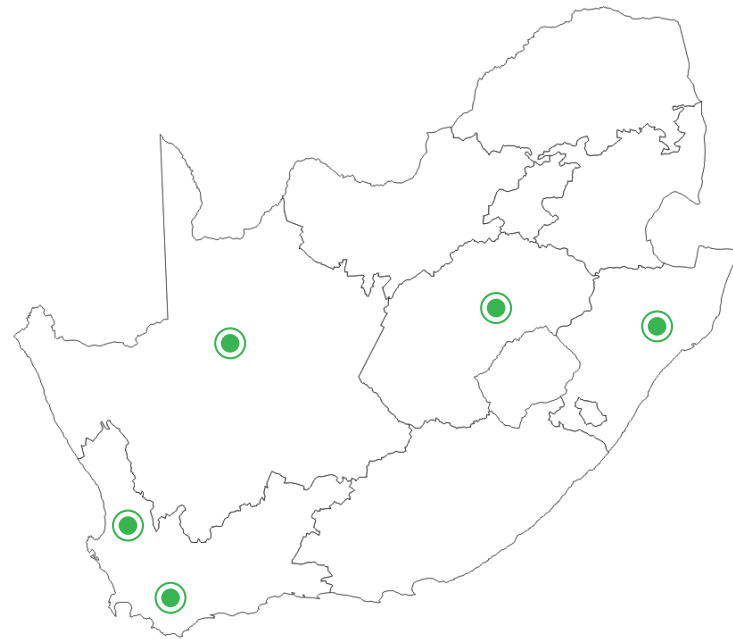


This research project is borne out of the necessity to make listenership research accessible to community media. Listenership and audience research is customarily an expensive exercise and thus out of reach for small community radio stations. Most also lack the time and expertise to do audience research in a systematic, rigorous way.

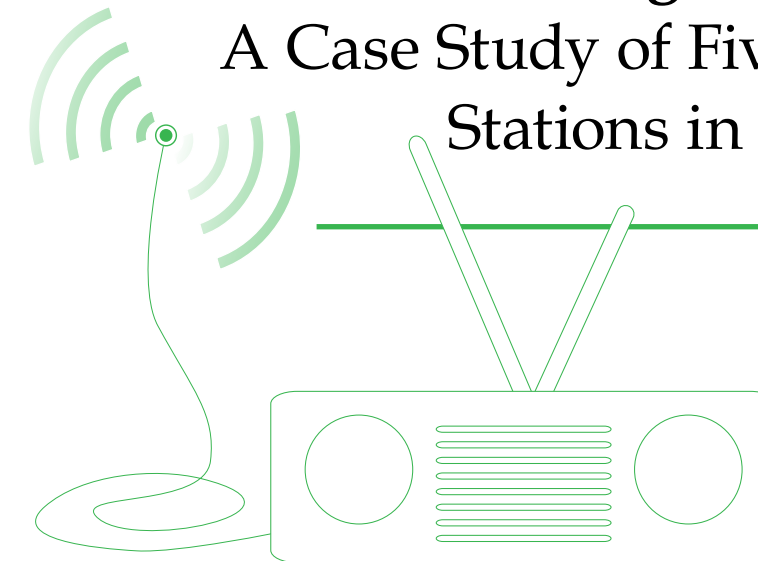
The Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (SPI) conducted the research with five community radio stations, with the aim of demystifying and encouraging greater use of formative target audience research. The SPI envisaged assisting radio stations to translate research findings into action. The insights of the research process and final findings can be used for marketing purposes to advertisers as well as making informed programming decisions.

The research showcases the experiences and lessons of the five community radio stations that attempted to conduct listenership research and those that have not. It features their challenges and successes – in this way the SPI hopes other community radio stations will learn from these experiences and that this report will inform their choices and decisions when considering research.



Research conducted by Johanna Mavhungu on behalf of the  
Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership  
Edited by Cathy O'Shea

## Formative Target Audience Research: A Case Study of Five Community Radio Stations in South Africa



# Formative Target Audience Research:

*A Case Study of Five Community Radio Stations in South Africa*

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**Formative Target Listener Research:  
A Case Study of Five Community Radio Stations in South Africa**

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Radio Maputaland

Radio Riverside

Kovsie FM

Bush Radio

Radio Zibonele

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Thank you to the Rhodes University students who worked hard to transcribe and translate the interview and focus group data.

# Acronyms

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NCRF	National Community Radio Forum
OSF-SA	Open Society Foundation for South Africa
SAARF	South African Advertising Research Foundation
DoC	Department of Communications
ICASA	Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
SPI	Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership
AMARC	World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters
LSM	Living Standard Measure
RAMS	Radio Audience Measurement Survey
NGOs	Non-profit Organisations
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
RAMS	Radio Audience Measurement Survey
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
ANC	African National Congress
DA	Democratic Alliance
CODESA	Congress for a Democratic South Africa
COMTASK	Task Group on Government Communication
STATS SA	Statistics South Africa
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
SASCO	South African Students Congress



## Terminology

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**Community** – The word ‘community’ is problematic because people living in the same geographical area not only have different interests, but communicate these using different cultural practices. Nevertheless, ICASA encourages stations to embrace the diversity of individuals existing within a geographical location or communities sharing similar interests. Hence when applying for a license the two permissible types of communities are defined as follows: community defined by their interest (religious, ethnic, etc.) and as indicated earlier, the geographic community. Davidson (2004) points out that unless the word ‘community’ is used with caution, the perception that participation has been achieved because the community owns and runs a station can mask the fact that it is certain individuals and groups that own and run a station. This entrenchment of power at a community radio station may reflect disparities in the access of power and resources within a broader social sphere<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, Davidson (2004) states that in South Africa the term ‘community’ is politically loaded and used to describe ‘previously disadvantaged people’, therefore implying that the radio station is ‘of the community’. The term ‘community’ has been interrogated in numerous academic interchanges; hence its use in any context needs clarification. In this research, the term is used interchangeably with ‘geographic community’ and ‘community of interest’ as per ICASA’s description.

**Target community listeners** – Van Zyl (2003), in *Community Radio: The People’s Voice*, argues that interest groups within a said geographical setting can come together to apply for a licence and once the licence is granted then a community is created around the radio station’s interactivities; so where no community existed before, the radio through discussion and debate can construct one – the granting of the licence thus becomes the first step in forming the ‘community’. Because not all members of a geographic community (e.g. living in the broadcast radius) or community of interest (e.g. sharing the same religious or cultural belief) are listeners of the station, this research will use the term ‘target community listeners’, which refers to people who listen to the station. This does not imply that community radio stations are selective about who listens to the station, but is a means of avoiding over-generalisation and what Davidson (2004) terms ‘consensus’ implied when referring to the community.

**Community participation** – Community participation impacts on the nature of research suitable for community radio stations. Participation has been central to the debate on ownership e.g. how can the listener get involved in the station programmes, the management of the station, policy and planning. Factors that impact on participation are accountability, transparency, access and measuring the relevance of the station’s activities. However, “the extent of involvement of the community in managing and programming

differs from one station to the next.”<sup>2</sup> Media policy in South Africa since the initiation of community media has attempted to define community participation, its relevance, and ways to achieve optimum participation by the target community listeners. To this end the IBA Act of 1994 considered the notion of community participation as active participation of a community in respect of attendance of meetings, involvement in fund-raising initiatives and directing the programming of the station through complaints or comments committees. It also noted a passive level of participation that includes donations to the organisation and, for example, dedications on air<sup>3</sup>.

Hadland and Thorne (2004) point out that Berger (1996) raised questions about the degree of community participation implied in the ‘owned and controlled by the community’ criterion. He states that it is unrealistic and warns that participation can ‘run out of steam’<sup>4</sup> and while community control is important, it can’t be considered fundamental. Hadland and Thorne (2004) question what community ownership means and highlight that the relationship between control and participation may also be more complex than it seems at first. For Berger, the most important feature of community media is ‘participation plus a progressive agenda’<sup>4</sup>. Ownership and control are some of the factors that influence the level of participation that is possible by members of the geographic community. Hadland and Thorne (2004) attempt to clarify the critical link between community participation and ownership, citing the Community Radio Manual (1999),

which states that community participation is made up of three elements: the involvement of local residents in decision-making and participation in the work carried out at the community media organisation; the sharing of benefits accruing from ownership; and in the identification of needs with the aim of addressing them<sup>5</sup>. If each of these requirements is fulfilled, then the organisation can be defined as a community organisation. The manual suggests that there is no fixed formula, as each community is different and should determine its terms for participation within the context of existing best practice and legislation. Nevertheless, it would appear that the baseline requirement, in the case of radio, is that the station is owned, managed and programmed by the community it serves. Participation at the level of policy and planning is difficult, while most stations have incorporated participation at the management level by employing locals. Central to this research – is the participation in programming by the target community listeners. This is an active form of engagement that allows for creative engagement in content development and production by listeners. In addition if the resources are available the station can pursue a systematic community participation research method tailored to suit their local context.

*Formative Target Audience Research* – “obtaining information from the target audience that is used to inform the development of health communication messages and content for broadcast and print media.”<sup>6</sup> Formative research refers to research conducted at the

beginning or development stages of a communication or message development processes.

**Stringers** – news journalists stationed at various locations within the community radio’s broadcast radius. Stringers are mostly volunteer journalists gathering news in their residential area but are not limited to this location; their movements are subject to available resources for news gathering.

**Programme** – structured content presented on the radio during a time-slot e.g. 6-9am, developed by the programme producer or presenter. The content can take the form of music/entertainment and discussion of topical issues. A programme can also be pre-recorded as a feature or drama.

**Programme segments** – one programme divided into sections of different topics or music genres within a specific time-slot.

**Programme time-slot** – time allocated for a programme, e.g. breakfast programme is broadcast from 6-9am.

**Programme Review Committee** – a body constituted by management, board of directors and members of listeners’ association, with the aim of reviewing feedback submitted through various mechanisms of interaction with the geographic community or community of interest, and making recommendations on changes to programmes, programme schedules and playlists.

**Code-switching** – it is the alternate use of two or more languages or varieties of languages, esp. within the same discourse. Simply put code-switching refers to the use of different/multiple languages in the same speech or sentence.

**Listeners’ association** – a group constituted by target community listeners of a community radio station within its broadcast radius. The ‘listeners’ clubs’, as they are sometimes called, meet from time to time and discuss comments and complaints. Some develop programmes with the stations and appoint representatives to the programme review committee.



# Chapter 1

## *Introduction*

---



Community radio in South Africa has been the topic of policy discussions since the early 1990s. While community media, and more specifically, community radio, had existed worldwide nearly 50 years before. Media activists in South Africa at the end of the Apartheid era, acting collectively, influenced policy-making taking place in Africa. Hadland and Thorne (2004) in their detailed account on the development of community media in South Africa note that in 1991, a statement of principles was drawn up by African journalists calling for a free, independent and pluralistic media on the continent and throughout the world. The Windhoek Declaration was to become a benchmark for the UN and for all organisations in the media field. In its preamble, the declaration noted that its lineage included Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and UN General Assembly Resolution 59(1) of 1946 (which declared that freedom of information is a fundamental human right) as well as UNESCO's Resolution on the free flow of ideas of 1989.

In South Africa after a series of workshops and demonstrations, the democratisation of broadcast services at a policy level was set in motion with the 'Jabulani! Freedom of the Airwaves' Conference in Doorn Netherlands, in 1991. The conference culminated in a series of recommendations for broadcast reform and, the establishment of community media. A number of South African delegates from the media industry, including the Task Group on Government Communication (Comtask),

attended the conference and later presented the recommendations during the proceedings of the Congress for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). CODESA was a major platform for the negotiations to reform government from an Apartheid system to democracy. During the presentation to CODESA a major recommendation from the Jabulani! Conference was initiated i.e. Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) was established in 1993 followed by the IBA Act of 1994. Subsequent to this and other developments in the media in 1996 all citizens' right to media, freedom of expression and information was guaranteed by South Africa's Constitution of 1996.

Hadland & Thorne (2004) state that according to the Jabulani! Resolutions, community or participatory broadcasting was 'initiated and controlled by members of a community, to express their concerns, needs and aspirations without outside interference'<sup>7</sup>. The idea of media for the community, by the community was to achieve popular currency in both popular and legal definitions of the sector. However within this broad definition lay much that was, and remains, contested. How does one define ownership by the community, for instance, or spell out how 'by the community' translates into different forms of participation? Policy interventions grappled with the issue of community participation and ownership since the early days of community radio, and to date the issue is not completely resolved.

In an effort to incorporate community media and liberalise the airwaves the IBA Act included com-

munity media within broadcast policy describing community media as the third of three components of broadcast media: public, private and community. The three-tier broadcast structure dominates most countries' definition of what constitutes the broadcast sector<sup>3</sup>. Community media is different because it is meant to provide the means for cultural expression, community discussion and debate among other similarly important priorities. It supplies news and information and facilitates political engagement on local issues. Community media offers concrete means for public participation and for defending cultural diversity. Through access to the production and consumption of relevant communications, community media forms a collective platform for community empowerment<sup>8</sup>. Hence, in South Africa, the development of community media has been synonymous with principles of democracy and development. Regulation and policy on community media seek to ensure the fulfillment of the above mentioned priorities and guarantees communities media that is independent, pluralistic, encouraging a free flow of ideas.

The IBA was replaced by the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) when IBA merged with the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SATRA). ICASA regulates both broadcasting and telecommunications, issuing broadcasting licences under conditions broadcasters have to abide by. At first, community radio stations received one-year licences permitting only a limited amount of broadcasting. However, stations now receive a four-

year broadcast licence allowing for 24-hour broadcasting, seven days a week. ICASA reviewed the IBA Act of 1994 and the Broadcast Act of 1999, as well as, taking into account the growth and impact of new media platforms on broadcasting. As a result of the interface between various forms of electronic media ICASA developed the Electronic Communications Act of 2005 to meet the changing broadcast landscape.

The emergence of community radio began with projects such as CASET (Cassette Education Trust), later Bush Radio. CASET sought to educate the people living in disadvantaged conditions by distributing development and educational material using cassette tapes, thus making radio content accessible across different ethnicities and racial groups. Content was primarily characterised by human rights' issues and development. CASET was later integrated into Bush Radio and marked the emergence of South Africa's community radio industry defined by an interest to address the information needs of the marginalised.

This report is an exploratory study of five community radio stations in South Africa. It aims to examine the use of research to develop good radio programming, stimulate community participation and gain insight from the target community listeners.. The researcher used elements of 'formative target audience research' to solicit feedback on programming – ideas, criticisms and perspectives – and hopes the stations will be able to use the data to shape and inform their broadcasting foci and content.



By merging key development content with the needs and interests of their listeners, stations can continue to respond to pressing social issues, while maximising their influence and reach. All these factors have the potential to improve the stations' relevance. In addition, a participatory approach to research is likely to add educational value for all stakeholders involved in the research.

This research builds on the work previously done by the Open Society Foundation for South Africa (OSF – SA) with other key broadcast stakeholders in South Africa in 2003, when they hosted the South African Roundtable on Audience Research. Representatives from the following organisations participated in the roundtable: ICASA, OSISA, AMARC, NCRF, SABC, OSF-SA, and the OSF Media Advisory Committee<sup>9</sup>.

*The aims and objectives of the roundtable were:*

- To consolidate the learning of the last few years regarding supporting community radio to do audience research in a way that is sustainable.
- To explore some new ideas and efforts that have not been discussed and shared previously.
- To move towards an implementable support strategy with distinguishable programmes and operations over the next few years<sup>9</sup>

*It was suggested at the roundtable that:*

- Programming of many stations is of low quality.
- Content and formats do not always reflect community expectations and could be improved.
- The level of community participation in programme production is low.

- Few stations have adequate knowledge about their listeners.
- Few radio stations managed to conduct audience research for their stations.
- In general, community radio stations do not have mechanisms in place to collect or receive feedback from their audiences that can help them develop, change or adapt their programming.
- Important programming decisions are made based on assumptions.

Formative audience research was identified, along with other research methods, as a potentially effective research method to meet the current research information needs of community radio stations.

With this in mind, the primary aim of this research is not to survey listenership, which is an area where professional independence is recommended and valued. Rather, the aim is to solicit the target community views on content, invite feedback from target community listeners and provide an opportunity for radio stations to measure whether they are serving the needs of their audiences against their existing programmes. This report includes a literature review of research conducted on the subject of community radio research in South Africa. The review is a brief account on the type of research orientations and methods used by community stations and those documented in academic studies. The selection survey undertaken before visits to the stations is analysed and the five community radio case studies described in detail. Finally, the two

chapters are synthesised in a compendium of findings, challenges and successes for programming research.

## Objectives of this report

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- To assist radio stations to understand formative target listener research and enable them to conduct such research.
- During the key stakeholders' interview process, identify what research methods are being used by the selected community radio stations to stimulate participation in programmes with their listeners.

To encourage community participation in media generally and radio programming specifically, by stimulating dialogue in the focus groups, amongst a multiplicity and diversity of voices in communities, especially those of the youth and women.

## Assumptions

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The research assumptions are based on suppositions described above at the 2003 OSF-SA Roundtable on audience research. As well as the widely held notion that the importance of community radio lies in its ability to strengthen development and democracy within geographic communities. Other assumptions include:

- Community media is an essential communication element promoting a diversity and multiplicity of voices.
- Community radio produces content with a

focus on development that is relevant for the community.

- Community radio is plagued by a lack of resources and capacity
- Research for community radio is expensive and inaccessible.
- Content for community radio needs to be improved on an ongoing basis to ensure relevance and attract advertisers.
- The sector struggles to secure advertising revenue as a result of lack of business confidence in the programming quality.
- Research can assist stations to understand their audiences and improve the quality of their content.

## Research Method

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The study undertaken at the five case study community radio stations was conceptualised adopting a qualitative audience research approach used mainly in health development communication to determine the knowledge, attitudes and practices ('KAP') of individuals in relation to HIV and AIDS and other development issues. It uses a qualitative approach – formative target audience research – to engage listeners, encourage community participation and gather information for content development. Formative target listener research was used in this research with the aim of creating an interface between radio production and target listeners based on the principle that communi-



ties should be involved in their own development. The research can yield results that inform messaging used when developing content for broadcast media using the ideas and views from the listeners.

Information gathered from listeners feeds into message development and the design of programmes. The method is structured and used by health and development communication organisations such as Soul City. The message is developed, then tested if successful, broadcast programmes are designed using knowledge gained from the research. Formative target audience research allows communities to speak about issues critical to their surroundings and in doing so deepen democratic principles of openness and transparency. It was envisaged that in conducting the research with the programme staff at the station, the process would be an added resource for identifying topics and issues to be addressed during programmes. In addition it was envisaged that the programme staff would be able to accurately identify their target listeners and provide profiles to advertisers.

However, one can argue that formative target audience research works well within a well developed organisation with the resources for dedicated constant research conducted by a skilled researcher. Because community radio stations struggle with resources and capacity it is not possible to use all the stages of a formative target audience research method as used by health and development communication organisations indicated in Figure 1 below. Nevertheless, the merit of this method lies in the participatory princi-

ples it advocates, an approach derived from a ‘bottom up’ as opposed to a ‘top down’ content development approach where the producer develops content in isolation without engaging the listeners or geographic community. A fraction of the entire formative target audience research process was used for this research during the field work to specifically focus on listener participation in content development.

Working in partnership with the National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) the SPI researcher embarked on a series of field visits to the radio stations with the aim of speaking to staff and listeners and generally people living within the broadcast radius. A database of all community radio stations was collated from the NCRF and ICASA databases comprising of four-year licensed community radio stations in South Africa. In the preliminary phase of the research a questionnaire developed by the NCRF and the SPI was sent to community radio stations. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gain insight into the nature of research conducted for content and listenership and to identify community radio stations to participate in the research study as case studies. Once cases were selected the researcher communicated with the radio stations to prepare for the research visits.

A daily schedule of research activities was drafted and agreed upon prior to the visit with the radio stations. The daily schedule outlined research actions such as interviews and focus groups to be undertaken with employees and listeners. It was important to have a structured programme, although the research is ex-

ploratory in nature. The focus groups were constituted in the spirit of community participation, allowing any interested listener from the broadcast radius to participate and the participants to set the agenda with regards the programmes they wanted to discuss and give feedback on.

Throughout the entire research the following methods of enquiry were used: questionnaires, semi-structured in-depth interviews, consultations with primary stakeholders at the radio station, and focus groups with the target community listeners. The aim was to consult with radio staff managers involved in the management and production of content and those who interact with listeners regularly. Open-ended questions guided the first phase of in-depth semi-structured interviews with the radio station's staff. Information gathered from the interviews helped to structure the focus group discussions undertaken with the listeners. At this stage pre-intervention data was gathered in the form of the staff's initial expectations and desired outcomes.

The second phase in preparation for the focus group discussions took the form of in-depth interviews with on-air and programming staff to establish how they produce and present their programmes, what feedback mechanisms are in place for their programmes and what they want to know about their programmes from the listeners.

The programme managers worked with the SPI researcher to help facilitate focus group discussions. Working together with the programme managers ena-

bled the SPI researcher to share research experiences and it also added positively to the interaction and visibility of the station to its target community listeners.

In the third stage the focus groups were conducted. The mixing of age groups and sexes did not inhibit dialogue from the participants. The mixing of groups was of concern to the researcher, but because the discussion point was programming content and community radio programming is tailored to appeal to young and old listeners, participants expressed their views freely and constructively. Segmenting the focus group participants according to age groups helped in other instances especially in the rural areas where participants are sensitised to social hierarchical structures. Participants were recruited by members of the radio station's listeners' clubs, and if a station had no listeners' club, volunteers did the recruitment. Listeners' clubs are groups of avid listeners of a particular radio station located in different sections of the station's broadcast area. They are a good source of information on events between the station and listeners in the community.

The final stage in the field was for the researcher to meet with staff members to reflect on the focus group discussions, review the process, expectations and outcomes of the research.

### *Literature on existing research approaches for community radio*

The purpose of the roundtable on Audience Research organised by OSF was to consolidate support for radio,

to conduct audience research in a sustainable manner and integrate the research processes and findings into the stations' planning and programming. Since the roundtable, the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) has made great strides to include community radio stations in their Radio Audience Measurement Survey (RAMS). SAARF produces a common research currency for the media industry and advertisers, measuring listenership, viewership and readership of the various media. SAARF research guides advertising spend in the media industry and provide media owners' insights into the lifestyle patterns of media consumers.

The difference between listener survey research and this research is that survey research at radio stations is quantitative and geared towards measuring the total number of listeners and listenership patterns. While this research is qualitative looking at responses to programming and how these can further enrich future content. This research also explores the possibility for community radio stations to conduct their own research and thus make research an accessible tool at a formative level of content production. As well as to gain details on lifestyle patterns, demographic profiles and the information needs of their target community listeners. Qualitative research does not require huge samples; however, it should be conducted systematically and with emphasis on ethical behaviour in the field and during the analysis of data. The formative target research findings cannot be generalised and

triangulation using existing feedback systems such as SMS, suggestion boxes, email feedback and other social networking media could add to information verification. This research does not position itself as a scientific research process; the idea is to highlight the research as a tool to gather insights from listeners regarding their experiences of existing content and feedback mechanisms.

In 1999 UNICEF and UNESCO undertook an audience research study that culminated in a useful resource: *Handbook on Radio and Audience Research* by Graham Mytton. Mytton's study is comprehensive explaining various audience research processes, their use and benefits to broadcast media. Although the research is now dated, the proposed methods are still useful.

Van Zyl's *The People's Voice*, written in 2003, considers not only instructions and examples of how a community radio operates, but how ICASA's licensing and regulatory issues impact on community radio stations. The OSF-SA's *Community Radio Manual* (1999) examines in-depth the various aspects such as management, production, research and the purpose of community radio. The *Community Radio Manual* (1999) is one of the earliest guides on processes and systems that should be used when establishing and managing a station. *The People's Voice* and *Community Radio Manual* have been relevant in the last 15 years since the democratisation of broadcasting, an era that has seen the rapid growth of the community radio sector in South Africa. Both studies have brief guides on how to go about con-

ducting research for community radio.

Van Zyl (2003) proposes two types of community radio research: first is the programming research form designed to suit programme research on a daily basis leading up to the programme script. The programme research form requires different stakeholders in the community to give information on the relevant topic to be presented on-air. Secondly he suggests a programme research sheet, which covers general research needs. It can be placed at the station's reception for listeners to write down their topic of interest. The sheet is a valuable resource that presenters and producers can use to refresh their topic and feature ideas. Therefore the sheet gathers general overarching topical themes and issues whilst the form can be used daily for depth on the chosen topic or theme for the day.

### *Formative target audience research*

Focus groups were used in this research as a method of gaining insight, and proved useful, however, it can also be time and resource consuming. Formative target audience research in health and development communication employs a cyclic process using mainly focus groups and in-depth interviews as data gathering methods. The process is best depicted in figure 1 below and exists within the production process.

Formative target audience research is about content development and focuses specifically on introducing participation to content, with the aim of extracting from the community knowledge, attitudes and practices around health issues. In this study, the

method is used to gather information about a range of other socio-political and economic issues plaguing a geographical community. In his research on participatory research methods Davidson (2004) writes about the three tiers of public participation proposed by UNESCO in the 1970s as a means of assessing the participatory nature of communication systems. The first is to provide opportunities for citizens to choose varied media content and formats and to provide feedback on their reactions and preferences. The second refers to consultation of the public with respect to management, planning and production processes. The third and most advanced according to Davidson is when the public is fully involved in policy-making and planning – termed 'self management'. The three levels of participation described by Davidson allow for participation beyond the scope of formative target research. Formative target audience research falls within the first tier, which Davidson terms the 'lowest' form of participation, and that is the contribution to content development. Nevertheless, formative target audience research used in tandem with methods such as community mapping could potentially benefit community stations in the areas of content development, community participation and identifying networks and relationships existing within geographical communities.

Community radio stations produce a significant number of their own development content in partnership with municipal departments such as health and social development. Some NGOs and CBOs are also

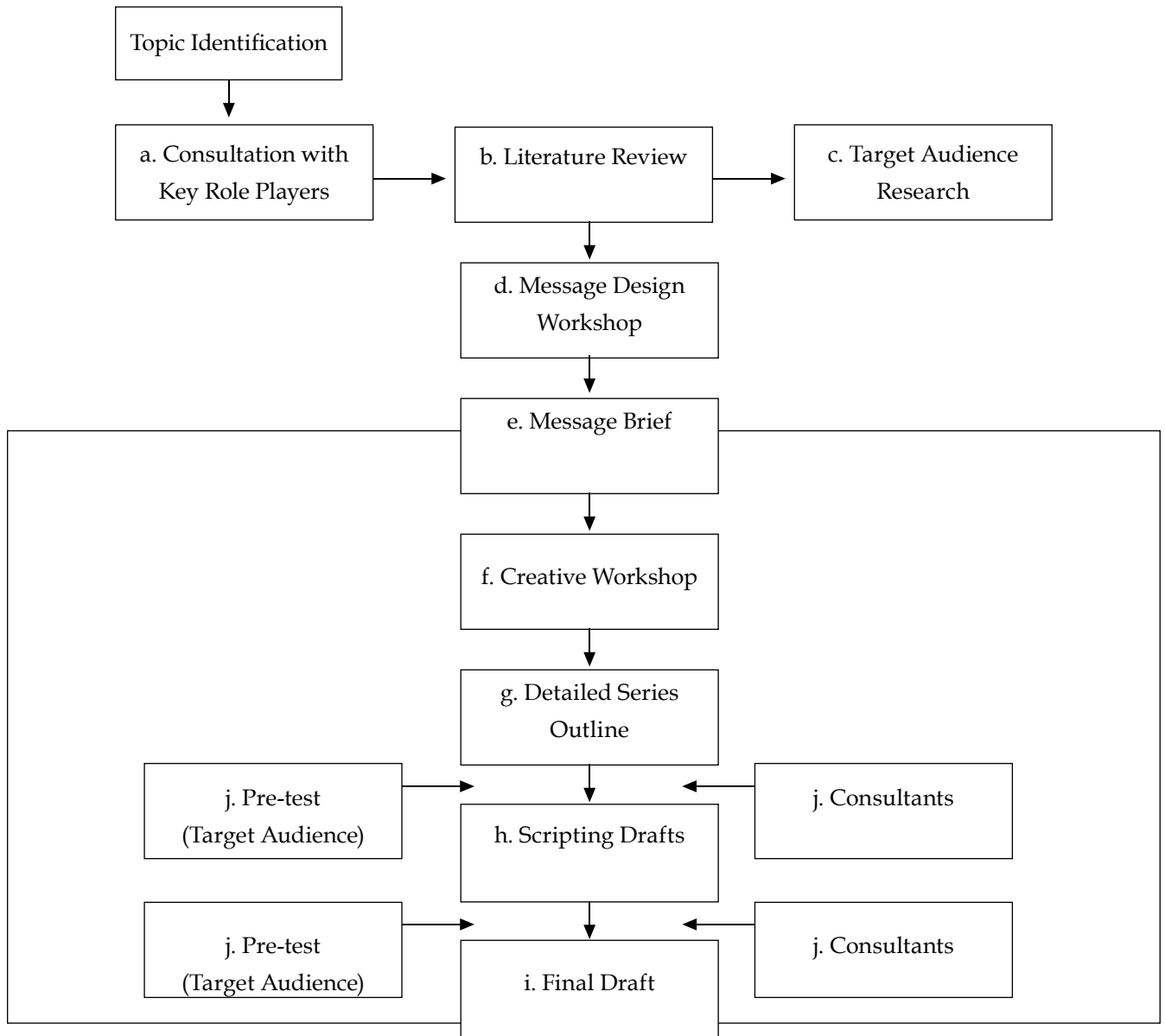


Figure 1: Formative research in a production process<sup>6</sup>

involved, although more civil organisation participation is still necessary beyond the use of one NGO and CBO representative as guest expert on a programme.

For radio stations to implement formative target audience research they need an in-depth understanding of the social relations and networks as well as the socio-political context of the geographic community. Some of the networks already exist because community radio stations have access to NGOs and CBOs for their programmes. Networks can be used for research purposes to develop alternative programmes with formats that are not restricted by commercial imperatives. Formative target audience research encourages stations to go to their communities to gather information and develop content from the bottom up to address the information and development needs of their geographic communities. Hadland & Thorne (2004) acknowledge how communication for development became synonymous with a two-way communication between media production and its receivers and aims to encourage consumers to be active participants through telling their stories using media. Formative audience research emerged from communication for development and emphasised community participation for content formulation, moreover, message development. According to Hadland & Thorne (2004):

*"The nature of community media is participatory and the purpose ... is development, a process of public and private dialogue through which people define who they are, what they want and how they can get it" (Wanyeki 2000: 31). A crucial element of communications is the*

*distinction it makes in the role of the consumer or participant and in the 'two-way' flow of information and dialogue. In a discussion document of the CMS Task Team (CMSTT) to the Minister of Communications, two-way information flow, appropriate technology, redress and diversity were all stressed as vital elements of the community media. The task team pointed out that community media is aimed at transferring people from being passive consumers of media to being active participants in telling their own stories, communicating their needs and accessing information that is relevant to their lives<sup>10</sup>."*

With the importance of community media for development and democracy in mind, presently community radio is struggling to sustain its financial operations and keep its mandate to promote development and democracy through programming. Therefore, a research approach for the sector should not only look at the participatory imperatives or listenership surveys, but also assist radio stations in improving content, staying relevant to their listeners, while helping the station to leverage the content in ways that improve financial sustainability.

### *Community Mapping*

Davidson (2004) takes the idea of research as a tool a step further by introducing community mapping. His thesis is one of the recent academic works written in South Africa about research in community radio stations. He commenced work on his thesis in 2003 with Radio KC in the Western Cape as a case study. In

his fieldwork he endeavoured to identify a participatory research method community radio stations can use to identify social networks that exist within their geographical community over and above assessing the needs, preferences and responses to programming. Specifically, the research employs community mapping - 'civic mapping' - as a research method arising from the school of public journalism used by some newspapers and radio stations in the USA to identify layers of stories and voices in their communities.

Community mapping, as it is known in South Africa, was pioneered by IDASA during the period of Davidson's research, himself an employee at IDASA. It was aimed to assist community radio stations to conduct research which was much more than audience and market research survey, but using research to stimulate community participation in content development and the structuring of the station. One of the key issues he raises is the need for an approach that seeks to identify social networks at three levels - the macro level of community power and influence, meso-level networks or organisations and associations, and micro-level interpersonal networks - and further examine the socio-economic and political issues existing within the geographical area<sup>1</sup>. Davidson opposes the use of audience measurement surveys, describing them as problematic because they "link sender and receiver in a 'calculative' rather than social relationship, as a cash transaction between producer and consumer"<sup>1</sup>.

Nevertheless, during the SPI researcher's field vis-

its, community mapping was not implemented at the radio stations on an ongoing basis. The only form of consistent research available to community radio stations was and still is the SAARF RAMS. As indicated by Davidson (2004) and also experienced during this research, stations have limited resources in the form of costs of transport and venues to host regular meetings to implement research.

It is critical to note that there is no quick solution to the problem of how stations can implement research such as community mapping or simple formative target audience research discussed in this paper. However, it is clear that the sector and more specifically programming staff need basic research skills which can be transferred or taught by research organisations, universities and community radio support organisations. Furthermore existing literature on the subject of research and participatory methods and techniques stations can employ need to be more accessible to community radio stations. So they are implemented within programme policies and programme staff can be exposed to their existence at a policy and planning level.

This research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of formative target audience research at specific community radio stations. It is a recent account of community radio research in South Africa.

## Preliminary findings

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### *Selection Survey Questionnaire Summary of Findings*

The selection survey questionnaire was used to gain insight into existing programming, research activities and practises at community radio stations. As well as to select the research case studies.

The selection survey questionnaire was sent to all community radio station in South Africa using the National Community Radio Forum and ICASA databases. This means a total of 100 community stations were sent the selection survey instrument twice, because of the low response rate from the first questionnaires sent out. 14 fully completed questionnaires were received from the community radio stations. It should also be noted that a total of 30 e-mailed questionnaires were undelivered via email either because addresses failed, or because email mailboxes were full. The researcher faxed the questionnaire to the undelivered email addresses, with very little success. So in total 70 stations received the selection questionnaire and the other 30 are not included due to communication difficulties. An analysis of the selection questionnaires was conducted to identify the stations that displayed the following characteristics:

- Are community owned with a commitment to ensuring that people from historically disadvantaged groups are involved in the leadership and/or the governance of the radio station.

- Consciously strive to serve all sectors of their communities.
- Are committed to promoting media plurality, diversity and democratic governance.
- Are committed to providing listeners with solid journalistic content.
- Can serve as a model for other small radio stations in terms of their programming and/or business practice.

The following are the community radio stations that responded to the selection questionnaire (see appendix 2):

1. Namakwaland Community Radio
2. Radio Riverside
3. Aganang Community Radio
4. Maputaland Community Radio
5. Shine Community Radio
6. Alfred Nzo Community Radio
7. Kovsie FM
8. Fine Music Radio
9. Radio Zibonele
10. Eden FM
11. 101.9 Chai FM
12. Radio Today
13. Radio Islam
14. Greater Lebowakgomo Community Radio

The respondents had a life span of between 15-20 years on-air with FM frequency, whilst others had existed well beyond this time frame on AM frequency. However, two radio stations, Radio Chai FM and Aganang Radio, were not yet on air. Of the 14 stations only



two did not have the four-year licence provided by ICASA. One station was waiting for the license to be approved and the other station was broadcasting on a special events license.

Thirteen of the radio stations are registered as non-profit entities and only Kovsie FM fell under the University of Free State. Most of the stations' main source of funding is advertising, with the two newest stations, Alfred Nzo and Aganang Community Radio, receiving donor funding and support from the Department of Communications. Donations are the second-largest source of income, followed by other sources such as sponsored programmes, telethons and investments.

The programme topics listed below describe the type of content aired by the radio stations. These are based on a mix of perception and quotas specified in their licence agreement with ICASA. Below are topics discussed during programmes at the stations that completed the selection questionnaire.

*Column 1* – represents target community listeners' topic preference, issues that listeners want addressed according to the station managers and programme managers who completed the selection questionnaire.

*Column 2* – shows topics the stations addressed again from the point of view of the station and programme manager. They indicate a range of issues that form topics addressed during programmes. Some of the issues are discussed as part of sponsored programmes

by local government particularly issues related to social development and health. Nevertheless, for the stations to understand what aspects of the topic the geographic community wants to know more about, they have to conduct research or use existing participatory mechanisms at their stations.

In the selection survey, a number of radio stations indicated that the only research accessible to them was the SAARF RAMS, which the majority were unable to interpret and use. Most of the radio stations had never conducted their own research. Few stations had taken the initiative to use other accessible sources of information available to them to gain insight into the issues facing their communities. The accessible resources include local university students, demographic information available from the local municipality, Stats SA for other local and regional demographical data and the community mapping research, which some radio stations did with IDASA in preparation for the station's licensing process with ICASA. The responses below from the radio stations speak to the kind of research they had conducted and its purposes:

- “We did research for the health programme. It was done by UCT [University of Cape Town] students. The research found that there is too little advertising on HIV and Aids.” (**Radio Zibonele**)
- “We have access to the RAMS whenever they are released and they help us in preparing and changing our programming.” (**Radio Zibonele**)
- “During the application process minimal community mapping was utilised in order to ascer-

<b>Column 1</b> <i>Topics and issues programme staff think listeners want discussed on-air.</i>	<b>Column 2</b> <i>Topics and issues stations discussed on-air according to the selection survey.</i>
HIV and Aids	HIV and Aids
Entertainment	Entertainment
News	News
Social development	Social development
Women, youth and children	Women, youth and children
Music	Music
Education	Education
Finance	Religion
Health and politics	Local news
Alcohol and drug abuse	
Talk	
Crime prevention	

*Figure 2: The place of formative research in the production process<sup>6</sup>*

tain the programming needs of the community – the community wanted to hear about crime, they felt that reporting was biased wherever Israel was concerned.” **(101.9 Chai FM)**

- “The Kaplan Institute in Cape Town published findings on the Jewish community that have been utilised in order to cater for everyone. In addition I used the 2001 Census results from Stats SA.” **(101.9 Chai FM)**
- “The local municipality provided the station with demographic profile of the community –

research conducted during 2003/4.” **(Aganang Community Radio)**

### *Case Studies Summary of findings*

The research into five community radio stations was conducted firstly by means of in-depth interviews with the station’s management and on-air employees. Secondly, focus group discussions were conducted with the station’s target community listeners. From the interviews with station management three main areas of concern are highlighted:

- Management challenges and successes
- Programme content development, production and presenting
- Community participation and interaction

Focus group participants spoke to the following areas:

- Language used by presenters
- Listener participation and interaction
- News content and news reading
- Presenters articulation and style of presenting
- Topics discussed during programmes

Other areas that are also important to this research but arose from a few interviews with station's management are:

- Operational matters, which include the day to day management of the station, presenters and programmes.
- The need to conduct research and the lack of resources for such an undertaking.

The case study analysis is divided into staff feedback, which has the following analytical grid: Management, Programme Content, Listener Interaction and Marketing. The listeners' feedback section is also divided in the following analytical grid: Language, Presenting Skills, Programme Content, News Content and Listener Interaction. Staff and listeners' comments are presented mostly as raw data with contextual analysis to amplify the voices of the listeners and avoid inference. A compendium of challenges and success is presented in chapter 3 using the same analytical grid to the one used for the case studies. The following is a summary of issues raised at the stations:

## Management

- **Management roles and responsibilities** – programme managers have multifaceted roles, which extend beyond their role of managing and developing content, but also ensuring that skilling of presenters takes place. "I am responsible for programming, or at least making sure programmes go on air. I'm also responsible for training: that's both internal training and external training." Adrian Louw, Programme Integrator, Bush Radio
- **Marketing the station** – lack of resources to launch marketing campaigns and attract advertisers is experienced by managers at all the radio stations. "We don't have any donors. We only survive through advertising, so it means we must make sure that we market ourselves... maybe if we market ourselves more aggressively our listenership can grow." Mzamo Ngomana, Station Manager, Radio Zibonele.
- **Recruitment** – some listeners complained about lack of transparency in the recruitment of presenters. In some cases, the station has a clear way of recruitment; however, publicising information with regards recruitment is a problem. This meant that only a few people know when opportunities arise at the station either for presenting or management positions.
- **Remuneration** – Poor remuneration impacts on quality, as presenters are over-committed to other income-generating activities. In some of

the radio stations, presenters receive a stipend, while in others they do not. Some presenters mentioned that they get other paying work to meet their living costs and work at the station when they have the time.

- **Financial sustainability** – in some stations such as Bush Radio the decline in donor funding had an impact on socially relevant programming. “This year, we don’t have money for MKK [children’s conference], because overseas people are holding onto their money. They don’t want to give money as easily as they did at other times...I think, it does affect us.” Brenda Leonard, Administrator, Bush Radio.
- **Diversifying sources of funding** – the stations visited diversify their funding sources, augmenting advertising revenue with revenue from local government departments that buy programme slots and programmes sponsored by businesses.
- **Advertising** – commercial advertising can contradict the norms and values of community radio. In one of the stations visited listeners complained about the inability of the station to hold local business accountable to the community because the station was receiving funds from the said businesses and local government departments - to the extent that one listener labelled a station “ANC aligned”.

## **Programme Content**

- **Programme policy** – some radio station’s programme policy lacked clauses outlining editorial independence. Self-censorship was also not addressed and none of the managers interviewed addressed it in the interviews. (However, mention was made of how they struggled to get local government officials to come for current affairs programmes where the agenda for discussion was determined by the station and the listeners.)
- **Professionalism and quality** – all the radio stations spoke about the need for professionalism and quality programming in relation to the production of content and on-air presentation skills. All interviewees who mentioned the issue of quality have different views on how to achieve it, with emphasis on training, evaluation, and mentorship of presenters.
- **Resources to work on programmes** – resources are scarce, leading to lack of in-depth research for programmes. Lack of skills, preparation and commitment also contributed to badly structured programmes.
- **Follow-up on topics** – some presenters are not keeping contact with listeners – or, when listeners raise an issue on a specific programme, they do not follow up on the issue.
- **Programme structure** – at stations where presenters had no overarching structure for programme development such as clear segments

and themes, programme formats tended to be entertainment driven.

- **News content** – one station, Radio Zibonele, had an in-depth current affairs programme. The other four stations did not have the necessary skills and resources for in-depth reporting or investigative journalism.
- **Training** – transferring skills to presenters was a challenge because of the lack of skilled individuals available to mentor and conduct exchange programmes or workshops. All the managers either conducted their own training in house on an ad-hoc basis, or waited for training opportunities from external training providers. Presenters are, at times, over-committed in various roles, e.g. at Radio Riverside presenters are also journalists, which means they have little time to focus on a particular skill and learn it in-depth.
- **Relationships and networks in the community** – some journalists did not understand where to go for stories and who to speak to in the townships. When relating national and international news some journalists are unable to analyse stories and give them a local context. Listeners stated that they have never seen journalists in the community and others suggested the places journalists should visit.
- **Lack of equipment** – almost all the stations spoke about the need to upgrade and augment their equipment e.g. audio recorders for stringers and journalists in the field; studio equipment for

dramas and programme features.

- **Sponsored programmes and paid for slots** – local government departments paid for programme slots where they discuss government programmes and campaigns. Listeners are concerned that local government departments mask some of the serious issues that need discussing, such as service delivery. Inexperienced presenters and journalists sometimes self-censor by not discussing critical issues which they feel could offend the government officials. This can be attributed to a number of reasons, such as lack of journalistic experience, and fear of interrogating the department that buys the most programme slots. On the other hand, the business relationship allows the stations to leverage government support.
- **Journalists** – two editors from Radio Zibonele and Maputaland Radio spoke about their communities' lack of co-operation on stories and general lack of understanding the role journalists and journalism plays in the community. Some journalists had to endure criticism and negative perceptions from officials in their local government departments. At Bush Radio, because journalists are interns from CPUT, three journalists stated that they are afraid to go out for stories especially in notorious townships such as Bonteheuwel in the Cape Flats.
- **Research skills** – all the stations except for Radio Zibonele said they lacked resources to imple-

ment any form of research and that they need research literacy skills to read SAARF RAMS and to differentiate between different research orientations.

### *Listener Interaction*

- ***Community participation*** – the stations had various methods of community participation which they use on an ad-hoc basis discussed within the case studies.
- ***Direct interaction*** – staff at all five radio stations felt that they needed more direct interaction with their communities in the form of an open forum. However, they acknowledged that they do not have the resources to host such meetings.

### *Footnotes*

<sup>1</sup>Davidson, 2004

<sup>2</sup>OSF-SA, 1999

<sup>3</sup>Hadland & Thorne, 2004

<sup>4</sup>Berger, 1996 cited in Hadland & Thorne, 2004

<sup>5</sup>Urgoiti 1999:17 cited in Hadland & Thorne, 2004

<sup>6</sup>Soul City Institute, 2003

<sup>7</sup>Siemering 1997:1 cited in Hadland & Thorne, 2004

<sup>8</sup> CRIS, 2003 cited in Hadland and Thorne, 2004

<sup>9</sup>Scheepers, 2003

<sup>10</sup>CMSTT 2003: 3 cited in Hadland & Thorne, 2004





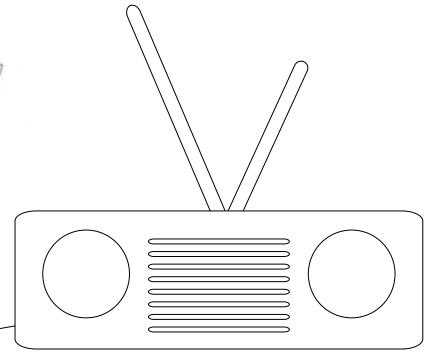
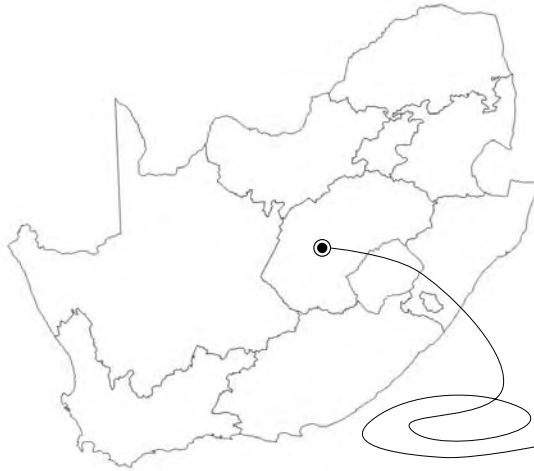
# Chapter 2

## *Case Studies*

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*"We have to make money to survive as a community radio station."*

• **Duard Grobbelaar, Station Manager**

## Case Study 1: Kovsie FM

*"Your Flava!"*

**Frequency: 97.0 FM**

**SAARF RAMS: 40 – 14 000 (SAARF RAMS 2008/9)**

**Station Manager: Duard Grobbelaar**

Kovsie FM was founded by a group of students in 1978. The station, first known as "Radio Kampus", was broadcast via a landline to the cafeteria of the University of the Free State (UOFS). Currently the station broadcasts to about 40 000 people (RAMS 2008), comprising campus students, Bloemfontein residents and the surrounds. With a sizeable number of on-air and management staff members, it is located on the UOFS

campus in Bloemfontein.

The university is no stranger to controversy: in 2008 the "Reitz residence incident" took place at one of the university residences, which some of the research participants refer to during the focus groups. Reitz, a male students' residence, was at the centre of a controversial incident in which video, leaked to the media, depicted white students ill-treating cleaning staff by making them perform humiliating acts including making them eat food that had apparently been urinated on. The racial incident hit national headlines and propelled the university management to set up an external committee, to investigate and make recommendations for the racial and cultural integration of residences on campus. Integration became the central

point of most academic and social interactions. Prior to this incident the university had adopted a policy to integrate black and white students into residences. According to the *Mail & Guardian*<sup>11</sup>, since the nineties, UOFS has been plagued by white student resistance to its residence integration policy. The students created the video in a bid to mock the University's policy on integration. Following a national furore over the video, the university council took a decision to permanently close the Reitz Residence.

Another factor that impacts on the implementation of an integration policy is language. UOFS is a parallel-medium university, which means lecturers are offered separately for Afrikaans and English speakers. The *Mail & Guardian* article highlights the negative impact the implementation of the parallel-medium language policy is having on integration. It reports:

*"Problems listed by the council's quality committee, whose report was approved a few weeks ago, include: Afrikaans-speaking lecturers have poor English skills. Exam papers are poorly translated from Afrikaans to English, putting black students at a disadvantage. Class schedules favour Afrikaans-speakers. The audit report underlines the "unforeseen negative" influence of its language policy on the recruitment, integration and retention of black academics and the racial divisions among students, socially and in residences."*<sup>11</sup>

The integration issue is a concern for the station and reflected in the struggle to produce content that appeals to different cultural and racial groups speaking

different languages on Campus and in Bloemfontein.

### **Target community listeners**

Kovsie FM listeners are multiracial, multicultural and multilingual 16-28 year olds within the LSM 6-10 bracket. A youth station, Kovsie FM, according to the station manager Duard Grobbelaar is targeted at "the school kids, the students and the young working adults". The station manager is confident that "if you get the senior school [kid] s [16-18 years] to listen, then the younger ones will follow as well because they want to be cool."

The station is based at the University campus and caters to both University of the Free State students and listeners within Bloemfontein. Therefore the station's management develops its content not only to suit the student body but also the listeners within their targeted age bracket in Bloemfontein. A few years ago the transmission strength was increased to 100 watts to cover an 80 to 100km radius outside Bloemfontein such as Mangaung, Thaba-Nchu and Brandford, which has also made the station's aspirations for a bigger listenership feasible.

According to the station and programme managers, the station caters for a multicultural market with a number of listeners within the "black community" Since that market is secure, they felt they had to balance their aim for a multiracial station by "trying to recapture a whiter market", said the programme manager. According to her they wanted to grow a Bloemfontein listenership and have "all the schools

and everyone in the hostels listening”.

*Vision*

- To be a multi-cultural, vibrant station of professional quality.

*Mission*

- Kovsie FM shall be non-discriminatory, democratic and independent. Through dedicated teamwork Kovsie FM towards a quality product for the people. Kovsie FM wishes to create a fresh, up to date, progressive image that entails quality broadcasting with an enthusiastic, lively approach.

*Research Participants*

*Management Interviews*

<i>Duard Grobbelaar</i>	Station Manager
<i>Melissa Koning</i>	Programme Manager
<i>Adriaan Badenhorst</i>	Marketing Manager
<i>Joe van Rensburg</i>	Public Relations Manager
<i>Tobias Swarts</i>	Business Manager
<i>Ingrid Wu</i>	Managing Editor

*Programme Interviews*

<i>Shaxes Khumalo</i>	Producer and presenter of the programme <i>The Revolution with Shakes</i> from 6-9pm.
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<i>Tshepiso and Peter</i>	Producers and presenters of the programme <i>Vodacom 4-Wheel Drive Show</i> from 3-6pm.
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Focus group discussions were conducted with the following listeners of Kovsie FM:

- 10 learners aged 16 to 18 from the Christian Brothers College (CBC), a combined girls’ and boys’ school.
- 12 University of the Free State (UOFS) students aged between 18 and 25
- Interviews with 10 young people aged between 23 and 29 from various townships in Bloemfontein working at a brick factory in Bloemfontein.

*Staff Feedback*

*Management*

Station manager Duard Grobbelaar took over the station with a R100 000 deficit from his predecessor. He learned the structure and procedures according to which a university campus radio station operates. The management structure is supported by a board of directors made up of the university’s administration and academic members of staff. Duard instituted a management layer, appointing managers for specific divisions at the station in marketing, public relations, news, programming and business management. The inclusion of a business manager, he explains, contributed to keeping the station afloat. “We renewed relations with our media agencies because that is where most of the money is.” Duard realised that their

current operational structure places the station in a fortunate position, he said, “to be part of a university... when the station doesn’t make money and you have all these obligations every month end, they’ll normally help you with that, but you will have to pay them back”. This is a unique position in comparison to other community radio station operating outside the university.

His immediate concern as a manager has been to ensure the sustainability of operations. He stated, “We are working with structures now and getting our sponsors and everything sorted just so that we know that we are covered for the next three to five years.” In addition to this he was confident that by getting at least a R100 000 reserve for the station to be set aside for emergencies, ongoing expenditure and community-based projects, the station will be in a much better position financially.

The station comprises 31 on-air and programming staff, and two administration and technical staff. All on-air staff work as volunteers, which means they are not paid and they don’t receive a monthly stipend. Staff are employed from a pool of students working to complete their studies in various departments. Employees working on air are mostly from the Communications Department and work to fulfil their course requirements. The fact that the majority of employees are not paid has been a challenge to continuity, because the station was unable to retain their services. It means that the station manager fills positions randomly by assuming the task of a newsreader or presenter

when this happens. To retain them the station manager is working to raise enough funds to incentivise the managers with a stipend of between R1000 and R2000 and develop an hourly rate to pay the DJs.

The programme manager Melissa Koning believed that disciplinary action was an effective means of getting presenters to perform professionally. She explained that because the station catered for listeners in the whole of Bloemfontein and not a small student community, presenters need to take what they do seriously. “We try to remind DJs that they are not irreplaceable, they are there to serve the community, not to become personalities...and do it with a passion for radio – reaching people and making a difference.”

The programme manager felt her role was to control the quality of programmes produced and ultimately what goes out on air. She determined programme changes from time to time and her role was to oversee the smooth operations with regards to programming, which includes:

- “Make sure everyone [presenters] is on air.”
- “Make sure that they are disciplined and don’t cause havoc.”
- “Playlists are up to date...the music is current.”
- “Playlists and adverts are running.”

Working closely with the music research manager, she makes sure that the charts are updated and sound relationships with the record companies are maintained. It was important that the programme manager kept in contact with ICASA and made sure that the programme log sheets were sent in once a month with all

the details of what is happening on the programmes, as well as fulfilling the quota on local content.

The station generates 90% of its revenue from advertising. Advertisers are generally local businesses and a few big sponsors for specific programmes. Income generation is important for the station to fund its daily operations and projects involving the community. In terms of overall strategic management the station manager says they recently had a meeting to discuss the vision of the station for the next five years. He shared his business ideas and the plan he envisaged for growth and success. In measurable terms this means “operating like a commercial station even though we still have these community programmes”. He echoes the need for financial sustainability and operating on par with competitors for advertising such as the commercial and public broadcasters. Part of the vision is to get a full-time committed management and develop systems that create consistency and professionalism. To this end the station plans to improve its programming and thus also gain more listenership. “We have to make money to survive as a community radio station.”

### **Marketing**

Marketing at the station was done by a newly appointed marketing manager, although the station manager had the role of overseeing that sales targets were met and visibility opportunities were identified and used constructively. Despite the challenge of a limited budget for marketing, the station managed to estab-

lish exchange relationships with newspapers such as *Campus Volksblad*, *Free State Bulletin* and others. This was a strategic advertising exchange deal that worked well for the partners. It also allowed the station to penetrate their 24- to 28-year-old market of working and postgraduate listeners. Marketing was closely related to listener interaction, in that the tools used for marketing such as the website, and outside broadcasting provided a platform for listeners to interact with regards to programming. Kovsie was fortunate to have an online manager and a graphic designer, both are students from the university working as volunteers. Having these positions filled by students means cutting costs that would have been paid to a marketing agency.

In September 2008, the station introduced a new brand identity to distinguish the station as a professional business. The change included modifying jingles, redesigning the website to incorporate streaming, as well as new presenter and programme profiles. The only interaction tool for listeners on the website was the station manager’s email address for suggestions and comments. Community participation at the station meant the ability to receive feedback and suggestions on programming and the management of the station. Participation was achieved through emails, SMSs, phone calls and facebook. To this end, the station manager said, “The only interaction we’ve got is a contact link that you can click on and write a message to my email address. I normally answer those to say ‘thanks for your feedback’. We encourage people

who've got suggestions to either SMS, phone or go to our website...that's basically all the interaction we've got."

It was unclear how this feedback was used or incorporated within the programmes, and whether any changes had taken effect as a result of listeners' feedback.

### *Listener Interaction and Research*

Kovsie used SAARF RAMS to track their listenership. The station manager said, "I know when I worked here two to three years ago we had 10 000-14 000 listeners, which I just kept working on, and now we have 40 000 listeners." The station made use of OFM's (a commercial radio station) Word of Mouth Forum called WOMF, a social networking site where listeners expressed their opinions about what was happening socially. The Kovsie FM Facebook group was another social network interaction platform with over 400 members who discussed entertainment, social concerns and got information about what was taking place at the station, competitions, pageants, and other community outreach programmes. Using the social networking platforms the station manager could, to a certain extent, get a sense of emerging trends and topical issues concerning the target community listeners. It was clear that the station uses technological means to get in touch with their listeners, which were mainly young people on campus and around Bloemfontein. The only shortcoming was their preferred mode of communication, accessible

only to people with internet and money for SMS and telephone costs.

The programme manager, Melissa, viewed interaction as marketing and publicity. She explained that it was important for the relevant managers to "get us out there, we just want to raise our public image so that people know about us and know that we have made this change on air...this Top Forty and stuff". The programme manager was hopeful about the changes – the placement of the new managers at the station and the brand repositioning.

Other than marketing and publicity, listener interaction took place around social responsibility events, for example, Organ Donor Month with the Organ Donor Foundation, cancer and HIV and Aids programmes. Listeners are encouraged on-air to participate in these awareness campaigns. The programmes are also aimed at informing and educating the community.

The programme manager explained that the main source of constructive feedback is received through phone calls and SMSs. The SMS costs the listener R2, shared between the cellular phone network provider and the station.

The station also tries to incorporate target listeners in other ways. For instance, Lebogang, one of the presenters, invited some listeners of his programme to co-present with him. Target listeners' simply come into the station and offer direct feedback – a common practice in community radio stations. The proximity of the station to the student community allows the

station to get this kind of feedback. However, Kowsie's location on campus is a disadvantage to school-going listeners and young working adults within Bloemfontein. The station started a schools' project, where they go to schools with the DJs/presenters, play music and get students involved in promotions and competitions. This opportunity can be used to record some comments and views regarding the station's programmes.

According to Melissa, Kowsie received numerous demands from students to include political issues in their programming. Dealing with difficult political issues is a challenge for the station as heated debates on topics such as racism often arise on campus, especially after the Reitz hostel incident. She explained, "We did try to start a new programme where we kind of discuss what is happening on campus. Like the whole Reitz saga...we had a debate between South African Students Congress (SASCO) and Vryheid Front Plus (VF) and I know a lot of people listened to that because everyone wants to know about it and what the two actually had to say and not have to read it in the newspaper, rather hear it live." The station does not have a current affairs news programme to discuss such topical current affairs issues and the discussion that had taken place with the aforementioned political parties was a one-off. In addition she explains that the debate between SASCO and Vryheid Front Plus became about "black and white" people and the racial tensions existing on campus. During the focus groups, blatant racial tensions on campus were brought to the fore,

which pose a challenge, but also an opportunity for a community radio aimed at promoting democratic principles.

### *Programmes*

The station manager was the longest serving member of staff. Aware of the issues facing the station, the university and Bloemfontein, he said: "What I don't like about the station at the moment is that it's quite segregated: that's what I found when I got here. You'll have your Afrikaans show and a Sotho-speaking person won't be able to listen because it is just Afrikaans. They play Afrikaans music and then you've got your Sotho where the guy just speaks Sotho, so we are trying to integrate just a little bit more. We want to see if we can integrate before the university does, because they have got that problem at the moment."

The programme manager (PM) believed the challenges faced by the station were a microcosm of Bloemfontein and South Africa; hence, she also thinks the integration issue is critical, even though she is not sure how to address it. She ensured that there is diversity within her staff by employing, as she puts it, "black, white, Indian, Asian, female and male".

Language is a programming challenge because the ICASA language quotas were interpreted literally, which meant that programmes are divided according to language. All the prime-time programmes are in English and two morning programmes are multilingual, using Afrikaans and Sesotho. The prime slot programmes are:



- 6-9am – *The Sunny Side Up Breakfast*, presented in English and Afrikaans
- 9am-12pm -- *Brunch with Mr T*, presented in English and Sesotho
- 12-3pm – *Café 97*, presented in English
- 3-6pm – *The Vodacom 4-Wheel Drive Show*, presented in English

Kovsie management plans to use at least two languages in each programme, although the complexity remains. Different cultural groups sometimes have different music preferences. The station manager says, “Your Afrikaans-speaking person might like listening to Afrikaans songs in rock and pop and so on, whilst for an urban crowd you’ve got hip-hop, kwaito and all that comes into play. We want to combine them but we haven’t gotten a recipe for that – hopefully [we will] soon.”

Programmes were divided into speciality shows due to language and cultural differences. Melissa states, “Our speciality programme: we had a hip-hop show, I got rid of that; we have a rock show; a house music show, dance show; gospel music show, etc. I feel people should be able to tune into Kovsie FM at any time of the day and know what they are going to get, whereas now they can tune in and say ‘I don’t like this’ and not tune in ever again because they don’t like the hip-hop show...I’d rather have a general programme where everything is Top Forty.” Melissa felt that the station should not have programmes segmented according to language and special music preferences but listeners should be able to get programming

that appeals to all cultural and language groups, thus Top Forty, she felt was a general music format that could be enjoyed by all listeners.

For Melissa Top Forty was the music format to integrate different listeners’ music preferences and a product the station could use as a vehicle for branding: “We are going to have this unified product instead of ‘this show is a product’, and ‘this [other] show is a product’. We want Kovsie to just be this one standard product that everyone can use.” The product has to shape itself to the preferences of a culturally diverse market, while staying “young and funky”.

The proposed Top Forty format had its own shortcomings, in that it was compiled from various local and international music tracks. The PM and music resource manager must always know how much local versus international music is played to report to ICASA, so if the Top Forty is made up mainly of music tracks from South Africa, Bloemfontein and the surrounds then the license conditions were not a problem. The PM’s reason for choosing Top Forty as opposed to any other format is “we want that South African sound ...where you don’t really care that R&B and hip-hop is for the black market or for the white market, we say ‘everything is for everyone’ type of thing”. Although it was clear why Melissa wanted to use the Top Forty format in this way, the format had been used at the station before. She said: “Previously we didn’t play as much Top Forty music as we should have, we focused on genres...rock, hip-hop, and R&B and everything...we are trying to market the fact that



Top Forty is music for everyone. Hopefully...we can get the white listeners back.” Melissa thought that most of their programming appealed to urban black people and for this reason she wanted to have more ‘white listeners’.

Melissa explained the Top Forty format in the following manner:

*“A good example is 5FM: they have a Top Forty format. It’s 40 songs that are really popular now and are all on the charts and all the radio stations. The Top Forty also includes all the genres [music]. And also within the Top Forty format you can also take songs that were in the Top Forty last year...so those songs play on a lower rotation, they still come up and then you hear it and go ‘oh, I loved that song last year’. But the Top Forty now is on high rotation and that’s basically all you hear all the time.”*

Once implemented the Top Forty would be compiled by the music resource manager and Melissa - looking at trends from commercial radio stations. She said, “We look at all their charts and listen to what our listeners are telling us in dedications and the music they are asking for and combine the two, and that’s what makes our Top Forty.”

In her account of how they would go about compiling the Top Forty for the station she also touched on how listeners would be included in the process, through information received during dedication.

In terms of presenter competency a factor that impacts on programming quality, the station manager acknowledges that the training of presenters is

currently not adequate. Not much had changed from when he arrived at the station in 2007. He was trying to upgrade the training, he explained: “We are working on a training structure so that when new DJs come in we have a basic training [process]...to say that these are the type of things you don’t say on air, format that and get OFM to help us with the finer things that they know a little bit more about.” The station approached OFM, a commercial radio station in Bloemfontein, to offer their presenters workshops on on-air presenting skills.

For Melissa improving the quality of content meant putting emphasis on the conduct of presenters. Therefore, she discussed with the presenters that “they need to have a professional attitude”. If a presenter is still not professional, she follows up very strictly on disciplinary procedures and replaces the presenter. She regards the station as a business and a professional community radio station. It was difficult to ascertain how Melissa defined professionalism and what the proper disciplinary procedure was. During the research process the station manager indicated that Melissa was given some time to reconsider her role as a programme manager as there had been some challenges and difficulties. She was called in from her leave for the research interview.

In conclusion, Kopsie FM is plagued by a number of challenges such as lack of training of presenters and management. Staff turn-over is also high, with most of their on-air staff inexperienced students with little or no guidance from a long-standing staff member with

radio expertise and mentorship abilities. Students are also pressed for time between their studies and duties as radio employees. The station manager, the only full-time staff member, indicated there is a lack of finances to pay staff a stipend. Presenters conduct very little research during programme preparation and news preparation, and there is little engagement with real issues and listeners within the student community and the target community listeners in Bloemfontein. In terms of community participation and listeners' feedback the only response listeners received is when they sent an email to the station manager, who responded with a general statement of thanks, with no indication whether their comments would affect any change at the station. The station has no structured community participation method other than when listeners SMS, phone during dedications and log on to Facebook. Outside broadcasts take place around promotions and publicity.

### *Listeners' feedback from focus group discussions*

The next section is a brief account of discussions between the researcher and listeners of Kovsie FM, presented within some of the problem areas that arose.

Focus group discussions were conducted with the following listeners:

- 10 learners aged 16 to 18 from the Christian Brothers College (CBC), a combined girls' and boys' school.

- 12 University of the Free State (UOFS) students aged between 18 and 25
- Interviews with 10 young people aged between 23 and 29 from various townships in Bloemfontein working at a brick factory in Bloemfontein.

### *Language*

Most of the learners from CBC had no problem with the languages used on the station; although a few participants did point out that the articulation could be improved for both Afrikaans and Sotho-speaking presenters. They stated that the station was easy to listen to and they enjoyed it.

Some of the university students said a lot about the use of language and their comments are largely discussed in the programme topics section below. Nonetheless, some of the students also thought that the Afrikaans and African language speakers need to improve their use of English on-air. They suggested that the station should hire presenters who are able to speak more than one language fluently and can switch between those languages without difficulty. Other participants acknowledged that there are other listeners from outside the university campus who might not understand English, hence the need for presenters with good language skills.

### *Presenting Style*

A student participant had this to say about the manner in which presenters addressed their callers:

“When you get callers from outside, it’s like there is no formality in the way they [presenters] speak...Speak to your callers in a way that you would want them to speak back to you.”

The issue of integrating different languages in programmes became a heated debate where some participants in the group thought that using English as the medium of instruction would allow for more people speaking other African languages to listen to the radio station. It was clear that the debate here is an extension of issues of integration within the campus. One participant suggested that there needs to be space for discussing cultural diversity, as this was central to integration

*“I think what can actually work is, once a week...you can have a show where an English, Afrikaans and Sotho [speaking people] are in one show and they tackle issues like cultural diversity and make it fun. They can actually tackle debates on music...why do you listen to ‘Bokkie wat will jy hê’, what makes you an Afrikaner and what makes you black? How can we use it and become one? And that is what will help the university as a whole.”*

Other participants supported the idea on integrated programming and said it would promote more tolerance in their immediate environment. Some participants were of the view that different languages speakers were entitled to programming in their mother tongue. And other participants disagreed with this perspective and thought that it caused unnecessary divisions.

Another participant said: “I think most of the time we have to use the integrated language which is English, and sometimes there should be Afrikaans and there should be black [languages], it has to be like that so that people can express themselves fully. Sometimes it is good to communicate or interact in your own language so it will benefit everyone. You don’t have to be naïve and believe that you have to do things together: people need their own language at least only for an hour.”

Participants had different opinions about using English as a language for integrating different language speakers, with one participant saying that all language groups struggle with the English language, but most people can comprehend it. Another participant noted that when programmes are conducted in indigenous languages, particularly during the prime slots, they pose a barrier and listeners “switch off”.

The concept of integration also extended to cultural integration, because different language speakers had their own cultural practices including music preferences and issues they wanted discussed by the station. However, participants had no ideas as to how integration in terms of differing music tastes and topics could be accommodated within the prime slots.

It seemed that Kopsie FM has not addressed the matter of integration openly on air. The station has a role to play in this regard with the hope of promoting a spirit of conciliation and understanding of diversity existing within the student community. The station has another challenge and that is to determine how

they will deal with language as it related to the cultural diversity of their listeners and the language quotas prescribed by ICASA.

### *Programme Topics*

A participant from CBC suggested presenters discuss issues that are relevant to the day-to-day lives of teenagers with a focus on how to deal with life changes and challenges. Another participant concurred that although some programmes are relevant, others should focus more on current matters affecting school-going youth, such as “kids killing each other at school”. Other topics of interest suggested by this group of participants were subject guidance, career guidance and job opportunities, to help them with future choices. The programme format of discussing some issues with experts, as another participant observed, did not appeal to him: “We don’t want to listen to experts talking about something that doesn’t affect you, something you won’t try.” The listeners’ interests were mainly career guidance and work opportunities. Most of the participants agreed that discussions relevant to teenagers should be discussed by individuals their age, or the presenters “should put themselves in our shoes, what we experience”.

The university students were aware of the ‘speciality programmes’, according to the station and programme manager these programmes are divided along language and cultural differences. The students expressed their views picking up on issues of race and language difference. They stated that when they listen

to Kovesie FM it seemed that presenters have listener support based on the colour of their skin: “If it’s a black DJ, then it’s a black following, and if it’s a white DJ...”

When asked to comment on the programmes at the station they said that a large amount of kwaito music was played at the station. They enjoy the music, but they would prefer more variety. As one listener put it, “I can’t switch on Kovesie FM without listening to kwaito. Seriously, I am not like a big kwaito fan and I am the minority, but I still like to listen to some rock now and again.”

This participant wanted to know if the topics discussed at the station were screened before going on air, as some presenters sound as though they are not prepared for the programme and use their charisma as opposed to clearly structured programmes on specific issues. The participant noted, “I understand you are trying to get listeners, but there is a way of doing it and they [4-Wheel Drive Show presenters] sometimes constantly laugh. If this person has this type of approach, why should I take into consideration what he is saying? There was a specific topic they spoke about on the Olympics on condoms, how many condoms they were sponsored and it was ‘haha! Why are they using it’, and the Olympics is something huge in South Africa.”

The station’s reluctance to address political and current issues in and around campus was another heated debate. One participant stated: “I think there should be a programme that focuses on current serious stuff,

because I think one of the aims of the station should be to change people, to change or correct their perception. It doesn't only have to be fooling around and stuff, because we are prospective adults, each and all of us should learn from the radio station." The participant observed that the station focuses on entertainment and although the participant enjoyed that, they also wanted to engage in discussions and debates. Another participant added "I think that sometimes it is all right to be sarcastic about things but there has to be a point of seriousness. At the end of the day I need to be educated about the topic."

Some participants expected thought-provoking yet light debates presented by the station. One participant added, "I think new ideas not the same old...what do you think about abortion? But come about it in a different way." This participant thought asking people 'What do you think about abortion?' is a tired approach.

Some concerns that arose included the high percentage of music, the station plays a total of 60%. One person added that it annoyed them when presenters debated about songs. "In that time you could be taking more serious calls...but they say call in to choose which song is the best." Some participants agreed they enjoyed the music, however; they concurred that presenters should not concentrate on music tracks as a point of discussion, but use the music to create ambience and a break from the topic discussed during the programme.

Most of the programmes at Kovesie did not discuss

issues largely because the station was licensed as a music station according to the station manager, which meant that they could play 60% music and 40% talk. But it was interesting to note that the listeners wanted more issues discussed to balance the high percentage of music. Some participants thought that the station should incorporate some "serious" discussion during their daily prime slots. The programme with talk was the 9am-12pm programme called *Brunch with Mr T*, presented by Lebogang. *The 4-Wheel Drive Show* with Peter and Tshepiso mainly discussed entertainment programming. The programmes did not discuss serious issues except for awareness campaigns such as organ donor or cancer months.

Participants were also keen to have a current affairs programme, "They should speak about serious stuff you can engage yourself in...like this Mugabe stuff". Another participant argued, "Remember that we are students and what you are going to be thinking when you hear this, people will say 'it doesn't affect me'. So you must also think that it must be about students. You can't force it on a person to engage in a conversation they don't think has anything to do with them, so in a way you are going to be losing your listeners by forcing them to talk about Mugabe." This participant thought that people would call with sarcastic comments as opposed to engaging in constructive debate. "Listeners need to be educated to comment or engage and presenters should be able to deal with listeners when they go off the topic." This participant was commenting on the capability

of presenters to handle political and current issues on-air.

Other participants were not only concerned about the issue of national and international news and politics, but were also interested in the discussions about local issues and news within the university campus. The participant believed that discussing campus news and issues would help resolve some of the issues causing division amongst students.

In order to get views on what was happening on campus, a participant suggested:

*“On formal issues get someone to walk around campus or town asking a few questions. That is the best way; otherwise you might get the same people. They [presenters] are learning so they are probably not used to coming up with a whole bunch of different things [topics]...so a little bit of research to find out what the majority are thinking [or] maybe like a small group.*

A participant touched again on integration as it relates to sports and the selection of players from different races into teams. He stated, “One topic that I think will get people involved is a discussion on integration in sports. I think it happens on campus where people don’t want to play rugby because you are not going to get selected.” One participant opposed this idea: he thought that the issue of integration was overdone and discussions on how to culturally integrate students had not really been fruitful. The same participant argued that perhaps a term other than ‘integration’ could be used, the sports administrators could look specifically at the sports quota system

and whether it was working or not. The participant sounded uncomfortable with the fact that the issue of integration was increasingly becoming a racial issue. He stated, “Integration is a good thing, but make it more subtle so it’s not an issue anymore. Like the quota system make people understand that it is not such a big issue...subtly motivate people to get into different areas in university without them feeling it’s just because I am white or black.”

Some suggestions from the student group of participants included the station tackling discussions on entrepreneurship and related business matters. A participant stated they would like to listen to accomplished entrepreneurs and business people in order to learn and know where to go for the correct advice to establish a business: “I’d like to hear something on entrepreneurship, like business minded people, I think a business show can actually take people into the right places, but don’t bring someone who is a student...he is not there yet.”

### **News Content**

The school-going participants had a lengthy discussion about the relevance of Kovies’s news. Their discussion confirmed that they listened and that news is relevant to them. Those who did not like it had clearly listened to news broadcasts and were able to argue why they did not like them. Those who argued in favour of the news could also argue why hourly news broadcasts were significant.

News was a heated debate and some participants

stated:

*"It's on all the time, I mean, every hour there is news...I find they could have done something better... [people don't listen at] seven, half-past seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, it's news...it's pointless. I don't get why we have to do it every hour. At least three hours or two hours - not every single hour - there should be a slot for the news."*

Some of the participant's peers were very quick to respond to the comment by stating that "some people like the news" and that news needed to be repeated so that those who were not able to hear it at certain times could catch it later. The discussion went as far as the school-going learners arguing that "it's not the same news every single time...because...things happen every hour". They understood the difference between bulletins and headlines and that both were updated and at certain hours. Although the participant's peers could argue that the news is relevant, the other participant's point also related to refreshing the news and presenting different angles.

For the university students the main concern regarding the news related to articulation and pronunciation by newsreaders. A participant said, "The newsreaders, sometimes they struggle to read plain English, it almost seems like lack of preparation and respect for the listeners. It's like someone walks in and you just give him the paper to read the news, and you can hear them stumbling through it." Another participant added: "People are very specific on how you pronounce their names, especially African people; it is an

insult if you pronounce someone's name differently. If it is an African name, try and get someone African and say 'please help me to pronounce this'."

Certain things that listeners enjoyed about the news, as articulated by one of the participants, is that "they get small stories which are kind of interesting which other people at other radio stations don't have". Listeners enjoyed local stories that are not available on the national bulletins of commercial and public service radio stations. However, some participants highlighted the need for listeners to be tolerant because newsreaders are still learning: "They're still training anyway, so I don't have a problem and if they are struggling I know she is still trying to learn, so I have no issue with that."

### ***Listener participation and interaction***

The main concern for CBC learners with regards to interaction was the fact that their main contact with the station was through the telephone. They can contact the station only by calling or sending an SMS. The station is not within their immediate surrounding as it is located on the university campus. One participant said: "When you call in they just cut you off...no 'bye'; nothing." Another adds that "or if you call them they just cut you off...and that's your airtime, you know". A suggestion was made by the group that there should be more interaction with the radio station even in terms of news, because they could contribute to the news content by phoning in and giving presenters and journalists' story leads and



topical issues concerning their school environment.

The students from UOFS stated that they would like to see more student community involvement in the station in terms of the programme topics and also getting people on campus to comment during certain programmes. One person suggested that the station should also “spontaneously grab a bunch of people, bring them in and that’s the best way I can imagine you’re going to do it”.

A participant was concerned by the fact that when she referred a potential advertiser to the station, the person didn’t seem to get clear directions from the station as to who they should liaise with.

### *Licensing*

Licensing was an issue that station staff raised when attending the focus groups. The public relations manager in attendance at the focus groups explained to the participants the station’s limitations in terms of content including topics that are discussed, music and news schedules according to language preferences.

Kovsie faces a unique challenge of catering to the following markets within its broadcast radius:

- School-going Bloemfontein youth;
- Out of school and working young people in Bloemfontein
- UOFS students.

The programme manager explains that the station has to play 55% South African music, i.e. music that is produced, written and performed by South African artists this also includes interviews and live coverage

of South African musical events. “In terms of language we are 60% English, 20% Sotho and 20% Afrikaans.”

There is also a quota for news and community programmes geared at what is happening in the community.

### *Conclusion*

The learners knew the station quite well; they could refer to a number of programmes that they had listened to, presenters they were familiar with and incidents where programmes had a direct impact on their activities. The school-going learners listen to the radio in the morning when they are preparing for school, in the afternoons after school and they also listen over the weekend.

This is a good target market to tap into because they have easy access to the radio at home. If the station had the resources, a programme presented specifically by school-going young people could secure the school-going market and ensure that they are loyal in the future. The participants were not as exposed to some of the cultural and racial issues discussed by the university students, hence, a programme that could help them set their agenda and interact on their own terms could build a foundation for cultural and racial tolerance in future. The overriding idea throughout their group discussion was that they wanted programmes that are more practical, more relevant to their day-to-day needs and more futuristic in outlook, in that the discussions should inform some of the critical decisions they have



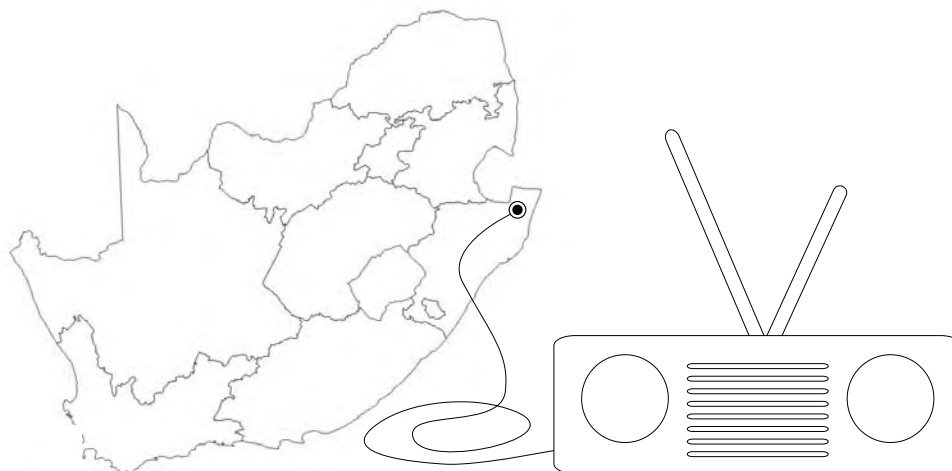
to make concerning their future.

The university students listen from time to time: some in the morning, those who have cars listen while they are driving and others listen late in the evening. Their listening patterns seemed more sporadic compared to the other groups of listeners. They are; however, articulate in terms of their programme needs, preferring to have a more integrated and inclusive radio station. How they defined this was that the topics and issues tackle what was taking place on campus. Kovsie was geared towards multiculturalism in programming as stated in their vision statement, aiming to be a “multicultural, vibrant station of professional quality”. However, the station was not yet living up to this vision. By avoiding cultural diversity and development issues the station was not creating a platform for debate for such issues to be resolved publicly. For example, a large number of their current programming is music and entertainment. There was no current affairs news programme to follow up on issues such as the Reitz hostel saga, the university’s own policy on integration, and coverage of the SRC elections.

Most participants were not sure about the identity of presenters, an indication that the station needed to do more in terms of marketing or visibility around campus and Bloemfontein. Presenters did not use to their advantage clear and distinct programme jingles played regularly to make sure listeners knew who they were.

Listener interaction is a problem, as the school-

going listeners clearly indicated. The phone and SMS system is not working sufficiently because the phones are not manned properly. The station manager also stated that most of the resources used for listener interaction are web-based, creating a barrier for those with no access to the internet. As indicated earlier, Kovsie is easily accessible to on-campus students, but during the researcher’s visit even they were not sure who to speak to about their concerns.



*"Good programmes help to attract advertisers."*

• Thulile Tembe, Programme Manager

## Case Study 2: Radio Maputaland

*"Qcama la ukhona/ Shine Where You Are"*

**Frequency: mcr107.6fm**

**SAARF RAMS: 116 000 (SAARF 2008/9)**

**Station Manager: Simon Ntsele**

Maputaland Community Radio station is located in the tropical highland of Jozini, north-east of KwaZulu-Natal, stretching as far as the border of Mozambique and Swaziland. "MCR was initiated by the Maputaland Youth Development Programme (MYDP) in 1994. The MYDP aimed to create after-school activities for youth and to locate training

opportunities for them"<sup>12</sup>. MCR has a staff of 30 with 25 members employed on a full-time basis. Broadcasting hours are seven days a week, 24 hours a day from Monday to Sunday. The broadcast radius covers Umkhanyakude District Municipality, which covers Umhlabuyalingana and Jozini local municipalities, local areas closest to the radio station. The medium of instruction in the area is isiZulu, spoken by the majority of the population. The population of Maputaland is sparsely distributed, which means one has to travel at least an hour to two hours to reach the next town. Closely located to Jozini Top Town, the home of Maputaland Community Radio are the following areas: Hluhluwe, Mbazwane, Mkuze, Pongola, Sodwana Bay and Kosi Bay.

Umkhanyakude is mainly rural and plagued by underdevelopment such as unemployment and lack of basic services.

*“Kwazulu-Natal has the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence in SA. A high incidence of TB (887 per 100 000 people) is currently being witnessed in the district, partly due to HIV/AIDS. The unemployment rate is 54% and more than half of households lack clean water and sanitation. Not surprisingly, uMkhanyakude is one of the areas which experience cholera outbreaks from time to time. The district is characterised by exceptionally committed healthcare service providers, although the shortage of doctors remains a concern. Health service provision is becoming harder as more and more nurses are leaving for jobs overseas, thus draining the already crippled human resources. Service provision in this district is facing challenges of previous backlogs, poverty, poor infrastructure, insufficient human resources and a high disease burden<sup>13</sup>.”*

### *Target community listeners*

The radio station broadcasts to a geographical area of over 100km. Some of the research participants in Hluhluwe had this to say about the radio station:

“We support Maputaland and love it and we wish that the heads [of the radio station] continue. If it were up to us, we would want the person who is in Durban to hear what is happening in rural areas.”

The presenters try to cater for the information needs of residents in Jozini and the surrounds, as opposed to making distinctions based on age and

gender. The lack of distinction doesn't mean that Thulile Tembe, the programme manager, is not aware of the varying information needs between young people and adults. She stated, “The youth obviously want youth programmes and youth music. On the other side, the older people want to know more about the government and their leaders.”

### *Value Statement*

- Honesty
- Transparency
- Commitment
- Accountability

### *Mission*

The station's mission statement is: “To empower communities in the North-Eastern Region of KwaZulu-Natal with relevant information / knowledge within and outside the region, for the emancipation of the disadvantaged social sectors of the community, so as to optimize such information / knowledge in order to improve the quality of life within the region thus contributing positively in the economy of South Africa and media diversity.”

## Research Participants

### Management Interviews

<i>Simon Ntsele</i>	Station Manager
<i>Thulile Tembe</i>	Programmes and Production Manager
<i>Sthembile Myeni</i>	News Editor
<i>Silence Khumalo</i>	Technical Manager

### Programme Interviews

<i>Buhlebuyeza Khumalo</i>	Producer and presenter of the programme Sekunjalo Sihamba Sonke from 3pm to 5:30pm.
<i>Nompumelelo Zwane</i>	Producer and presenter of the programme Hloma Ngolwazi from 9am to 12pm
<i>Nelisiwe Nhlenyama</i>	Producer and presenter of the programme Ezamatekisi from 12 to 3pm.

Focus group discussions were conducted with the following listeners:

- A group of 15 listeners from Hluhluwe with middle-aged women and men.
- Two focus groups were conducted in Mbazwane, one with a group of 8 young people and another with a group of middle-aged women and men.
- A small group of 4 women and men from Jozini.

## Staff Feedback

### Management

Programme manager (PM) Thulile explained that her responsibility was mainly managing the content produced by the presenters:

*“My work is to check that the presenters are doing their work properly. I must check that before they go into the studio what the programme script is like. Like today is June 16 [so] I must check if the presenter is covering issues of June 16. I must also check that our adverts are going well and the presenters are playing them as well as the PSAs. And then there are programmes from different departments, NGOs and CBOs and I have to do reports for them on their programmes. My department is linked to our production department, so I have to do scripts for adverts and edit them and then we produce it with the help of the presenter. Another thing is when we have an outside broadcast I go out with the presenters and we will broadcast wherever the marketing department has organised for the broadcast.”*

The PM focused closely on the content and its delivery and checked that presenters were prepared to present: “My job is to make sure that the quality of the programme is good, [and] that the presenter has a programme script. They can’t do a programme without the script. If the presenter has a script [s/he] knows every minute what [s/he] is supposed to do and say [on-air]. So when they [prepare] the scripts then I can check that the programme is good quality.” For the PM a script is a good tool to help presenters

organise their programme and prepare prior to delivery on-air.

“Good programmes help to attract advertisers”, Thulile adds: “Programmes are the number two contributor to the financial growth of the station. Local government departments buy slots: the health department, the department of agriculture and environmental affairs and the department of public works. The slots [vary] from 30 minutes to one hour. NGOs also buy slots, but the municipal departments buy the most programme slots. Public Service Announcements and advertising also contribute.” These programmes were produced by Thulile with assistance from the presenters.

The station had never undertaken research to gain insight into their listeners’ views on programmes. However, research undertaken by other stakeholders on the station’s listeners has allowed the station to get a good sense of some of the issues the listeners would like addressed.

*“The research that is done is maybe when a company wants to bring a programme into the community and then we will assist them. Like the Bank SETA, they came and asked us if we can organise people for focus groups. They wanted to know how people save their money, which banks do they use and where do they get loans, how far they travel to get a bank and so on. And then they came back with a feature: a drama to broadcast on the radio station. There are others from Workers World [Media Productions Company] who bring programmes. Their topics are different – sometimes*

*they deal with domestic workers, Eskom, xenophobia and so on. They once came as well to do research to see how many people listen to Workers World and how do the programmes help them and what other topics can they add that touch on this community.”*

The station has benefitted from the research conducted by its stakeholders, in that the companies gathered research information they later used to develop content that addressed social issues in the community, such as employment, and perceptions on xenophobia.

### **Programme Content**

Nompumelelo Zwane, known to her listeners as Mpume Zwane, is the producer and presenter for the programme ‘Hloma Ngolwazi’, meaning “empower yourself with knowledge”. Essentially, the programme aims to inform and educate listeners on health issues – advising on medication and herbal remedies. The second part of the programme is called “Woza Dado”, directed at children. The programme has an Open Learning Systems Education Trust (OLSET) feature called ‘English in Action’. In the third part of the programme called ‘Get Wise, Hlaganipha’ the presenter prepares a segment on general knowledge for the listeners, for example: “Just to let people know that it was Youth Day and this is what was happening in 1976,” Mpume said. The last segment of the 9-12pm slot is called ‘Asikhuleke ndawonye’ meaning ‘Let’s pray together’. Here listeners can phone in and share their daily challenges, or the presenter reads a letter sent by a listener. At the end of the programme Mpume urges

listeners to pray for themselves and to send their well wishes to those who have requested a prayer. The programme plays a variety of music chosen by the presenter to complement the tonal variations of the programme: “The music is local and mixed... Maybe two gospel [tracks], two maskandi, maybe reggae and then two African pop tracks, we try to limit [music] because time is short.”

The programme *Hloma Ngolwazi* has different sections within its format to cater for different age groups. Mpume had this to say about her target audience: “I can say youth and children. Sometimes we have programmes that are supported by women who I think are still young. I can say they are 15 – 30 years because the person that is 30 years is married [and] at home at that time. My programme runs from Monday to Friday, so the children are at school at that time.”

Immediately after presenting her programme, Mpume begins producing the following day’s edition. “I draft a programme script, or let me say a programme plan,” she said. The core structure of the programme stays the same, that is, the sections of *Hloma Ngolwazi* e.g. *Woza Dado*, *Get wise*, *Hlaganipha* and *Asikhuleke ndawonye*. However, she has to do her research on a daily basis to come up with new ideas and information to feed into each section except for *Woza Dado*, the OLSET programme ‘English in action’ which had a pre-recorded version daily. “Unfortunately, our internet is sometimes on and off, but then I try and get into the health websites. When the internet is not available, we buy the newspapers and use them

because most people in our area, in the rural homes, are not able to buy the newspaper so it becomes our responsibility that we pass on the knowledge and information to them.” She uses local newspapers such as *Isolezwe*, *Ilanga* and *Daily Sun* to gather her information. Once she has settled on a topic the next step is to call guests, especially from the local health department, who are her reliable resource.

The National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) sends important information on health and development campaigns and general information that the stations should pursue with their local health departments. “The NCRF sends to us information – you see that this week is World Environment, this week is Youth Day and so on... We photocopy [NCRF information] and give it to the manager from the health department and then she makes us something like a timetable so that I know that this week I will be working with [this person] and that week I will be working with [that person],” Mpume adds. The local health department is not her only source of information; she consults local traditional healers and elderly people who practises traditional rituals and medicine “*amasiko*” for a long time.

Mpume is informed by local, national and international events taking place such as the ones stated above when selecting her topic. She also uses her radio skills and knowledge of the area to observe what is happening in Maputaland. “I like to get young people who have made it, and they can explain how they got there. You find that young people lose hope, get

discouraged and believe that others didn't suffer to get up there."

She believes her topics are on point with the issues concerning youth particularly. An important indicator is the number of phone calls she receives daily, during and after her programme: "There isn't a time when I don't pick up a call... Most of our callers don't use cell phone numbers, they have a work number, [and] you can see that this person is really listening and is following your programme." Her assumption that listeners are calling from their work place is unfounded; nevertheless, the phone calls help to assure her that people are listening to the programme. For the most part, the calls are a source of interaction with listeners; Mpume's assumption was also that the volume of calls in general show that listeners are pleased with the programme content: "The calls that you get after the show encourage you, and you can see that I actually did something right - you may be called in by the head [station manager] and he will say, no, today you nailed it!"

During the topic selection process Mpume also consults with her programme manager: "I go to my programme manager and sit down with her. [I tell her] 'I was thinking since the show is like this, I was thinking of adding this', she will then analyse it and get back to me." Mpume emphasises the fact that the programme manager has to "really analyse, to analyse and analyse the fact that if she puts the programme in this and that manner, will it be okay?"

### *Programmes and Marketing*

Thulile is also one of the board members for the station and serves as a member of the Programme Review Committee (PRC). She said some of the challenges for the station include, "Some of our stakeholders don't have confidence in our community radio, and they don't listen to it. As a result they are not confident in it." She explained that their marketing strategies were geared toward changing this perception, particularly amongst local businesses.

"We are not completely happy with the coverage, because we find that in other places like Nongoma some people get it and others don't. So the technical problems make it very difficult, because we would like to have more listeners."

As the PM for the station Thulile is confident that the station is one of the best in the country and any further training and improvement would benefit the station. "Every year you have to review and do something better." Improving the station's content is a priority and a way of improving the financial position of the station and getting more listeners: "The more they [listeners] are satisfied, the more they will use the radio station and pay money for slots and programming they would like to run with us."

The marketing department undertakes satellite broadcasts with the help of Motswako Media. This means the station broadcasts its programmes via the Motswako Media satellite platform. "We go into their channel for that broadcast, but this is organised by the marketing department." Broadcasting on a satellite



platform has the potential to increase the station's listenership and this is attractive for advertisers.

### ***Listener Interaction and Research***

For the programme 'Hloma Ngolwazi' Mpume Zwane explained that she received feedback mainly by telephone and speaking directly to people in her community.

For the news, listener interaction is mainly through contact established by journalists with their sources in the community and the Newline, where community members can leave messages about story leads. Stringers based in the local areas are also able to get stories and interact with listeners concerning news stories broadcast at the station.

*"Our road shows help us link up with our listeners. Another thing is that we have a listeners' club; they started off as people [greeting] each other on-air, but now they are a formal group of people. They now have other projects, they have tents and other equipment they use when someone needs assistance [funerals and birthdays], so they are independent of the station, but they work together. They do projects working with agriculture or public works, making bricks and so on. They invite the station from time to time when they have special events; they call themselves isixaxa which means 'pulling together'. They have their own office close to the station because they have a lot of projects, so it is easy to get in touch with each other for joint projects."*

Isixaxa is a good example of listener participation

resulting in something constructive for the listeners.

The station's suggestion boxes are placed in various areas where the members of the listeners' club live allowing people who are unable to go directly to the station or call to submit their views. The feedback is then brought to the station and the attention of the Programme Review Committee who make decisions on programming.

The programme "Imibono Yabalaleli" 'Listeners' views' is where listeners give suggestions to the station and the PRC directly on-air. "A lot of people call into this programme and tell us what they need. If there is a programme where they feel they need more time, then they will express it," Thulile said.

All comments made by listeners using the various feedback systems are reviewed by the PRC: "When they [listeners] have made their comments they are recorded and sent to the PRC. So the PRC will listen to them and if there is something useful it will be adopted. Once the PRC has made a decision, uBabu Sikhosini, the head of the PRC, will go on-air and speak to the listeners." Thulile explains that sometimes people don't really understand the radio station and how it works: "They might make a suggestion that one presenter should move from this slot to that one, [and] it is very difficult to respond to those kinds of requests. So we have to explain how the radio works with the head of the PRC and the station manager on-air." Thulile added that the PRC uses its discretion to determine which suggestions are valid and need implementation.



### *News Content*

The News Editor Sthembile Myeni works with a team of five journalists and three stringers and ensures that the team meets its daily deadlines. Her team comprises journalists living in Jozini not far from the radio station, and stringers. Stringers are journalists stationed in various geographical locations within the broadcast radius, but further away from the radio station in Jozini. The team of five plus the editor start their day with a diary meeting, where according to Sthembile they; “Look at stories of the day, read newspapers – looking at newspapers to see which are the leading stories, which ones maybe we as a community radio can we make relevant to our listeners here at Umkhanyakude”.

The diary meeting is the most important meeting of the day with tasks allocated according to story and journalists’ interests. “If there is one amongst us who has a local issue that they wish to follow, it’s either he goes out personally or he uses the internal phone, depending on his sources.” The news team helps the journalist to formulate questions and decide on an angle for the issue. Other team members, Sthembile said, will go out in the morning for a certain story or event. The remaining team will read the news and prepare the headlines, the four news bulletins for the day and the daily current affairs programme called ‘*Ezivuthayo Zomhlaba*’. Sthembile said, “I am used to staying at the station so I will be responsible for news bulletins and other stories filed for the day, those gathered by stringers in their areas. They call us; we

get their stories and record them in our production studios, [and] edit them before they are broadcast.” News is read in isiZulu for all four news bulletins and headlines throughout the day.

The station uses the following news sources: “We work with families...government departments and organisations, NGOs, the police station and chiefs and kings – we are in an area where we are headed mostly by kings so we work a lot with them, so that is where we get our stories.”

Sthembile explained how difficult it is to be a journalist in her area, especially being young and a woman: “I find that I am not taken [seriously] as a professional in my work: people first look at the fact that you are woman, and say, hey, this is a child...The whole thing of being young and you are a woman and maybe you want to speak to the mayor... That is what we have been seeing now, being looked down upon; someone will say ‘I can’t talk to that smallish girl!’” She explained that it has been difficult to make her community understand the role of a journalist, as people thought that they were just trouble-making, nosy individuals. “They don’t take it like something that they should accept or what we should be doing [being a journalist].” Nevertheless, she is optimistic that the community is beginning to notice the value of journalists. Someone will hear a story on the radio that they have heard about through the grapevine, she explained, and said, “Oh this is how it happens!”, meaning the journalist has delivered on their promise to broadcast the news and not stir up rumours.

Sthembile said that previously they had a problem getting fresh stories from local people. This was resolved when management decided to buy a cellphone, which was used as a Newline for the news team: “People can call us and it is open 24 hours so they can let us know if something happens.” Listeners also send stories via SMS and others come personally to the station. The types of stories that the team regularly cover include:

- Crime stories, one story received national interest, “We were faced with stories such as hijackings. This place [Maputaland] became famous because we have a border that links us to other countries like Mozambique and Swaziland, so there were [hijacking] stories [and incidents] and the government had to intervene.”
- Family violence, “Violence that happens in families – some family fights start from drinking places. At times the people are not educated and they spend most of their time in the drinking place and they go home where the husband will pick a fight with the wife.”
- Abuse, “Child abuse – children raped by relatives is very common.”

She explained that child abuse stories are the hardest to follow with regards to approaching the victim and the family. “Talking to the victim is hard; you have to find the person who did it. When it’s a family member you find that for the family to tell the real story [is hard]... It is something that has been happening for a long period of time and the family has been hid-

ing it and buries it deep. Maybe the child was being raped by the uncle and they say ‘What can we do?’ and it continues to be buried.” Sthembile felt that it is especially hard for the journalist because they have to continue with the story and not keep the secret even when the family is reluctant to come forward with any information to the media because of shame, denial and at times, guilt.

One of their major stories was the hijacking exposé on cars taken over the border of Mozambique mentioned above. The story was broadcast by national media. Maputaland journalists obtained access to the victims of the car hijacking who then related the events of how their cars were stolen. The journalist pursued the case until the number of hijackings began to drop in the Ngwanasi area.

An hour-long news current affairs programme from 5.30-6.30pm is packaged, with in-depth stories selected from news that made the day’s headlines: “We have hard [news] stories from our reporters, where the reporter narrates; he then puts clips that are relevant to the issue.” Sports news is included during the programme for no longer than five minutes. The first 30 minutes is general news – local, national and international – and thereafter for the next 30 minutes the reporter focuses on the topical local stories.

Sthembile said their biggest challenge is resources: “We don’t have transport. The station has one car that all the departments use, and we fight over it, so it is a little difficult. We only have three stringers; they usually drop out because most of them want to get paid.

We don't have money, but we hope as time goes on we will be able to give them something for the stories they contribute."

### *Listeners' feedback from focus group discussions*

Focus group discussions were conducted with the following listeners:

- A group of 15 listeners from Hluhluwe with middle-aged women and men.
- Two focus groups were conducted in Mbazwane, one with a group of 8 young people and another with a group of middle aged women and men.
- A small group of 4 women and men from Jozini.

### *Language*

Research participants said the station uses isiZulu, the dominant medium of instruction in Umkhanyakude, an advantage to the residents of the area. One participant pointed out that some presenters do not articulate isiZulu accurately, taking English words and turning them into isiZulu such as *"ambhethi"* (batteries) in adverts. "You find that they use a language like...you would think it's a Thonga station...they shouldn't use it, but use this local language, the language we are used to."

In Hluhluwe, participants preferred programmes presented in isiZulu, as "we don't like the English". This was in reference to presenters who sometimes mix English and isiZulu. One participant was very passionate about the issue of language and said:

*"It makes us happy to hear you use a language [English] that is understood by everyone...other nationalities. But since we are here [rural area] as women and you start talking in English, which Boers are you talking to? I am just a black person! That thing kills us when we learn language. We must know that when we are talking to women or just your community, we mustn't address them in English; it seems we look down upon our own language [isiZulu]. We believe that the true language is the one from other nations [European] yet they have never learnt ours 'a ba gaze basishebe'. [They don't learn our language]. It's better if they also suffer to learn isiZulu. If there is a person who is said to be a minister or presenter, its better if they are broadcasting, they should talk and broadcast in isiZulu."*

### *Presenting Style*

The focus group participants in Jozini agreed that they enjoyed the way presenters speak. However, a comment was made by one of the participants about jokes that have the potential to offend elderly people "There are other jokes that are not okay. I know we need to laugh and some people like those kinds of jokes... We need proper jokes, not joking about the pastor." The speaker acknowledged the need for humour and the fact that other listeners enjoyed it; however, she thought that presenters should be sensitive. Thulile pointed out that some jokes were actually jingles and meant to be comical, however, another participant added that at times the jingles were un-

clear and incoherent, and that some jingles should be updated.

Technical problems were again mentioned as detracting from the quality of the sound: “What they can do is to ... raise the standard of recording when a presenter has been taped and recorded somewhere. You find that they are talking over the phone and there is noise, confusion where he/she is, it ends up with us listeners not being able to hear well what this person meant to say at the end of the line.” The participant thought that perhaps the person should be advised on time to check their surrounds for noises that could affect broadcasting. It is well worth noting that the station does experience technical interruptions to its broadcast mainly due to its geographical location; however, these are difficulties that are rectified from time to time by the technical manager, Silence Khumalo.

A participant suggested that guests from other neighbouring areas should be given less time on-air to share their experiences, as he would prefer to hear more local stories, “Like there was a person from Durban who had come to speak and one from the township [Jozini] who can tell us about the life they live in the location... We are asking that they shorten the time they spend talking with a person ... from far way.”

Some participants from Hluhluwe were concerned about not being able to get information on activities at the station, such as the hiring of new presenters. “If there is going to be a person who will be hired to be-

come the new presenter...can [the station] put posters in the whole of Umkhanyakude?” asked a participant.

The programme manager explained how the station announced new positions and this was also the way she found out about job vacancies before joining Maputaland as a presenter:

*“I also wished to be a presenter at Maputaland. I know that there are a lot of us youth who wish to come and work at the community radio station, but at times it happens like this: It’s advertised... especially when a presenter is needed. There are different departments. There is marketing, there is programming and there is production, there is news, finance and admin. It’s advertised when a person is needed in that department. It’s put on the radio. If you don’t listen to Maputaland there is no other place [we] can advertise...we can’t put costs [up] by putting it in the municipality or eLangeni or something. If you are not listening then you won’t hear until there is a new person... I also heard about my job when I tuned in that, oh, they needed three people.”*

### **Programme topics**

A participant in her late-40s thought that programmes that involve government departments and health matters such as HIV and Aids should be broadcast or re-broadcast at night. She said, “Some programmes should shift, especially those that talk about Ministers or if the Mayor had been talking.” The reason is that some people may not have access to radios during the day at work.

Thulile pointed out that most programmes with government officials as guests are aired during the day because municipal officials were available during office hours to attend interviews. However, she suggested that the station record the discussion and replay it in the evening. In addition, a listener said that they sometimes heard from other radio listeners that Umkhanyakude municipal officials were giving crucial information at urban-based stations about Umkhanyakude: “It’s like you hear from someone else that your Mayor has been saying this.”

One of the reasons this happens is that municipal officials believe that community radio is of “low quality” said Thulile. An official would rather pay a high rate for an announcement, advert or a slot charged by a public service station than the rates charged at a community radio station. This means that the information broadcast at the bigger stations might not filter down to the targeted community. A participant termed the situation “underminesation”, meaning the municipal officials are undermining the potential of the radio station to reach local listeners and to produce good quality programmes. The participant added that when a resident of Umkhanyakude phones uKhozi FM chances are that they will not get the desired response on the other end, which for him indicates that the radio station is mainly available to people living in the urban areas of KwaZulu-Natal.

An incident that came up for discussion was when the station approached the local municipality to join a discussion forum or to speak to listeners about topical

developments. The municipal officials refused and said they do not have the “authority” to do so. Instead, the station was advised to approach the headquarters in Pietermaritzburg over 300km away from Jozini for comments and interviews on topical issues. The PM explained that the behaviour of deflecting issues was common with social development and home affairs departments. Furthermore, the PM explained that once an approval letter from Pietermaritzburg was obtained, the department concerned will still hesitate. However, other departments such as agriculture were more approachable. One of the listeners said he found programmes featuring the local agriculture department useful, although the time of broadcast was not convenient for farmers who were in their fields working during the day. The same participant felt the station should cover the issue of water shortage for farming in their programmes with the agriculture department.

The participants agreed that the station was doing well in producing programmes aimed at uplifting and giving youth advice. However, they requested that the station arrange for local people who have experienced hardships such as alcohol abuse and drug addiction to speak to the youth of Umkhanyakude, as “there ought to be a person who can come and motivate our youth”.

Another participant asked if it was possible for the station to publish information booklets on some of the programmes, particularly those that deal with empowering women on agricultural matters. The participant felt it is an important area that will help

women in future: “We can raise our children, educate them so that we build the nation and not die of hunger... We need seeds in situations like these [tough economic times].” A male participant supported the previous speaker by adding that the station should add more female presenters to give confidence to other women in the community.

One of the participants suggested that the station should look into the businesses they sell ads to. “They shouldn’t say that the salon is good... When I get to the salon I find that it is dirty – the floor is dirty and there is hair all over, you see, things like that should not be advertised on air.”

A number of participants were concerned about the price charged by the station for announcements. In addressing this, the PM explained the type of announcement that people usually request, the submission procedure and price negotiation. It was interesting to note also that the station charged for public service announcements.

*“There is an announcement ... that says I was riding in a taxi; I forgot my bag or someone got off with my bag. That kind of announcement will cost R3.50. Then you explain that the taxi I was travelling in was from Hlululuwe or from EMpangeni to Hlululuwe or was from Hlululuwe to Mbazwane. The taxi was like this and that. Then you can explain and clarify that you want it played maybe three times a day for how many days. The person from the reception will then explain to you that since you want it to be played three times, it’s R300 for those three days, but we also say that it*

*is a community radio [and] working together for the community. Then we say, well, this is a person from the community, we ask you how much you think you can afford. Then you can say if you were supposed to pay R100 [but] I only have R50, we can talk. Now on the issue of if you are far [away] what do you do? We would then tell you that you write your announcement, we give you a fax number and the account number. You can then deposit the money at FNB, then you take the bank slip, you photocopy it together with the announcement, then you can fax it to us.”*

The process sounded daunting for listeners who live at least 50km from the nearest town, as it means they not only have to pay for an announcement, but first they must have taxi fare to get to town, find a bank and an internet café or phone shop to fax the deposit slip. Nevertheless, after a debate about the implications of the process outlined above, participants suggested that the station should have postcards that can be sold, say, at R10 or slightly more, depending on the number of times one needed the announcement broadcast. Buying the postcard means the listener has already paid for the announcement and cut the trip to the bank. It also means that a postcard can be kept at home and use it when necessary by faxing at the nearest Community Centre. Another participant suggested that perhaps an SMS could also be used for this and payment processed immediately on the receipt of the message by the station – here the details seemed slightly more complicated and needed time to resolve. Announcements are important for Maputaland listen-

ers, because they impart information about activities and events in the area, which they would not receive anywhere else, especially when distance and access to other information resources such as a newspaper is also a problem.

One listener appealed to the PM not to charge listeners for announcements on missing persons. The PM suggested that during the programme '*Hlobo edukileyo*' (Missing relatives) people should phone in and talk about their missing relatives. Although the station's reach was limited, in terms of broadcast radius, "maybe there is a person who heard of her or saw her in Johannesburg" and could come forward with some information, said the PM.

Other comments made by participants are: The station played a variety of religious music from the Zionist, Nazareth and Charismatic Churches. One listener said that "at times I don't go to church, but if you play gospel music...in the end I feel like someone who went to church". Listeners had different views about the issue of gospel music, each arguing for more music representing their religious denomination. A participant said, "They play a lot [of gospel music], but if we are singing God's music we have to be humble... There is a point where they sing as if they are possessed by spirits."

Someone else suggested that different music tastes should be catered for in various music slots so that people could have their music preferences met.

For the programme "*Yazi invelaphi yakho* and *Gcina isiko lakho*" (Know your roots and preserve your cul-

ture) participants suggested that the station should get a historian to come and talk about the names given to different clans in the broadcast area, Umkhanyakude. "We have someone from Mbazwane who speaks about Mbazwane and tells the history of how the people there originated the history of Nibela [Hluhluwe] and so on."

For the youth segment on "*Sekunjalo Sihamba Sonke*" (It's time to travel together) they could discuss how youth could start and develop businesses.

Another participant suggested that the station should continue to ask people for their views about programming because their needs are constantly changing.

The issue of youth and alcohol abuse was mentioned several times, as well as the need for nation building, talks and debates about issues relevant to the community.

### **News Content**

Participants from both focus groups enjoyed listening to the news and found it informative and relevant, particularly as news is made up of local events and issues.

*"We find stories that happen within Umkhanyakude."*

*"We hear in other countries how they live and work."*

Here a participant was referring to international news.

*"In the morning there is news that is local and the other news is from outside our area. At times... it helps us in that we know and are updated about things happening in our area because you find that there is*



*something happening at Phongolo [nearby town]...this and that..."*

*"You get information easier through the news that happens here in our area especially the weather service here. It's the one I like the most because you know that at a certain place today there will be mist. In our area you see that it's not the same. There is the highland and the lowlands and you find that there is fog. Drivers then know that at a certain place there will be fog, they must do that and things should be right."*

*"[It is useful when...] a person is saying some speech they have already summarised for people who cannot read."*

One participant thought that news needed to be refreshed more regularly, especially local stories:

*"It's read at 7, it's headlines, and then around past 7... let's get something else maybe ...let's not have it three times, they should add other news so that the community can be updated... or maybe after two hours...we can get other stories."*

*"You hear a lot of stories from outside, but you don't hear those of the community ...like this person who was stabbed at the tavern, I didn't hear that...I don't know if they do those or they use the internet, they don't go out for stories anymore."*

*"Make sure that we don't hear about one topic [only, but also] ... hear new topics."*

Research participants from Huhluwe stated that they were not satisfied with the news: "I have never seen even one person coming and saying that they are a stringer from here." The PM explained that resources were scarce and this impacts on the deployment and movements of stringers. Some participants wanted news to be refreshed more frequently. Others felt that because they are able to listen to the radio in the evening only, it would be useful if the radio station repeats news broadcast earlier in the day. It was agreed that the news should be more in-depth in terms of covering local stories and contextualising national stories and their impact on local issues.

Again, technical challenges to transmission were cited as a problem during news broadcasts, especially with field broadcasts. A participant says: "Talking on air with that person ends up with the information not being transmitted well. Even in news it is sometimes as Sitheni [research participant] said, you find that you cannot hear properly because of that confusion [background noise]... Another thing is that sometimes you couldn't hear the radio well [because of faulty transmission]."

Some participants from Hluhluwe asked how they can go about sending news to the station from their local communities, especially given their two-hour distance from the radio station. Thulile made them aware that the station has a Newsline open 24 hours a day for listeners to leave any news-related information:

*"If you can, you leave a message, and you say please call me back, there is a story in a certain area, that's*



*what it means, then maybe it can cost you 20 cents or 50 cents."*

Sthembile indicated the challenge lack of resources posed: "The problem is that we have one car and we don't have a lot of resources to take us to a lot of places. If you then call us we then know that at Jobe there is a stringer called so-and-so, and we call him or her to go and record the story and then the story can come out."

### ***Listener participation and interaction***

Listeners prefer to walk-in and leave their suggestions and feedback at the station. A suggestion box stays prominently displayed at reception where listeners insert comments and feedback. Some listeners also seemed aware of how the station operated and had a close relationship with the presenters and its management. Most focus group participants said that the station brought access to information, especially information that is about the community, through regular announcements of activities and events:

*"You see things that are related to the community... adverts that there is a certain store...and this store has better prices this month. And that there are colleges open at Mthathshana Metro with these courses or those courses. The community can find all this out – those that don't have money and cannot afford to learn far away; they know that there is a school here in our area and when the courses will start."*

A participant discussed the listeners' club *isixaxa*, which started a financial support scheme. As

mentioned earlier the listeners' club started spontaneously as a result of listeners greeting one another and sharing experiences over the radio. "You see this station...it has caused awareness among many people. It has eased our poverty...because of *isixaxa*." Participants explain that the security offered by the financial support scheme was better than things like "Metropolitan [life cover] or what-what..."

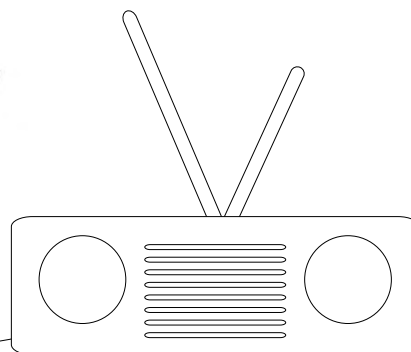
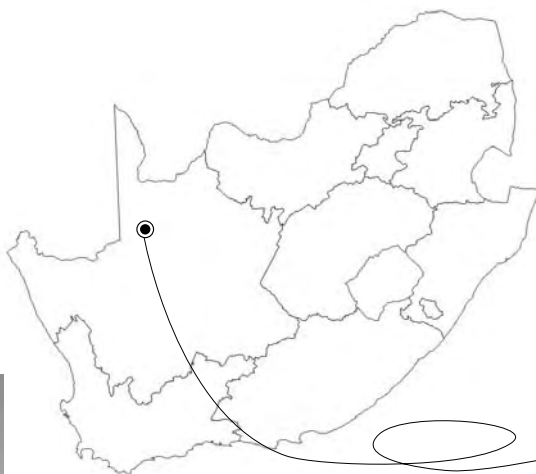
*"Isixaxa was formed when people started calling each other here at Maputaland, let's say around 10 and 12 at night. They used to call each other nicknames like 'umhlane we dada' (duck's back), or 'nkunzi'edla yodwa' (a bull that eats alone), 'ntoya bantu' (people's thing), you see. At night they would call each other... and in the end they found a way to put in place a form of society where if someone dies, they would be able to help each other. Even if they were the poorest of the poorest and you find that your poorness would not be noticed. They [members] contribute money and let the other branches know. So you see, it continued and merged to become a huge society. Because now you know if there is a funeral there, you will see the tent and you can see what they are doing has a greater purpose. What I can say is that Maputaland has played a pivotal role by having *isixaxa* we no longer see the poverty of people...and the money that they contribute when someone has lost a relative...is more than insurance. If you had joined insurance, you wouldn't have gotten it plus the things that they bring. You see what it builds in the community...it is building love and it is making people have this picture of our station*

*that it is of high standards."*

Another participant said: "It's not only funerals, but it is christenings and weddings too." The participants appreciated the range of support services offered by the *isixaxa* financial support scheme, and the fact that it alleviated the effects of poverty by helping them during rite-of-passage events and difficult times. "You find that someone loses a relative and they are all alone and they don't have family, but you know when you look around, you find that you are covered as if you have family. What I like the most in Esixaxeni [the same as *isixaxa*] is that there is no-one who looks at who you are, where you are from," added another participant.

Said another participant: "I want to say the heads or the founders of Maputaland should really be proud of themselves because I think that there are many things which have been fixed [in the community]. When we look we know that they are an example...Maputaland has reversed bad things...because they are discussed at Maputaland ... people are exposed and don't continue with them."

Because of the positive feedback from the different research participants, another participant had this to say: "I could not listen to it. [In the past] I would only listen if they say that there is something that is going to be relevant to me. So now [after listening to the other participants] I think I will let Ukhozi go and listen to Maputaland."



*"Coming up with fresh new ideas and [broadcasting] quality programmes is one of our biggest challenges."*

### Case Study 3: Radio Riverside

*"The independent Voice of the Rivercity"*

**Frequency: 98.2fm**

**SAARF RAMS: 81 000 - 25 000 (SAARF 2008/9)**

**Station Manager: Thabang Pusoyabone**

Radio Riverside a community radio station on air since October 1999. The initiative to start the station began in 1997, but the vision was realised three years later. The radio station is a category C licence, which means that they must provide for their own transmitters and antennas for broadcast. The station broadcasts within a 100km radius in the Khara Hais District Municipality covering Upington, Keismoes,

Groblerstroom, Kakamas and the surrounds. At the time of the research, the station was in discussion with key stakeholders - the community, the Board of Directors and ICASA - concerning the increase of its broadcast radius to reach the whole of the Siyanda region.

A challenge for the station is that the studio and production office are housed with the local fire brigade, while the office space housing the news team, marketing, station manager and all the office resources is a rented house in town. So effectively the station operates from two separate buildings, which necessitates the on-air team to commute 2km hourly in between programmes on a daily basis. It is especially demanding given the limited resources the station

has. As a category C licence they have to replace their own transmission equipment as well. Their antennas have been struck by lightning twice and at the time of the research their broadcast radius was reduced because of the incident.

*Target community listener*

The station manager (SM), Thabang Pusoyabone said: “We tend [to cater] for our youngsters, our teenagers, the youth and for our grown-ups, women and youth, we have programmes focusing specifically on youth. Our target market is our community consisting of all the age and language groups that are out there in our broadcast area.” So the station produces programmes that address issues faced by listeners within the broadcast radius.

Input from research participants in the focus groups was generally positive, as people were explicit about their support for the station. Participants expressed appreciation, with a typical remark being: “It looks promising; one of these days you [Radio Riverside] are going to compete with SAfm.”

The station has grown from when it used to broadcast during the day only, until 2008 when it became a 24-hour radio station broadcasting daily.

*Vision*

The station’s Strategic Considerations and Workplan states that the vision is to be:

*“[O]ne of the best community radio stations in the country, a radio station that community members go*

*to and rely for information on local issues. The vision is to be a radio station that is managed well, it has well trained staff, and generates an income level which is sufficiently high to pay staff a living wage and meet all other operational costs. With skilled staff and good quality equipment, the radio station has the capacity to produce and flight good programs.”*

*Mission*

The Strategic Considerations and Workplan document says its mission is to:

*“Provide information on community issues and a forum where all the people living in Khara Hais District municipality can interact and discuss issues relevant to them without fear or prejudice, an instrument where social and cultural values of the communities of Khara Hais are promoted and passed between generations and a place where young people are given an opportunity to learn and develop.”*

*Research Participants*

*Management Interviews*

Thabang Pusoyabone	Station Manager
Blanche Claasen	Programme Manager
Tebogo Monyo	Marketing Manager
Lebogang Mokhwae	Technical Assistance

### Programme Interviews

<i>Barry and Queen</i>	Producers and presenters of the <i>Big Breakfast Show</i> from 6-9am
<i>Cameron and Rene</i>	Producers, presenters and news-readers for the <i>Vodacom Road 3 to 6</i> from 3-6pm
<i>Rosita</i>	Producer and presenter for <i>Spreekbeurt</i> in partnership with the Aids Foundation of South Africa from 1-2pm
<i>Cameron</i>	Producer and host of the <i>Hot Seat</i> from 8-10pm

### Focus Group Discussions

- Paballelo – a group of 10 men in their late twenties to early 40s.
- Rosedale – a group of 8 young women in their late teens to late twenties.
- Louisvale – a group of 12 young men and women in their teens and early twenties.

### Staff Feedback

#### Management

Thabang Pusoyabone took on the station management role in 2004. In his tenure he has worked as the news reader, then presenter, a technical manager, marketing manager, programme manager and finally promoted to the station manager position. He says, “I have travelled through the ranks.” In 2008 the station developed a 2013 vision, which, Thabang says,

“Clearly states how we intend to grow the station to make it more accessible to the community and to extend our reach to include other areas which are within the same district municipality”. The strategy focusses mainly on proper management of the station and its resources.

Managing talent is one of the programme manager’s problematic areas. “Powerful presenters or presenters with good radio personalities become popular with the community and develop an ego. They don’t adhere to the policies of the station, they don’t follow the structure of the programme, and they play music all the time, partying and taking dedications – which is not what we want to achieve: we want educational programmes,” said Thabang. Disciplining presenters for insubordinate behaviour is equally difficult because “presenters build a network of community support; although the presenter is not delivering according to the standards of the station, the community just supports that person”. Eventually, it happened once that when management decided to release the presenter from their duty, there was uproar from the listeners in the community.

On the other hand, the programme manager (PM) has a number of demanding daily roles. Blanche Claasen recently took over as programme manager and at the time of the research she had worked for only just over five months at her post. She described her duties thus:

- “I have to oversee everything that goes on-air – every programme, music, everything...I

have to see to the presenters' needs and the programmes."

- "Formulate and develop content and see that the listeners' needs are met."
- "There are things like reports that need to be sent to ICASA; for instance, the departments [government] need updates with their contracts."

Blanche believed that training was paramount to improve the standard of presentation on-air. She says, "Two of our journalists went on a workshop recently – both of them are presenters as well. When they got back, they were full of enthusiasm and new ideas. It was so good because our news was automatically better." She pointed out that journalists should receive more training on how to structure and format their programmes. Another form of training which she believes would be beneficial is voice-over training, as long as the presenters don't "lose their natural accents". She emphasised that their accents are important because they speak in manner listeners relate to. "It's their own identity, but they should know how to present to their fullest [potential]."

Her style of managing presenters is that she advised them during one-on-one sessions and conducts a monthly meeting where "we get together as presenters and talk about grievances, complaints and programmes". Presenters produced their own programmes, as the PM explained: "All our news readers are our journalists. We don't get journalists to get news for the news reader; they have to do those themselves and all our news readers are presenters as

well." The journalists fulfil their duties of obtaining stories, producing programmes, presenting the programmes and reading news for their programmes and for other presenters.

As a result of heavy multi-tasking, the journalists sometimes get most of their stories from the *Gemsbok* (regional newspaper in the Northern Cape) and the internet, as explained by some of the journalists during the interviews. Some focus group participants also raised their concern about how journalists obtained news. The participants from Rosedale and Paballelo were concerned the newsreaders often read news from the *Gemsbok* and that the news items were several days out of date. One participant said: "Some of us have already read that." More comments on the news are discussed later in the listeners' feedback section.

The PM felt that the programmes' team manages to fulfil their multifaceted roles. "I must congratulate them because they start at 8am, but our first news reading is at 10am. The Afrikaans and English [news-readers] arrive at that time and they still have to translate the news before going on air. The English guys would know that I have to take the Afrikaans and translate it, the Xhosa and Tswana would also have to translate that." The programmes' team work hard, which is a concern for the PM because of their meagre remuneration.

Remuneration could cause good presenters to migrate to other, better-paying community, commercial and public radio stations: "We had a DJ who'd been with the station for quite some time: he was grabbed

up by a station in KZN [KwaZulu-Natal]. For me it is good, he started here and made the best of it, we helped him and if there is a better opportunity for him we won't hold him down. We would like to see him go further and reach his fullest potential."

### *Listener Interaction and Research*

Blanche said that listeners have the option of phoning the station to give feedback on programmes; some people prefer to walk to the station and speak to the presenters. Most listeners send a dedication on the *Big Breakfast Show*, including comments about issues in their environment that bother them. On Sunday they send funeral announcements. The station also opens up lines when "burning issues are being addressed", particularly on a current affairs programme called the *Hot Seat*. The PM wants to develop a specific system to make it easier for listeners to interact with the station, mostly for feedback and suggestions, because she is in the office most of the time and feels out of touch with the community.

The station has a listeners' association that started as a result of the programme *Spreukbeurt* in partnership with the Aids Foundation South Africa programme (AFSA). The programme was initiated by a group of listeners who went "out into the communities, doing their research to input into the programme". The AFSA group asked their own communities what issues pertaining to HIV and Aids were critical and needed to be discussed on the radio. Through their interaction they became liaison officers

representing their communities, so for each of the ten members there are more individual links in the community. The PM explains, "Just this week we had a workshop compiling or developing a work plan on how to go about getting the best impact and reaching our objectives [for the programme *Spreukbeurt*]." The fact that the *Spreukbeurt* has links with the community through representatives of the listeners' club, liaising with the listeners in their location on issues that addresses concerns surrounding HIV and Aids, it gives the programme a platform for interacting with the listeners in the community. The programme structure (links with the listeners' club and target community listeners) is effective according to Blanche, because more locals are involved in the content development.

The PM could use the AFSA group and extend their mandate or include questions to gather responses from the community on other programmes during their regular meetings and their fact-finding missions in the community. However, the process would have to be well-structured, working on a programme-by-programme basis.

The listeners' association is a group of listeners from the various locations within the station's broadcast area. However, for Blanche the Board of Directors also constitute the listeners' club. She says, "They are kind of a listeners' association because they also listen and give guidance or comments on programming." It is unlikely that the Board of Directors could function as a listeners' association;



rather, some members are mandated to serve on the Programme Review Committee. A listeners' association is made up of ordinary listeners in the community, so board members serving as a listeners' association could be construed as biased.

The station had no programme review process and relied on the board's decision on programme input and changes. The PM says, "I have to take it to the board first, have their input on it, and motivate why I want to do it." The board has various committees, including financial and programming, and Blanche uses this line of authority to get approval on programming decisions. The Board met every three months, and if there are urgent programming matters Blanche needs to attend to it was easy to reach the board members. To take a programme suggestion to the board Blanche has to send it through to the station manager and then he would pass them on the board for final decision making.

On the other hand, Thabang the Station Manager (SM) says, "Although we have not gone out much to ask people for input on how our programmes should be shaped due to a lack of resources, we currently have a programme that goes on the first Monday of each month which we call the *Radio Riverside Open Forum*. It is where the board of the radio station goes on-air with at least one manager – in most cases it is the station manager – to speak about the radio station." On the *Open Forum* platform, listeners phone in and make suggestions about the direction of programmes at the station. The SM complained

that listeners don't understand the concept of giving programme feedback. Instead, they use the platform to report other activities such as "suspicious activity going on with the station's transport". Listeners will also complain about the departure of a presenter they liked instead of thinking about shaping the content. The SM also explained, "We might decide at a board meeting to have a change of programmes, but this might be different from what the community wants to hear and these are the issues that the communities must participate in."

The station uses other ways to get the community involved in the station's activities, including the following projects:

- "We had a winter project where we invited the community to donate blankets. One of the people who were distributing those blankets was the mayor who went around with us. That project was concluded end of May 2008."
- "We have a workers' tournament: workers don't have much time to engage in sports so we started a workers' sport where different institutions play soccer and netball. We had a tournament this year in which 42 businesses participated, including government departments."
- "We are currently busy with Miss Radio Riverside."
- "We have the kids' Christmas Drive. Before Christmas Day we give needy children clothes, toys and so on - it is again the community that pledges."



- “We had a project this year [2008] where we gave street children food.”

The station finalises all their social outreach and income generation projects at the strategic planning meeting at the beginning of each year. Some of the station’s presenters are also coordinators involved in social outreach projects and projects aimed at raising funds for the station.

### *Programme Content*

The PM stated that the vision for programming is “to empower, inform and to educate. Whenever we decide on programmes we look at that – will we be empowering our people?”

Programmes are designed to cater for the various age, language, religious, race and cultural groups that constitute the community of Upington. “We have an isiXhosa programme called ‘*Isicamto*’ which is focused on tradition and culture, we have a kid-dies’ programme for children and toddlers, then our afternoon drive for the youth, music on Saturdays for our older generation, Top 40 on Saturday morning keeping the youngsters up to date with the music, a reggae programme for the Rastafarians and we have a programme called *Nama stap* and *Langarm* music on a Saturday evening and that is one of our most liked programmes.” said Blanche. Programme diversity is very important and she believed that in this way the station was inclusive of the diversity existing within the community.

Most of the programmes that focus on development

issues such as health and social services are called “paid-for programming” because the local municipal departments pay for the content. “We have programmes that are paid, like those on health issues – on a weekly basis we give tips and discuss a certain disease. We get a professional in the studio to go through it with the presenter and discuss. The paid-for programmes have their own topics and our local municipality has programmes telling the community listeners about their services and what is happening with councillors.”

Working with presenters, the PM has developed topics for the station’s programmes on taxis and rising petrol prices, child pornography, and giving people with criminal records a second chance. Human rights activists and those who had been in exile during the apartheid years also gave their perspective on xenophobic attacks.

The response to the latter topic was unexpected, Blanche explained: “We had our callers phone in and say we have changed our point of view, they’ve never thought about it because it is always ‘oh no, not the foreigners’, but now they do realise that [the foreigners are] our brothers and sisters. If you go back to those apartheid years, our people had to go to [the foreign] countries and they were accepted there, so we [the programme] had positive comments [from listeners].”

She noted: “Coming up with fresh new ideas every day and not repeating yourself and giving quality programming is one of the biggest challenges.” For Blanche, quality means the following: “I really inform,

educate and entertain. If people say 'I didn't know that, but now I do,' I would know that our community has learned something from us. Stimulating our people out there, giving them what they need – and not just saying 'it's our station, we can do whatever we want for 24 hours' – no, that's not quality."

Thabang's idea of quality is slightly different, as he emphasised the need for presenter evaluation alongside training. He said: "We are going to develop a presenter evaluation criterion where presenters will be evaluated on a constant basis. We will have sessions with presenters and give them feedback on their programmes and listen to their inputs. The reason why presenters take ownership of a programme is because they are left to work too much on their own cocoon. They don't see that we are a team that must achieve a specific goal." The presenters have been made aware of the evaluation and agreed to take part in it [once it is implemented]. Thabang stated that he, Blanche and the presenters will develop and agree on the evaluation tool to be used. "The presenter will go into the studio knowing that they are being evaluated. We would want to see if there are features that are supposed to be on the programme, whether those features are making sense, how the presenter has developed those features and how they handled the topic."

The SM works closely with the PM and he said they plan to develop a content structure for the programmes, because "what we have realised is that in the past if we have a presenter who does a pro-

gramme, if the presenter leaves, s/he leaves with the content of the programme, especially with talk programmes, the new presenter introduces new content and a new focus". The lack of continuity is a problem which both the managers were trying to rectify.

Another issue on the agenda is research. The SM explained that while following up the SAARF RAMS releases for the past two months, he noticed varying audience figures. However, his main issue is the inability to read and interpret the data accordingly. In addition, Thabang would like to understand which programmes were doing well and which weren't by reading the RAMS report. He said, "Some of the programmes have been there for a very long time and nobody wants to touch them to say – are they still relevant? We have never done research on our programmes to see when our listenership is increasing and know what the cause is." The SM hoped that after three months of tracking SAARF RAMS, "We will be able to say these fluctuations are like this, we need to keep or change our strategy or in forming our strategy we can maintain this growth without too many fluctuations."

"We can do our own research, but firstly we don't have enough resources, but also if we do our own research will it be credible, will it be trusted?"

He was working on a plan to engage the local university of technology to partner with the station and conduct research on their behalf. He believed the university's involvement will add credibility to the findings, because the station will not be involved in

acquiring the data. In this way the radio station can have credible research done by students, involving the community.

### *Programmes and Marketing*

Although the PM is concerned that presenters need further training in order to improve their presentation and programme production skills, she was pleased that the station is growing gradually due to the hard work of the marketing department. “We advertise for local businesses on the radio and business is growing. Since the start of 1999 they’ve [marketing department] come a long way.”

Thabang concurred that the growth of advertising has been good for the radio station business. “We have an average of 15 advertisers or so which are from Upington and the list does not stop there.” Previously, the station received most of the advertising from Motswako Media and Media Connections – community radio support organisation. The new growth in advertising, the SM stated, indicates confidence on the part of local businesses. Advertisers give the station business at varying intervals. “Some advertisers say that they are interested in advertising at specific times of the year; some will say ‘I want to test if it will make a difference’ – but an advert for a month won’t make a change.”

On the other hand, local businesses are generally hesitant about placing adverts because they don’t understand the value of advertising; the SM said that they want quick results and at times when they don’t

see this they will pull their adverts from the station. The marketing manager works as a sales manager as well, and because of his direct sales technique to local businesses, and a collaborative effort in producing adverts for clients with the programmes team and the occasional involvement of the client, the station’s advertising revenue has increased.

Thabang said, “Government is our key stakeholder. We are working with all government departments. We try to cover their activities as much as we can. We also have NGOs within the community that we work with regularly.” In addition, the SM explained that the station has monthly contracts with government departments and sometimes these are extended to annual contracts. With regards the private sector involvement and funding, the station receives advertising and one corporate sponsorship for the prime slot programme.

### *Listeners’ feedback from focus group discussions*

Focus group discussions were conducted with the following listeners:

- Paballelo – a group of 10 men in their late twenties to early 40s.
- Rosedale – a group of 8 young women in their late teens to late twenties.
- Louisvale – a group of 12 young men and women in their teens and early twenties.

### *Language*

Most comments on language came from participants

in Paballelo and Rosedale because the groups are from the African-language speaking communities, while Louisvale participants are from the Afrikaans-speaking community. The station is licensed to broadcast mainly in Afrikaans 60%, English 20%, isiXhosa 15% and Setswana 5%. The PM explained that ICASA regulates language quotas and allocated only 5% for Setswana programmes for Radio Riverside. The 5% translated in practice into an hour-long Setswana programme daily. Paballelo participants argued that this was inadequate. One participant stated, “I think in Paballelo there are a lot of Setswana speakers who are not interested in listening to Radio Riverside because they are not being catered for. So ICASA needs to do more research in terms of communication at least cater for Setswana instead of isiXhosa because they [Setswana speakers] are more than the Xhosas.” This view was supported by some participants from the Rosedale group discussion. The PM said she has heard community members express this point before. To cater for the isiXhosa speakers the station has a daily two-hour programme to cover the 15% language quota.

One Paballelo participant noted: “The issue is proficiency; there is a lack of proficiency. You get someone stuttering over their own handwriting. The moment you [presenters and new readers] stutter you get derailed and your message doesn’t really come through, so proficiency in writing and reading is important, especially for news readers.”

A participant from Rosedale added, “Mostly they

[presenters and news readers] speak Afrikaans, [and] when they speak English they don’t use the language correctly.” The participant was of the opinion that presenters should only use the language they are proficient in.

However, other participants considered the matter differently, stating the effort made to include other language groups should be recognised. Although participants had differing opinions on the matter, they stressed that a presenter should speak only one language at a time proficiently e.g. Afrikaans and this would serve to accommodate older Afrikaans speaking people who want to enjoy the programme. They stated that at times, switching between different languages was difficult for some listeners.

### *Presenting Style*

One participant from Paballelo stated that he was not happy with the standard of presenting: “[Presenters] should be more professional and the radio station should set the standard of selecting presenters on merit. I think where they [presenters] lack is when it comes to researching information. Most of the time they play music and adverts – they should be more constructive and educational.”

Another participant wanted to know how the radio station went about recruiting presenters. He thought that the radio station should try to train the youth in different parts of Upington throughout the year so they understand how the radio station works and the opportunities that are available. In this way the sta-

tion would be able to groom more talent and in future might not struggle to get young people interested in presenting. Another participant stated that the station should get experienced presenters from the established radio stations to groom existing and aspirant presenters.

The programme manager explained that she had been in her job for only a few months and was not familiar yet with the recruitment procedures. However, she did confirm that she would set out the criteria for such a process.

During an interview with two of the station's presenters, Cameron and Rene, they stated that they were recruited through a youth programme that ran at Radio Riverside for a period of two weeks. The training programme was targeted at young people with an interest in radio and through this programme they were selected from a group of young people in Upington who had participated.

A participant from Paballelo suggested that the station should also make use of local teachers, doctors, and so on to come to the radio station and take part in a programme centred on their skill or profession. For instance, teachers could help numerous students by presenting on the subject they teach, and a medical doctor could advise people on health matters. So those were identified as key individuals who could contribute to the station and the community at large. The participant added, "The community radio is actually a free resource where you go and serve your community, but now it is being used as a tool to create em-

ployment and this causes the lack in the presenting." In essence, this participant felt the station should be a platform for all community members with knowledge and skills to come and impart some of these through the medium of radio.

### *Programme topics*

*The Big Breakfast show* – Research participants from Rosedale stated that they enjoyed the *Big Breakfast Show*, and the presenters' combination of personalities and social backgrounds. Queenie and Barry co-present and jointly produce the *Big Breakfast Show* from 6-9am on weekdays. One of the participants said, "The presenters are more powerful [than other presenters]; he [Barry] does research and then he gets back to the community again to give what he has researched." One participant stated that the presenters are the station's most popular. The breakfast show is a 'magazine format' and has segments where the presenters speak about celebrity birthdays, listeners can phone-in on the segment '*Wat pla?*' meaning 'What is the matter?' and talk about their burning issues

'*Wat pla?*' was the most popular segment of the breakfast show. One participant stated that they now have a platform to voice their dissatisfaction about what is happening in their area, including complaints about business service, service delivery and general social behaviour issues. When an issue is unresolved during '*Wat pla?*' the presenters research the topic

further and find a resolution for the listeners.

Criticisms from research participants include: “They can maybe add another phone because getting through is very difficult”, and “When a person phones, Barry will not respond (by saying ‘hmm’, ‘oh’). Must you still talk or what now? You don’t know if you are still on the phone on or off, and your airtime is still running.” The participant thought that Barry should reassure his listeners that he is listening to the caller by being responsive.

*Vodacom Road 3 to 6* – Participants stated that they also enjoy the afternoon drive programme known as *Vodacom Road 3 to 6*: “They give you gossip, headlines, and maybe the Top 20 music. It’s as good as paging through a magazine.” Other participants thought that the programme touched on current issues affecting young people, with comments including: “they talk about what teenagers do, I feel I am part of them”; and “They talk about drugs, teenagers that use drugs and that affects us.”

Some of the Rosedale participants thought the presenters need to work harder on their co-presenting skills: “They are supposed to be co-presenters, but for me they don’t work together. It’s mostly you’ll hear Cameron speaking and then Rene will come in when she has to read the headlines.” Another added, “There isn’t any communication; you don’t feel the atmosphere.”

The research participants from Louisvale were not familiar with the programme. These listeners were

between the ages of 16 and 21, a primary target for the programme. The listeners are school-going and therefore their afternoons are focused on extra mural activities. One participant stated that they listen when there are competitions.

One participant who was part of the AFSA listeners’ association explained that *Vodacom 3 to 6* could use the same strategy used by *Spreukbeurt* to get more listeners in their target group, that is, going to the young people in the community and speaking about the programme and the issues it tackles, urging them to listen.

*Music* – Some participants from Paballelo noted that the music is generally good and current, except for their favourite programme: “They neglect the reggae show. It is a spiritual show and the music that is played on the show has been played since the radio started, but other shows get new music.” They also reported that members of the community lend their CDs to the presenter of the programme, and that these are often lost at the station.

Participants from Rosedale were also generally happy with the music played at the station. However, one participant, supported by the rest of the group, said: “Some of their CDs jump a lot, they are scratched. [It happens] maybe...three or two times in a week.” A participant said that all the programmes, especially prime time programmes, play the same music and it would be best if they varied their selections or genres: “We must maybe mix the music, but we can’t get the

same music with every programme.”

Another participant suggested: “Let us focus on local artists here; it’s a community radio station, so let us focus more on our people.” This participant felt that the station played enough international music, especially R&B, and should focus more on unearthing local talent. This view was supported by all the participants in the Rosedale group discussion.

*Storie Tyd met Auntie M* – Margaret Basson is fondly known by the listeners of her children’s programme as Auntie M. She presents a programme in the morning between 9-10am. In her programme Margaret reads children’s stories narrated in Afrikaans, beginning with a prayer and sometimes a Bible story. Participants from Rosedale enjoy the programme and said, “For me it’s not just the stories – she begins with a prayer and stories from the Bible, so for children who don’t like going to church, you get something with the beginning of the story.”

Others in the group added: “She is so soft-hearted. She shares the prayer with us who are at home, and teaches how to pray, the way she prays for people in the community, the people with Aids, those in prisons. I like that to also encourage them, they must not just sit in prison” and “she talks as if there are lots of kids in the studio.”

Some participants from Louisvale suggested that the radio station should perhaps open the lines for people and children to phone in during the programme. Another suggestion was that Auntie M tell

her stories at a crèche or a primary school and the recording of that session be broadcast on the radio, so that the learners could “listen to themselves on radio”. Furthermore, the teachers could take copies of the recordings to play for learners during lessons at school. The programme manager explained that something similar was done before during the holidays where the librarian or a primary school teacher came to the radio station with a group of children to read a story during Auntie M’s programme.

*Dare to Care* – This is a Sunday programme presented by Janie Simon from 9am – 12pm. The Louisvale participants call him Uncle Jannie. The participants in this focus group agreed that they enjoyed the programme; particularly the sermon and his preaching. Comments included: “He acknowledges family deaths in the community” and “He sort of keeps their memories alive.”

*Dare to Care* is connected to the Christmas drive, a project by the radio station to collect toys for children. The programme manager explained: “There’s one presenter, Fan Titus, she passed away and now it is the Fan Titus Christmas drive. It started in October [2007] with the object of collecting toys and distributing them to less fortunate children into the community. There are so many toys, I mean bakkies (pick-up trucks) full of [them] and we can go out to the communities and give to the children.”

Participants said that Uncle Jannie’s voice engages the listeners and he speaks well on radio. One partici-



pant added that the combination of Uncle Jannie and Auntie M on Wednesday evening presenting 'Upington tonight' works well.

*Comfort Zone* – This is a dedication programme on Sundays from 3-6pm. Participants liked the way the presenter catered for young people and adults. A participant said, "He takes dedications and then he says 'When I am playing music I'm not going to take calls': he is not disrupting the music because we are listening to it", and listeners seemed to enjoy that.

*Afrikaanse Treffers* – The participants from Louisvale are the only participants who spoke about this programme. They enjoyed *Afrikaanse Treffers* (Afrikaans hits) and suggested that the programme, which plays on Tuesday from 10pm-12am, should be given another mid-week time slot if possible.

### ***Programme Ideas and Topics***

A participant stated that he was not satisfied with the sports. Sports reports comprised two hour-long programmes, one on Mondays called *Sports Focus* and the other on Friday called *Sports Wrap*. The participant said: "The presenter is not informative enough. I would like more sports, especially on Saturdays and Sundays, giving us updates on the score and so forth, because as I mentioned some of us don't have televisions, so if [you] can update us on what is going on in the different sports it will be better, especially on the local sport."

A participant stated that the stations needed to urgently attend to the following: "The open mic sessions [poetry sessions] and the road shows. Let the radio go to the people, because not everyone is financially strong." What the participant highlighted was the fact that few people within the community have resources to make phone calls and send SMSs to the station for feedback.

Some participants from Louisvale thought that the station should be a platform for the discovery of youth talent in their area. They enjoyed the open mic poetry programme where young people could demonstrate their poetic and singing abilities. Paballelo participants also requested the return of the open mic sessions on the radio. One participant said: "I once visited someone in prison and he told me that 'I heard you on the open mic session, I listened to it'. I mean, young people like us and it wasn't only one person; a lot of guys that know me would say we listened to the open mic session every time. I think it was a great inspiration for the youth."

Programme topics suggested by some listeners from Paballelo include the issue of withdrawing social grant money. The participants stated that it would be interesting for the station to tackle the issue, because loan sharks are making community members buy certain products or goods, for instance in a butchery, because the person withdrawing their grant money owed money to that business owner.

Another topic suggested was: "You get teenage mothers who leave their kids with someone at home



during grant pay day, and the little government gives to the child is spent haphazardly in town, not even with the priority of buying food, but with the aim of abusing it on alcohol, getting drunk and arriving at home not knowing where the child will be.”

Some participants from Rosedale thought that debating on issues such as teenage pregnancies, STIs and drugs would be interesting for young people. They thought the issues should be discussed amongst young people and if adults were there they should be there just to give advice. The participants from Louisvale also felt that issues such as teenage pregnancy were interesting, but the station should ask those who have experienced these types of situations to speak about their experiences, to “deal with it from a youth point of view”, as one person said.

However, a participant coming from Rosedale thought that some people are shy and would be reluctant to open up on some of the proposed issues. Therefore they suggested that the youth start a debating forum that could approach the station for a programme time-slot. Alternatively, the station could ask their journalists to spend time in the township, even sitting on street corners. As one participant stated, “That’s something I noticed in our location, if we go sit, then issues come out. You might have been talking about the events of the weekend, but you also talk about issues with meaning. When you get home from that corner you’ve learnt two or three things by raising your opinion.” The PM felt that this could be risky for their journalists, although participants countered that

it wouldn’t be risky as long as the journalists were sticking to the facts. Participants were adamant that journalists should deal with facts, because there was already a perception, as one participant put it, that “Riverside is a story radio station”, implying that the journalists tell tales and are not reliable.

Another participant suggested that maybe this could also take place in the comfort of someone’s home where participants are invited to discuss an issue and the radio station could record it away from the studio and the public eye.

The presenters of *Vodacom Road 3 to 6* stated that they had asked during their programme for young people to come to the studio and debate the importance of school and education, but young people in the community did not show up. When the participants from Rosedale were discussing the merits of debates, and were asked whether they would participate in their suggested debates, comments included the following:

- “If we open up a topic to the community to talk about it they are quiet, there is silence. But if we go sit at the corners, then we talk so that everyone can hear us.”
- “They are quiet because they won’t gain anything, we don’t gain tickets ... that’s why we don’t call.”
- “You have that thought in the back of your mind, will the community agree or is it right what I say? You know it’s your opinion, but you still [wonder] if people will accept you.”

- “I want to say something, but I don’t have air-time.”

Four reasons for lack of listener participation were mentioned: people were sometimes not comfortable discussing serious issues in a public forum; they sometimes felt they were not going to benefit materially for their efforts; they were worried about being accepted in their communities, particularly because Upington is a small town where people know one another; and finally they sometimes did not have money to make a phone call.

### **News Content**

The radio station has news bulletins on the hour followed by headlines every 30 minutes. The newsroom has an editor and one journalist going out for stories. Presenters such as Rene and Rosita are also newsreaders and at times assume roles as journalists to cover stories in the community.

Participants from Paballelo said that they have a newsletter called *Paballelo Information Bulletin* they would like to share with the station. Their newsletter is put together in collaboration with some youth members of the community; working with the station they would supply some news stories and information on creative arts. Since their publication was in print the station could make use of the news covered in the publication and this would add to their daily news bulletins and topics for current affairs. Other participants thought that the station could add national and international news contextualised with implications

for the Upington community; for example, a news feature on interest rates, inflation or government policy and the impact it will have on the lives of locals.

An issue raised by both the Paballelo and Rosedale participants was that the station should broadcast more news in isiXhosa and Setswana. The station had two news bulletins – one read in Setswana and one in isiXhosa. Blanche explained the limitations imposed by the licence stipulations from ICASA, which requires the station to broadcast in the following languages according to their allocated percentages: Afrikaans 60%, English 20%, isiXhosa 15% and Setswana 5%. As mentioned earlier, one of the participants argued that the station needs to look into their language quotas, whether they are still a reflection of the community.

A participant from Louisvale said that local news needs to focus on other positive stories such as when a community member receives a scholarship opportunity to study overseas. “The local news doesn’t have to be like there is a death, because there are a lot of [positive] things happening as well.” Another added that the news was “not community based”.

Paballelo and Rosedale focus groups seemed to concur that the news did not adequately cover community events. However, a participant from Rosedale mentioned a recent tragedy where a young man died in a dance club: “We didn’t know because we don’t go to the club. But now Monday morning on the news I was shocked because it was a friend of mine, so they update you with the local news and the

nicest is that they start with the local news and then they go international.” In this example the participant clearly felt that that local news was covered.

Generally, the participants from Paballelo and Rosedale said that they don’t see the journalists at work in the community. They know only two journalists, whom they see “when it’s Ms Riverside [pageant], or when there is an event”. Paballelo participants suggested that the radio station should embark on a road show using their outside broadcast vehicle so that they are more visible and familiar to the community.

#### ***News Current Affairs: Hot Seat***

The station hosts a current affairs programme called *Hot Seat*, which airs once a week on Monday 8-10pm. At the time of the research, the programme had a new presenter, Cameron, who also presented the afternoon drive programme.

The participants thought that the issues affecting the community should be discussed in-depth on the radio station and *Hot Seat* should be the platform for these discussions. At the time of the research, a court case was underway involving a local member of the police force charged with rape. The participants from Paballelo and Louisvale were not entirely satisfied with the coverage and thought the station could prepare more regular coverage and that the news should be more in-depth, giving time for the newsreader to give details on the court proceedings. Participants agreed that “*Hot Seat* is not delivering”. Participants from Rosedale and Louisvale also shared this view,

joking that “the *Seat* is not hot, it’s cold” and “*Hot Seat* is lukewarm.”

A participant explains that issues covered just before the research, went over people’s heads, but when the programme was first initiated relevant issues were debated such as matters concerning farm workers, however the participants said, “Since they moved to ... government issues ... most of us are not into government or politics.”

Some participants from Paballelo said they need a platform for debates with local government departments and this platform was almost never available. The PM explained that the station is in partnership with local government departments such as Health but it was “a constant struggle” to get an official to respond to topical issues or attend a radio debate involving community with open calls for questioning at the radio station.

Issues that participants thought should be discussed on the programme include patients not attended by doctors at the hospital on their appointment days; and “ill-treatment by police is not covered by the radio; a lot of people are sometimes locked up for unnecessary issues”. One participant said, “When there is a [serious] topic, it is always the same people that come. Maybe [they’re covering] the issues with the hospital, then they always bring people from the Red Cross, they don’t bring people that work there, that know the issues and what is going on there...they just bring people from the top who don’t know what is going on at the bottom.”

The hospital issue is ongoing, with the radio station receiving numerous complaints from the community about the treatment of patients. And yet the station has struggled to get any resolution or response to the matter. One Paballelo participant noted that issues that are taken up by *Hot Seat* usually end with no resolution.

Another participant implied that the programme *Hot Seat* was 'lukewarm' because it embraced the politics of South Africa's ruling party, the ANC. He stated, "This is an ANC programme: we don't tongue-lash it [the ANC], we don't really tell people the lacks of our government. On the programme we are only beautifying it, so that people should get interested in government issues."

### *Listener participation and interaction*

The station had no formal systems for listeners to submit their feedback. Listeners use the platform on '*Wat pla?*' (What is the matter?), a programme segment on *the Big Breakfast Show* which asks listeners to say what is bothering them. Blanche explained that the radio station has only one phone and during the group discussions participants complained that they are unable to get through to '*Wat pla?*' There is no listeners' club except for the Aids Foundation of South Africa (AFSA) group on the hour-long HIV and Aids awareness programme *Spreukbeurt*, driven by the members.

The participants from all the research groups said that they would appreciate more visibility of the station presenters and journalists in the community,

either through road shows or debates. One of the programmes called *Dagboek* mentioned by the PM aimed to give listeners information about community activities, which was appreciated by some listeners, while others thought that the presenter needed to do more. One participant complained that while the listeners wait to hear about upcoming events, the presenter "plays music for that whole hour". Another participant said: "You don't actually hear that there'll be a jam, or there'll be a debating session or there'll be a get-together, or there will be a school governing body meeting, or who is coming to town. That's what the *Dagboek* is supposed to be about."

A Rosedale participant said, "She [the presenter] doesn't go out and find out what is going on in the community. She expects that the people must phone her and tell her what is happening."

However, some participants from Louisvale thought that the programme had significant information that they would not otherwise know about. "I would say it is free advertising for the community for whatever events," added another participant.

The participants suggested that in various communities, such as Louisvale, there should be a representative whom the community can contact when there is an event or announcement and who can then relay the message to the host of *Dagboek/Community Diary*.

### *Listenership*

Participants from Rosedale stated that when they were not listening to Radio Riverside they tune

into Umhlobo Wenene, RSG, SAfm and Ofm. Their favourite programmes on Radio Riverside are the *Big Breakfast Show* with Barry and Queenie, and *Vodacom Road 3 to 6* with Cameron and Rene. One participant mentioned that he listened to *Dagboek* and another participant enjoyed *Hot Seat*.

Participants from Paballelo were equally split between the *Big Breakfast Show*, *Vodacom Road 3 to 6* and the *Hot Seat*. Louisvale participants listened to a variety of programmes, with the most listened to being *Storie Tyd* with Auntie M Basson, then *Big Breakfast*, *Dare to Care*, *Spreek Beurt*, *Uncle Sam's programme*, *Afrikaans Treffers* and lastly *Vodacom Road 3 to 6*. It was interesting to note that the participants from Louisvale who fall within the programme's target group were not listening to the programme *Vodacom Road 3 to 6* because they spend mornings at school and in the afternoons are busy with extra-mural activities.

In conclusion of this section the listeners enjoyed and listened to Radio Riverside, there were some critical issues raised:

- The reliability of journalists with the radio station termed a "story radio station".
- The transparent recruitment of presenters
- Political biases on the current affairs programme giving the station yet another name as the "ANC mouthpiece".
- Local visibility

Radio Riverside did not have a structured listeners or community feedback/participation system.

The station relied on phone-ins and walk-ins by community members for feedback. The role of management and the Board of Directors was not clear with regards programme content. The station did not have an editorial independence policy and the programme manager was not clear sure whether she has the power to initiate even minor changes to programming and hence she went through the board, which made the made final decisions on programme changes.

The idea of an open forum or imbizo has been assimilated into a radio programme where listeners are meant to phone in and share their views on programmes.



## Case Study 4: Radio Zibonele

*“Iziko Labantu”*

**Frequency: 98.2 FM**

**SAARF RAMS: 35 000 - 180 000 (SAARF RAMS 2008/9)**

**Station Manager: Mzamo Ngomana**

Radio Zibonele started broadcasting before the airwaves in South Africa were liberalised, a political process seeking to break the government monopoly on broadcasting during 1990 to 1994. Established in 1993, the station was set up under a hospital bed in an effort to hide in an old container truck. The container truck served as a clinic for the Zibonele Community Health Care Centre and provided illegal broadcasts

for two hours on Tuesday morning to the community of Griffith Maxenge in Khayelitsha<sup>14</sup>.

Currently located in Ilitha Park, Khayelitsha, a peri-urban township about 26 kilometres from Cape Town, then the township of Griffith Maxenge existed as a result of forced removals and displacement of people during the Apartheid years<sup>15</sup>. According to Dagron (2001), Khayelitsha can be defined as a deprived community that had a high rate of unemployment and illiteracy. Public health conditions and public health services are poor. At the time of the research, these social conditions had not changed.

Over the years Radio Zibonele has dramatically increased its broadcast time to 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The station’s licensing agreement with

ICASA stipulated language broadcast conditions of 80% isiXhosa, 10% English and 10% Afrikaans with a programming format of no less than 60% talk and 40% music. The station is also licensed to implement a “programme summit” where non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community based organisations (CBOs) and members of the community would make input on the programme content. In its licensing document, ICASA had not outlined the frequency of the programme summit or details of its size. Furthermore, the mechanisms and parameters for community participation in content were undefined.

### Target audience

The station manager stated that the target listenership includes any individual living within the station’s broadcast area: “We cannot say that we are targeting the youth or the old... people, our target is everyone so long as you can listen to the radio.” He highlighted the need to maintain a close relationship with the listeners, because “our community must feel that sense of ownership and that this thing [radio station] belongs to them”.

### Programming Objectives

The programmes objectives, in the station’s programming policy, focused on the following:

- Programming content should fulfil the mission and vision of the station.
- Content should be gender sensitive.
- Content developed should be relevant and allow

for broader community participation in its conceptualisation and implementation/broadcast.

- Content should be non-discriminatory in terms of race, religion, ethnicity, HIV and Aids, disability, children and political affiliation.

### Radio Staff Research Participants

#### Management Interviews

<i>Mzamo Ngomana</i>	Station Manager
<i>Phetho Ntaba</i>	Programme Manager
<i>Zalisile Mbali</i>	Marketing Manager
<i>Mfundo</i>	Production and Technical Officer

#### Programme Interviews

<i>Salomi Bam</i>	Producer and presenter of the programme ‘Ezempilo no Mama’ from 9am – 12pm
<i>Zamile Mkontwana</i>	Producer and presenter of the ‘Breakfast Show’ from 6-9am
<i>Ntebeleng Shete</i>	News Editor and presenter of the mid-week current affairs programme from 7-9pm on Tuesdays to Thursdays
<i>Pastor T</i>	Producer and presenter of the programme ‘Drive Time’ from 3-6pm
<i>Zalisile Mbali</i>	Presenter of the current affairs programme ‘Hot Seat’ from 6-7pm on Sundays



Focus group discussions were conducted with the following participants:

- Makhaza – a group of 12 participants from an informal settlement located at the back of Khayelitsha Township, towards the end of Landsdowne Road.
- Makhaya – 10 minutes away from Ilitha Park where Radio Zibonele is located. A group of 12 middle-aged women were part of the focus group discussion.
- Emfuleni – 20 minutes away from Khayelitsha across a bridge built over the N2 highway, the area was the furthest area visited in relation to the station's broadcast area. Over 20 participants of all ages arrived to attend the focus group discussion. The group had to be separated into two to allow all participants to voice their opinions.

### *Staff Feedback*

#### ***Management***

Radio Zibonele's station manager (SM), Mzamo Ngomana, believes that the station should operate professionally in order to attract advertising. Permanent staff includes five managers – the station manager, programme manager, sales/marketing manager, news editor and financial administrator – with four assistants to support all the management positions. There are eight presenters permanently employed and the number included two news reporters. Mzamo explained that his aim is to minimise reliance on volunteers because at times

they are unreliable, which means an unprofessional image of the station is conveyed to the community and advertisers. "You have to make sure that advertisers will be able to come and invest, as this is the only way to survive as a community radio. That is why we want to make sure we have presenters who are permanently employed," Mzamo said.

The station generated 100% of its revenue from advertising; hence the station manager emphasised the need for professionalism. As a leader it is imperative to play a supportive role for his team because most of his employees are inexperienced. In order to develop the expertise of managers and the presenters, he said, "Because community radio is too small we need to make sure that we share our experiences," so sharing work experience among staff is an integral part of learning on the job. Maintaining good relations with the board, the managers and their subordinates impacted on the overall optimal performance of the station. The station owned its key resources such as the signal distributor, and with further sponsorship from local businesses they were able to upgrade the transmitter to broaden the broadcast coverage, to include other areas within the Cape Peninsula such as Gugulethu, Mitchell's Plain, Langa, etc. The development indicated management's serious intention to grow and command a larger audience base.

The SM's future plans include the development of a website with streaming audio for people around the country and internationally. Streaming audio means more people even those who are not living within



the station's broadcast radius would be able to receive the station's broadcasts. However, financial resources would determine future marketing possibilities such as the development of a website and outdoor marketing in the form of billboards. The station manager explained that to continue generating revenue for the station, it is imperative to market on a much larger scale using the aforementioned media platforms.

Phetho Ntaba is the programme manager (PM) at the station. She started work in 2002 as a volunteer with no radio background. Having volunteered at the station she went on to pursue a journalism diploma, which gave her more experience and the confidence to apply for the programme manager's position as soon as it was advertised by the station. She has been at the helm as programme manager since 2005. Phetho explained how important it is for content to be in line with programming policy and licence conditions stipulated by ICASA. Her position requires commitment and an understanding of the community radio sector. By responding to the changing needs she ensures that topics addressed by presenters are well researched, guests are organised and programmes are relevant and coherent. She also assumes the role of producer for some of the daily programmes as well as the current affairs programme *Hot Seat* (which will be discussed under 'News content').

She explained the significance of relevant programming: "One of the highlights is to serve the community because if you don't, they will leave you. [But if you serve the community and] you have mistakes like

technical problems, your listeners will stick by you because they know you," she said.

### *Listener Interaction and Research*

According to Dagron (2001), since the station's inception, it used a participatory approach to programme development and production. Community health workers workshoped the contents and format for each health programme with local residents. The aim of the workshops was to ensure that the programmes were adequate and relevant. Programmes were developed using a range of approaches such as songs, role-playing based on common health issues and themes pertinent to the community, story telling and poetry. At the time of the research, health issues were still discussed, but the use of creative methods highlighted by Dagron had ceased to exist. The dominant format included presenters doing minor research on issues to be discussed during a programme and, inviting a guest to offer expert opinion and sometimes allowing calls from the listeners.

The development of community participation methods including listener feedback is the responsibility of the programme manager. According to the station's programming policy, the following methodologies of community participation are used:

- phone-ins
- SMSs
- outside broadcast
- road shows
- letters

- questionnaires
- listener random visits or walk-ins
- listeners' club
- imbizo.

Zibonele is one of a few station visited during the research whose programming policy outlines the mechanisms used for community participation. Furthermore, the programme policy outlines the programming committee constituted by the following members of the station:

- Members of the board
- Programme Manager
- Recruited members of CBOs and NGOs in the broadcast area
- Station Manager

The above-mentioned members fulfil the following roles with regards to programming decision making:

- Review and evaluate programmes in accordance with the licence conditions.
- Provide guidance to the programme managers.
- Represent the station in other content-related forums.
- Consider all the input made on programming through the various methods of community participation such as letters and questionnaires, and provide feedback to the community.
- Make content and schedule changes.

The station incorporated aspects of participatory engagement with the community, although the methods were trimmed to fit the station's operations as well as the lack of budget for research. As a result

of the station's historical emergence (described at the beginning of this case study), many researchers tested research methods for various purposes at the station since 1998. Stakeholders including the Open Society Foundation for South Africa (OSF-SA), Radio Development Partners (RDP), University of Cape Town (UCT) and other independent research consultants piloted research projects to assess the viability of community radio in South Africa, using Radio Zibonele as one of the case studies. The station was chosen as a case study because of its broadcast history, its location within Khayelitsha a previously disadvantaged community and the station's programming geared towards the discussion of primary health care issues. Such interface helped the station to tailor its own research method, which includes the administration of an annual research questionnaire to the community.

Each year the station embarks on a research process from January until March where a team of volunteers go to public spaces such as malls and taxi ranks to gather data from various community members about the station's programmes. In March, all the responses are collated and the feedback reviewed by the programming committee, which takes decisions about programme changes and, in April feedback is relayed to the community shortly before programmes are changed. The method seems to be working for the station and it has a quick turn-around time, using research findings to generate content.

### Programme Content

The PM tries to structure the programmes to cover the diverse listeners that make up the target community. Mondays are used to cover topics relating to family issues “from paternity to family support”, the PM said. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, some community issues are covered. Three days a week, some school subjects are taught, with assistance from teachers in the community “We invite teachers from schools to deal with certain learning areas they are competent in.”

The PM ensures that the presenters are ready to tackle their topics by establishing the relevance of an approach to a topic. She often initiates a discussion prior to the broadcast with the concerned presenter. Complaints from listeners regarding language or general dissatisfaction with the quality of the programmes are dealt with by directly engaging the presenter in a one-on-one session, to offer advice and resolution.

Lack of resources is a challenge. For example, during the 2007 Polokwane Conference, the station was unable to broadcast regular updates and reports from the conference because they had no correspondent. They had to rely on other secondary sources such as reports from other bigger broadcasters. The PM stated that their listenership dropped during that time because listeners tuned to other stations, especially the public broadcast stations.

In the interests of relevant programming, the PM and her team decided to make changes to the current affairs programme, *Hot Seat*. The programme was

presented by two journalists working together to produce and present. The PM decided to use one of the station’s experienced journalists, serving as a marketing manager, to present the programme. She, in turn, opted to produce the programme and got the news editor to take on an editorial role for *Hot Seat*. The two previous presenters are now able to concentrate on getting more stories for the news department and for the current affairs programme. “This brought us closer to the community,” the PM said. Because the two previous presenters who are journalists were able to gather news and conduct research for the programme, the programme now has skilled staff members and it means that the topics are investigated for relevance to the target community listener and, the appropriate guests are invited to discuss the issues. The formula seems to work, because the *Hot Seat* team is bigger, each team member has a clearly defined role and there is more time for the journalists to compile any reports for the programme. They are able to brainstorm, drawing on their various fields of expertise, and come up with a well structured, informative current affairs news package every week.

The PM stated that the station accommodates the needs of diverse individuals and groups within the geographic community. She explained that young people used to complain about the lack of hip-hop on the station, so there is now a programme over the weekend that plays that music genre. “You find people moving from the Eastern Cape to Cape Town and when they get here they lose their cultural and tradi-

tional practices, so we cater for them,” the PM noted, referring to a programme on culture and tradition, which one focus group participant spoke about saying it reminded her of her cultural roots.

### *News Content*

**Daily News Bulletins** – The station has daily news bulletins every hour. The News Editor, Ntebeleng Shete, explained that she has seven journalists going out for stories daily, of which five are volunteers. She checks stories for accuracy and balance and verifies facts with the concerned community. All seven journalists also present the news. Ntebeleng emphasised the need for the station’s journalists to be well networked so that listeners or community members are able to call one of them when there is a story. Being an editor is challenging, especially working with volunteers. Ntebeleng said, “At the end, you want a good product but you don’t have people to do it, [so] you have to do your best with the little resources that you have.” Because resources are limited she explained that journalists learn to work independently and do everything from finding stories, doing follow-ups, writing and presenting. She said, “You become creative and you use things that the people that have resources never thought would be used and be of good quality, [which] makes good radio.”

Ntebeleng explained that her news format follows the format prescribed by the regulator, so they first discuss Khayelitsha news, then Cape Town and the Western Cape, then South Africa and then continental

and international news. However, as an editor Ntebeleng changed the format if there was breaking news of local interest from any of the geographical spheres. Ntebeleng produces and presents a mid-week current affairs programme on Tuesdays and Thursdays, which covers various stories that are reported on throughout the week.

Ntebeleng also stated that the community is still new to the idea of having journalists in the community. She found it a challenge that at times people didn’t want to comment to journalists even when given an opportunity to express their side of the story, as people suspect that the journalist will expose something negative. She saw this as an opportunity and added “it is also our duty to educate people [about journalism]”. Ntebeleng said that the stories they got from the community are different – some interesting and some weird, even including witchcraft. For Ntebeleng the ‘weird’ stories are what make community news grounded in the local reality.

Other news covered by the station includes politics, occasional floods sweeping through the Cape Flats and service delivery issues. On Nelson Mandela’s birthday the editor invited people who had been instrumental in Mandela’s life or those he had come into contact with, to speak about him. The internet and newspapers are some of the main sources of news. She explained that the news agencies give mainly national news and are vague on detail when it came to the local news, hence, she decided to cut the news agencies and go straight for the internet “News Flash

[news agency for commercial and community radio stations] was giving us national news that we can get on the Internet. We don't have a news agency now. It's us going to stories, the emails and the Internet."

One of the key partnerships the news department has cultivated is the formation of a network with news departments from community radio stations in other provinces. For instance, reporting on the xenophobic attacks of 2008 was done with the assistance of a radio station in Alexandra Township, Johannesburg, where it was reported the attacks began. "We had a guy there reporting for us whenever there was something that was happening, so that was how we tried to localise and be there." Other stations in the Eastern Cape are part of the network and when a huge story takes place in the Western Cape, Zibonele is able to send news to the partner radio stations quickly. The station also collaborates with the local community newspapers.

**News Current Affairs: Hot Seat** – The station airs a current affairs programme every Sunday 6-7pm. The presenter of the programme is Zalisile Mbali. The programme is broadcast mainly in isiXhosa and the presenter explained when a guest was English speaking he constantly recaps and explains significant details [in isiXhosa] to the listeners so they are able to follow the programme. Zalisile is also the sales and marketing manager for the station. He started working at the station as a volunteer and subsequently studied radio journalism at Cape Technikon. One of the skills he brings to the news and current affairs is

in-depth reporting. He said that one of his guests once accused him of being a dictator because of his probing questions. "I want people to feel that when you get into that studio, this is the *Hot Seat*...it should be hot... you should deal with topics that other stations don't want to deal with," he said.

For him, a journalist should tackle issues and not look for popularity: "You should tackle issues you feel people need to know, you are the only one that makes sure that they know about relevant issues." A councillor from Makhaza location was on the show a week before he was murdered to speak about service delivery in his area. Zalisile stated that he followed the issue of the councillor's murder and was assured that it had nothing to do with what was discussed in the interview. Mcebisi Skhwatsha was also a guest a week before he was stabbed in Worcester at an ANC provincial meeting. Skhwatsha was interviewed on the infighting among the provincial branch members of the ANC. Zalisile stated that during the interview with Mcebisi listeners were rude and he could sense the hostility toward his guest.

The highlights for Zalisile include the fact that the current affairs programme has elevated the station's standing amongst listeners. Participants from all the focus groups were impressed by the programme and said:

*"The programme is informative about politics; they tell you exactly what is happening in the community."*

*"You are comfortable to say whatever you want on Hot*

*Seat [as a caller]. Hot Seat is the best programme and it is the one which sustains and makes Radio Zibonele shine."*

*"We know the committee of SANCO. We didn't know that before, but now we know it because of Hot Seat. The programme did well in providing SANCO information."*

One participant said, "Most people who participate in the Hot Seat are from Khayelitsha. Emfuleni people feel excluded." And another participant added that the programme could be slightly longer than an hour, because it is so good.

Tackling national political issues was high on the agenda because Zalisile believes that the community want to be informed about what is happening in the country. "I am doing it for the radio station, the reputation, the image and the integrity of the station. Never underestimate your audience and think that they don't want to hear about national issues; they do, they want to know what is happening in the country. Now if you don't talk about those issues, what is going to happen? They will tune into other radio stations." National political analysts also appear on the programme, giving opinions on national issues and making them relevant to the local conditions. Zalisile's argument is mainly that you need to balance local, national and international issues. He emphasises the need to keep listeners informed about events and debates in the country because listeners always know more than the presenter. Some listeners, he noted, are

in the provincial political structures, so he needs to be knowledgeable and sharp.

He explained that the programme had managed to build a listenership different from the listeners tuning in during the week. The listeners phoning during the programme seemed to have an in-depth political understanding of issues discussed on the *Hot Seat*.

In preparation for the weekly programme, the presenter and producer decided on the topic based on their knowledge of Khayelitsha. They used their listeners as sources of information as well as the internet, looking at what is happening in the township at any given time. Zalisile noted, "[We look at] any new development, what are the problems and issues, developmental issues and then we invite the people facing the challenge and those who need to be accountable." The weekday current affairs presented by Ntebeleng set the stage for Sunday's *Hot Seat*. During the week the current affairs covered a range of issues in five-minute segments. And on Sundays during the *Hot Seat*, issues are amplified and dealt with in detail.

One of the programmes that stood out for Zalisile was the programme he conducted with the then-newly elected South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) executive. The SANCO leadership dispute was discussed on-air, where the radio station invited the new members of the executive to a debate about the organisation's in-fighting. He said that during the interview some members of SANCO came to the station "physically with guns", causing a confrontation

that led the station's management to call a police escort for the invited executive members to leave the station safely. In a follow-up, the treasurer of the regional branch of the organisation was invited to further clarify the situation within the organisation to the listeners. The current affairs team followed the story for a month, inviting different guests involved in the dispute and their affiliates, such as the ANC to share their side of the story with the listeners.

The previous mayor of Cape Town, Helen Zille, bought a slot at the radio station and was on the *Hot Seat* one Sunday every second month. Zalisile explained that the mayor addressed issues of service delivery on the programme and not the politics of the Democratic Alliance (DA) (Zille's political party) or the country. He admitted that other local political party representatives complained that the station gave Zille "so much time on the radio", but were not aware that she was paying for it. He added that the presence of the mayor gave the community an opportunity to interact directly on critical issues facing their community, while building the credibility of the radio station. In fact, he believed that speaking to the provincial political players or, as he put it, "those top class people in the province" means that listeners "will begin to trust what you are saying". He stated that the main aim of the current affairs programme is to create a platform for listeners. Although he felt that an hour might not be enough for callers on the programme, he said, "If you've got too much time in your programme you are bound to make mistakes, because you end up saying

things that you shouldn't have said, so if you have only one hour, you go straight to the point."

### *Listeners' feedback from focus group discussions*

Focus group discussions were conducted with the following participants:

- Makhaza – a group of 12 participants from an informal settlement located at the back of Khayelitsha Township, towards the end of Landsdowne Road.
- Makhaya – 10 minutes away from Ilitha Park where Radio Zibonele is located. A group of 12 middle-aged women were part of the focus group discussion.
- Emfuleni – 20 minutes away from Khayelitsha across a bridge built over the N2 highway, the area was the furthest area visited in relation to the station's broadcast area. Over 20 participants of all ages arrived to attend the focus group discussion. The group had to be separated into two to allow all participants to voice their opinions.

### *Language*

A participant from Makhaza said presenters should refrain from mixing isiXhosa and English: "It is annoying to hear a presenter talking and they say 'you know' while speaking IsiXhosa, 'you know', 'you know', you can hear that what they are saying is not making sense." Some presenters start some of their



sentences in isiXhosa and complete them in English. This is confusing to participants who are not familiar with English words.

The programme manager mentioned that the station's licence conditions prescribe that the station use 80% isiXhosa and 20% other languages. Phetho said that although this was the case, listeners are also welcome to share their thoughts regarding a preferred language and these could be negotiated against the station's licence conditions.

The argument for language articulation oscillated between those who thought that the strict enforcement of isiXhosa was in the interest of the community – to instil dignity, affirmation and preservation of the Xhosa culture – and those who thought that speaking English was in the interest of the community because it fostered a culture of tolerance for those not familiar with isiXhosa. Here are some of the participants' comments:

*"We have to accept that for some presenters isiXhosa is not their mother tongue, so the person adds the English not because they want to, or they are showing off, but because English is within their vocabulary."*

*"The presenters must keep improving their isiXhosa. What is happening now is that people think if you don't speak English you are half a person. A white person the majority also can't speak isiXhosa, so why must I be afraid that I cannot speak English?"*

*"They need to use more Xhosa in their programmes*

*because those programmes are mainly for black people."*

One participant said, "When they have guests such as people from Lovelife [a youth HIV & Aids awareness campaign], I wish they could just speak in isiXhosa only and presenters could then translate if there is a need for English. When they start speaking in English, people don't understand what they are saying. And the Lovelife people don't only help the youth, but there are a number of older people who listen to the programme."

This comment points to a concern that language was becoming a barrier, preventing listeners from gaining basic information on health from Lovelife representatives speaking in English. Furthermore, the information communicated by Lovelife representatives is also useful to the mature members of the community who may not have a good command of English. Another participant thought the use of English by Lovelife representatives is good because they deal with the sensitive issue of sexuality. This participant said, "There are other sexually revealing words that are used and for me it sounds better if they say it in English. If they had to say it in isiXhosa it sounds vile." Other female participants also added that some of the issues discussed with Lovelife representatives caused a sense of embarrassment and were difficult to deal with in traditional contexts.

### **Presenting Style**

Most participants from Makhaza and Makhaya agreed that presenters spoke respectfully to callers.



Someone said, “When they don’t know how to answer your question, they refer you to the person who can answer it for you; they do their best to help people.”

### *Programme topics*

#### *Ezempilo no Mama – Mam Bam’s programme –*

Macassar participants thought that Mam Bam’s programme had a unique focus on women, children and youth. The programme covered issues relating to parenting, counselling relationships between parents and children. It was stated that the programme was constructive for young people, offering local information and dealing with social challenges. Some participants commented:

*“It has the right advice; I like it as a woman because the programme advises us on how to deal with our teenage children.”*

*“The programme builds young people, helps us to know what is happening in our area.”*

*“It tells us about health issues and talks about children who are disabled.”*

One participant stated that the broadcast time from 9am to 12pm is appropriate, as most women are busy at home either with their domestic or business duties. Some young people in the location at that time are also able to tune in. A participant said that the programme content had the ability to influence behaviour positively, creating awareness and preparing or mobilising people to take action on issues that affect their health.

Another participant pointed to the awareness Mam Bam has created with regards to women and financial matters. A recent programme on disability touched a number of people who raised the topic during the focus group discussions. This was evidence that participants listened to the radio station in the few days prior to the research. Some participants expressed concern about the care of vulnerable children in the community of Khayelitsha and commended the discussion of the topic:

*“The parent will lock the child indoors and go the whole day without any care. If something happens to that child or the shack burns, that child will die in there.”*

*“The way the parents talk and treat their children has a damaging effect on the person and they [children] end up behaving as though they have fits or something – those are [caused by] nerves because of all the internal hurt.”*

*“It teaches me how to behave.”*

*“Mam Bam knows her stuff. You are able to get up and do something, and it’s like pre-counselling [for HIV testing]: you get courage to go and get tested, just from listening to the radio.”*

One participant requested more focus on job announcements, including employment opportunities. The participant thought that a segment should be dedicated to this, including opportunities for skills development and their cost. One Makhaya participant

noted that the programme teaches young people life skills, and endeavours to build and mend parents' and children's relationships. Participants said:

*"The topics teach the youth how to live the right life."*

*"She does not only advise youth, she also advises parents. She tells us that we must be approachable to our children so they feel comfortable to discuss their problems with us."*

**Drive Time with Pastor T** – Several participants from Makhaza and Emfuleni stated that Pastor T's programme was constructive as he counsels individuals in the community. They also enjoyed his sense of humour. They commented:

*"The programme builds people who are in broken homes."*

*"It gives us good advice. Sometimes we get married without knowing certain things. Had I listened to that programme before I got married, I know I would have done a lot of things differently."*

*"I like the jokes he makes on the programme."*

In Makhaya location, the group of participants concurred with the two groups from Makhaza and Emfuleni. They mentioned the programme's educational tone and its ability to affect behaviour between the sexes, advocating for reconciliation as opposed to violence and divorce. Several participants said:

*"That show is the best; it teaches women and men how*

*to handle their marriage."*

*"His show is a major influence on people; he teaches men and women how to treat each other. He even reconciles people who want to divorce."*

*"He tells you the right person to meet when you have a problem or when you want to report something."*

### **Listener participation and interaction**

The station has an interesting feedback system, which the PM explained to the listeners. It takes place between January and March of every year. Resources permitting, a selected number of employees go out to locations within their broadcast radius with both self-administered and assisted questionnaires, to solicit listeners' feedback. The questionnaires, notes in the suggestion box, emails and SMSs are retrieved and compiled for management to review.

During the focus group interviews, the PM wanted to know whether the listeners are aware of the three-month feedback period. None of the listeners seemed to be aware of it because the research covered only a few areas within the broadcast radius and the broadcast radius is also still limited within the Cape Flats. One participant suggested that the comment period should be longer or stay opened throughout the year. It was made clear by the PM that listeners can give feedback all year, but the station undertakes structured listener feedback in order to review programming and make the necessary changes on an

annual basis.

A participant from Makhaya pointed out that while Zibonele does participate in matters concerning the community, there was a project involving an old-age home that the station seemed reluctant to participate in. Some of the women from Makhaya attending the focus group are involved in a soup kitchen project which provides food to the home. They asked for the presence of the radio station at one of their soup-giving days several times, but did not receive any response.

Someone mentioned that they appreciate that the station announced local funerals, keeping people in the community informed. Noted by another participant was the involvement of the local councillor with the radio station. She said, "Our councillor has played a major role and he co-operated with Radio Zibonele to help our community. I applied for my identity document in Pretoria and it is taking time, our councillor is helping me with that." The councillor assisted after hearing about her plight from one of the radio presenters.

One participant said, "The station is for the community, not theirs [Zibonele employees]." The participant said that the station should always remember they are servicing the community and make themselves available when needed to participate in matters that concern the community.



## Case Study 5: Bush Radio

*"The Mother of Community Radio in Africa"*

**Frequency: 89.5 fm**

**SAARF RAMS: 25 000-85 000 (SAARF RAMS 2008/9)**

**Managing Director: Zane Ibrahim**

Bush Radio started in the early 1990s. Known as "The mother of community radio in Africa", it is one of the first community radio stations in South Africa started by political activists. The station ran into conflict with the Apartheid communications and security officials because it broadcasted illegally in 1993.

Located in Salt River, Cape Town, the station broad-

casts to listeners in the Cape Flats. One only needs to log on to their website<sup>16</sup> to see how active the station has been within its broadcast area, especially with its outreach and training programmes. Although there is room for improvement, Bush Radio has been a shining example of the development of community radio, not only in South Africa, but in Africa as a whole.

The station's business model is a combination of radio broadcasting and social development programmes, as Managing Director Zane Ibrahim explained:

*"Bush is not only a radio station. We cannot afford the luxury of simply being a community radio station; we have to be a lot more than that. At this time of our nation's development, we can't afford that luxury, to*

*simply be sitting there behind the microphone, playing music and sending out shout-outs and dedications. No, our people are dying of AIDS, our people are dying of unbelievable violence and our job won't be over until a woman can walk the streets safely any time of day and night and we have people no longer sleeping under bridges."*

Common Frequency Radio Project, according to their website<sup>17</sup>, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation dedicated to providing information about non-commercial radio broadcasting within the United States to the public, with the aim of facilitating more public involvement in non-commercial radio in the United States. In 1997 the organisation thanked Bush Radio for educating officials from the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) an independent government regulatory agency, regulating interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite and cable<sup>18</sup>. Bush Radio was one of the community radio stations consulted by FCC officials about the significance of community radio, Zane said.

Local and international recognition of Bush Radio's contribution to community radio has increased its networks and opportunities for other projects that contribute towards its programming.

### *Target community listener*

Staff member Brenda Leonard explained that their target community listener is defined in geographical terms as per ICASA's definition. Staff at Bush Radio had this to say about their target community listeners:

*"With the CREW programme (Children's Radio Education Workshop) it is very clear that it targets young people and children between the ages of 6-18 and the programmes are split into three different programmes for the different age groups. Gender programmes largely target women specifically; some of [them] target men and women."*

• **Brenda Leonard, Administrator**

*"We target the historically disadvantaged. Anything else is a bonus, but this doesn't mean we have to dumb down our programmes."*

• **Adrian Louw, Programme Integrator**

*"The whole idea is to give the community an opportunity to engage itself, to engage with itself, to speak to itself. If we have the resources, this would be a lot more successful than it is. We are quite aware of the impact that we have on the community because we live in the community. So we are talking to our neighbours, we are talking to our families."*

• **Zane Ibrahim**

## Radio Staff Participants

### Management Interviews

<i>Brenda Leonard</i>	Administrator
<i>Adrian Louw</i>	Programme Integrator
<i>Professor William McClain</i>	Board member
<i>Zane Ibrahim</i>	Managing Director

### Programme Interviews

<i>Crew Teens group</i>	Producers and presenters of <i>CREW Teens</i> from 10am-12pm.
<i>Victor Jantjies and Shiraaz</i>	Producers and presenters of the programme <i>It's All Good</i> from 6-9am.
<i>Nashira Abrahams-de Jongh</i>	Co-ordinator of CREW
<i>Busisiwe Matabane</i>	Presenter for the programme <i>Sakisizwe</i> from 12-1pm.
<i>Cindy Witten</i>	Intern journalist from CPUT

### Management

Adrian Louw is the programme integrator for Bush Radio. He began working at the station as a student intern in 1994 in various positions including as a technician and in the news department. His unconventional title, 'Programme Integrator', he said, "refers to the two sides of Bush Radio: there is the on-air component and then there is the project side, so my role is to integrate the two, to provide the projects with

a platform on-air so hence we use 'integrator' rather than 'station manager' or 'programme manager'". He added the title gives him an opportunity to learn, which is in line with the culture of the station.

As programme integrator he is responsible for internal and external training, the day-to-day management of the station and programmes' logistics. He also helps with formulating new programmes done by the various production teams, primarily giving advice, training and checking that programmes are of a "reasonable standard". His use of this term reasonable standard of programmes, rather than "high quality" is interesting, indicates that presenters are still learning to produce content.

The volunteers and interns are selected after a clear process of application and interviews. A call is made on-air to announce the vacancies for interns and volunteers and, specifically at the universities and technical colleges for those interested in radio. Adrian said, "They would come to an Open Day-type situation." The applicants would then be taken through an interviews process, and thereafter "we select people on the basis of potential rather than what they know", said Adrian. "Furthermore, we find, for instance, that researchers make good producers." One of the producers, Tanyesha, started as a researcher without any radio skills. "Within three months she did her first feature, and she was a finalist in the SABC Community Media Awards, so that is the potential," Adrian noted. Another intern, the presenter for the 9-12am *Morning Cruise*, Chanel, was scheduled to

leave in a few months for the Prime Media stable of radio stations. Adrian said, “The difficult thing is maintaining that enthusiasm for the training...but our belief and passion is to turn young people into the best broadcasters [and] producers of media.”

Brenda Leonard, the administrator at the station, adds that working with interns and volunteers is a challenge because listeners complain sometimes, but once the station’s management explains the training involved, they understand.

Brenda also started in 1992-1993, during the early days of the station. She began as a volunteer during protests by media activists aimed at influencing government policy to open up broadcast airwaves and relinquish control over the media. As an ANC member she also worked for the party, but could not abandon her passion for media, especially community media and what it stands for. She then took on a position as a trainee administrator at Bush Radio. Now a full-time employee, she oversees three other members of her department: Belinda, who does reception work and basic accounting and auditing, Sharon who does accounts and payments, and the child minders Joanne Sapto and Priscilla Brady at the crèche. Brenda is the overall financial manager. She develops and oversees budgets, writes proposals for projects, and is responsible for advertising and conducting external training. The station’s management structure is divided between Zane, the Managing Director, Adrian, the Programme Integrator and Brenda herself in charge of Administration. She said, “We

take the decisions on any problems we have, whether personnel or programming, we take the decisions as a management collective.”

Bush Radio’s training programmes includes the internal training of volunteers and interns and the external training conducted in other media houses and with NGOs. For example, they were busy with training staff at a start-up community radio station in Namibia: Karras Community Radio. The training was funded by one of the funders in Namibia and Bush was identified to provide on-site training to the station employees. This comprised a series of visits by Bush’s employees and the Karras employees also spending some time at Bush Radio. The aim was to help prepare the station for its own operations and transfer the following skills:

- setting up a programme schedule
- administration
- finances
- interview skills
- different types of programming.

Another longstanding training partnership the station has is with Breeze FM, a small independent radio station in rural Zambia. The two stations work together to deliver training to radio station in the SADC region. One of the key areas of the training offered by Bush is attachment, i.e. other radio stations visiting the station to learn radio skills from Bush Radio’s volunteers, interns and full-time employees so as to apply these at their stations. However, they have to take into account their local contexts.

Other projects conducted by Bush Radio are as follows:

- Children's Radio Education Workshop (CREW) – the project is a flagship programme for children's radio, co-ordinated by Nashira Abrahams-de Jongh. According to Nashira, Bush Radio has been home to children's broadcasting since 1996. Every Saturday children and youth meet at Bush Radio's studio to create and broadcast media that reflects themselves. "CREW has been in progress for 11 years. Children as young as six years of age learn to broadcast, including writing, research and presentation skills. They also learn technical skills and broadcast journalism skills and other life skills such as teamwork, critical thinking, interpersonal communication and political awareness," Nashira said. The CREW programme on Saturday is divided into three one-hour slots starting with the *Bush Tots* aged six to nine, then *Bush Kidz* aged 10 to 15 and *Bush Teenz* aged 16 to 18.
- South African Radio Internships (SARI) – is a programme for international students and radio practitioners to work at Bush Radio, learning about radio or imparting their experience in radio production. "The project sees broadcasting students and seasoned professionals pay to help us move our democracy forward"<sup>16</sup>.
- Bushkidz Day Care Centre – the day care centre was set up originally for staff members, but grew to include children from workers

in the surrounding factories. The number of children varies daily (three on some days with a maximum of nine on other days).

- Media Kidocracy Konference (MKK) – in 2008 the conference was in its second year. It is linked to the project CREW in partnership with one of the Donor Foundations in The Hague, Netherlands.
- Alternative Curriculum Mentoring Youth (ALCHEMY) – "Young people go through a process of political education, reading different ideological and political books," explained Brenda. Six young people are selected to participate in the project for three months.
- In partnership with the Red Cross, the station sets up an outside broadcast. The Red Cross identifies the community and the topic.
- Schools AIDS and Education Programme (SAEP) – "We take our outside broadcast unit to schools and talk to them about HIV and AIDS," Brenda said.

The projects are a cornerstone of the social responsibility work done by the station. Brenda explained that they have numerous community projects not functioning due to lack of funding.

According to Brenda, one of her management challenges is recruiting someone to do advertising sales. Of the previous part-time salespeople, one lacked motivation to sell and another did not collect money from the businesses that bought advertising. Brenda believed this was largely because they were working on commission of sales. She said that the station was



in a process of resolving the issue of sales by looking at possible strategies before they hired again. The financial sustainability of the station is a key concern and, given the economic recession of 2008/9, the station is beginning to notice the decline in advertising and willingness of donors to allocate funds for projects.

Brenda said, "At first Bush Radio was very reliant on donor funding; most of it goes directly towards projects and we raise running costs through advertising." She added that a good funding model for community radio should have diverse sources of income. "And if donor funding is part of it, it must be one part of it with advertising."

Zane commented that it is harder to finance community radio because the station has to be selective about the advertising it aired: "If you have a community radio station, you have to have a conscious. You can't sell alcohol, you can't sell gambling...Grand West Casinos and stuff like that, you can't sell that... it's immoral! It's very hard to run a community radio station. I would tell...any person in media today, any young person to seriously reconsider a career in community radio: it's hard, because you have to have the consciousness to go with it."

The station diversifies its funding model by using outside broadcasts and sponsors. Brenda adds, "Good accounting practices help. If someone gives you money you should be able to account for it. That includes submitting your progress reports on time."

### *Listener Interaction and Research*

*"It is not always about taking all the recommendations from the listeners, but getting in touch with the community to say that we are here."*

#### • **Programme Integrator**

The programme integrator explained that the station would like more direct interaction with the community; however, this is not possible because of the lack of resources. He noted that the critical aspect of participation lies in listeners being aware of their power to affect programming content through feedback comments: "The listeners will not necessarily argue with the station...we have to educate people to comment." Some listeners are not aware they have a right to comment on the programming and on how the station operated. Adrian said, "You are fighting against something that was ingrained into our understanding: that you do not challenge what is perceived as authority. Radio becomes the authority; to a lot of people they still see it as 'the voice'."

The role of Bush Radio, the programme integrator said, is to equip listeners with radio skills in order to spread media literacy and to encourage ordinary people to interact with the station constructively. He also discussed feedback as a political tool for communities to talk back to authority by adding their views on how the status quo can change. Some of the interaction takes place mainly through outside broadcasts and the monthly Open Forum.

The Open Forum is a monthly meeting between the

station personnel and the target community listeners'. Brenda said, "We announce it on the radio. It is something that has been happening since Bush Radio's inception and ... anyone can participate and raise questions on any part of the station, particularly programming."

Managing Director Zane said the station lacked resources to implement the Open Forum:

*"We've ... never really been able to successfully pull it off... we would like to conduct a town hall meeting. This is where we go into the townships, we book a venue, we provide ... meat and maize and coffee or whatever, we invite the community to come and meet the presenters and the producers who will be sitting in the front at the meeting, and they [geographical community members] fire these questions at the presenters and at the producers."*

During outside broadcasts both men and women staff members help set up the unit by carrying equipment. Adrian said:

"It is to show that anybody can do this. These are your normal brothers and sisters that are making this radio and people have to see that. They should see Chanel carrying the speaker, it should be a visual thing, it's a very strategic method of adult basic education, that is 'learn by doing' so people can actually see what is going on."

The 'learn by doing' principle is a critical element of listener participation at Bush Radio aimed at changing community listeners into active participants. Some of the staff also give talks at schools around their broad-

cast area encouraging young people to participate in media. The station also approached one of the local comedians, Mark Sampson, to develop and present a programme on comedy. Mark took the opportunity to be part of the station, and contributed to creating "an understanding of comedy as an art-form" Adrian said.

Another example is the hip-hop programme presented by students from UCT. The students were involved with the station through the ALCHEMY project and later developed a hip-hop music programme. CREW is also another programme that grew as a result of participatory engagement with the community. CREW now broadcasts at 10am on Saturday morning until 12pm, with programmes presented by children as young as six. The children produce their own content with guidance from the interns and volunteers and there is very little adult intervention.

### ***Programme Content***

All the presenters working on the weekday flagship programmes have producers. All work as volunteers and interns except for the presenter of *Back Chat*, Bassie Montewa, one of Bush Radio's longstanding presenter and producer, he works as a mentor as well. The presenters and producers work independently, with the guidance of the programme integrator. Adrian explained, "Development [in the form of training of presenters] takes place in a guided and mentoring way. The trainees are here to develop their skills and explore what is possible in radio." He added that community radio is citizen journalism.

“It’s not necessarily journalists who have to be part of community radio; it’s your ordinary people who are taking an interest in media.”

Bush Radio offers a unique combination of social responsibility projects and radio programmes, as explained above, that allow any interested community member to be involved in the station.

With regards to language, Adrian explained that multilingual presenters who communicate in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa, the main languages spoken in the broadcast area, are an asset. He talked about “code-switching”, which occurs when the speaker is able to “use the first word in English, the second word is Afrikaans, the third word is English [and so on], completely mixed people understand what he is saying”. Furthermore, he added, it is better to use language on radio in a manner used by the listeners as opposed to sticking rigidly to the language percentages stipulated by ICASA, i.e. English 40%, Afrikaans 30%, and isiXhosa 30%.

Bush Radio presenters are able to meet ICASA requirements even when mixing languages. They felt this “mixing” is best understood by their listeners, so they have negotiated their compliance on language percentages based on a language format that works for both, the station and the regulator. The manner in which Afrikaans in particular is articulated in advertisements could affect the way in which listeners receive the message, so adverts have to be produced using the same “mixing” technique. Adrian explained, “Most recently one of the main financial institutions

came with a drama that was produced in Gauteng and we said it is not going to work, because the listeners here speak a totally different type of Afrikaans.”

The station has to produce its adverts – or those who produce adverts for the station have to take into account the way in which local people use language in order to communicate with them effectively.

The station permits 60% talk and 40% music, with the talk aspect focused strongly on community issues. Working with NGOs, presenters are able to address issues discussed in the programmes and formulate their programmes with input received from NGOs. The programme format for the weekday programmes follows broad themes. The themes started with the flagship programme *Sakisizwe* (Building the Nation) aired between 12-1pm, with the aim of creating a focused broad programming structure.

The themes are:

- Gender
- Health
- Environment
- Arts and culture
- Human rights

When presenters and producers prepare their weekday programming content each day they ensure that they follow one of the themes for the day. By the end of the week, all the themes are addressed. CREW also uses the themes to prepare for their Saturday programmes. In terms of how these are implemented, *Sakisizwe* uses the themes more rigidly, while others such as *Morning Cruise* and *Back Chat* have a broader

interpretation and address the issues from a motivational aspect using scenarios people are faced with as opposed to tackling facts relating to an issue such as HIV and Aids. Adrian spoke about trying not to 'ghettoise' issues; for example, "Gender is normally seen as a woman's issue", so for that very reason, gender should not be discussed by women presenters only, but by men too.

Other content strategies include playing Public Service Announcements (PSA) alongside advertisements. Although PSAs are not paid for, they are treated as though they were and given adequate air play. Integrating social messages with entertainment is important when broadcasting socially relevant content. "A little bit of sugar makes the medicine go down," Adrian explained.

One of their training successes has been with local NGOs. The station attempted to host a number of NGOs who worked in the areas addressed during programmes. However, the NGOs frequently simply issued press releases instead, because key people were not confident to deal with radio interviews. Therefore, the station began training local NGOs on how to deal with the media. The training decreased the number of press releases the station received and more NGO representatives came for interviews. The preparation time spent by the producers with the NGO representatives beforehand helped to improve the quality of interviews and the information disseminated to the listeners during the programmes.

Adrian commented that commercial stations some-

times use ideas from community radio stations such as Bush Radio without crediting them. He believed that some of their programme and project ideas have been copied by commercial radio stations. He said, "The biggest challenge is that we have to compete in a commercial world, yet Bush Radio talks about HIV and AIDS, [and] TB, and these are not necessarily commercial issues." Commercial stations cover these and similar issues, however, most commercial radio can play higher levels of popular music, which attracts more listeners and a larger market share.

Other challenges include loss of news equipment such as field recorders, and untrained volunteers breaking some of the equipment during their training. Adrian spoke about embracing new media as a tool to bridge the resource gap. For example, "When we've had power failures, we broadcast off an iPod. We plugged it in physically with some programmes and music onto the headphone and plug it into our lines and broadcast. Our transmitter with Sentech has a backup power so we can send the signal. We use the technology that is available." Getting involved with technology for Adrian is primarily about knowing and using the technology to serve listeners, by disseminating information, rather than admiring technology for technology's sake. He thought new media such as radio streaming, social networking including Facebook, blogging and so on have created plenty of opportunities for community radio, making it economical to engage with listeners. He acknowledges, however, that one has to consider the fact that not all

listeners are technologically inclined and some have no resources to engage with new media platforms.

For programming, the station from time to time broadcasts pre-recorded talks and discussions from international intellectuals such as Noam Chomsky and Michael Parenti. These are generally referred to as alternative American programmes. Adrian said, “We call it our political hour...one of the topics for instance has been around Nike and the exploitation of children. Who owns oil?, is another example.” The relevance of this type of programming to the local community has been questioned by the regulator. Bush Radio argued that global socio-political and economic issues affect ordinary people because the price of oil has an impact on the price of petrol and food. On those grounds, local communities need to know about global issues. For Bush Radio, broadcasting programmes that address socio-political and economic conditions in the broadcast area is of great importance. Zane said, “Our vision is to see a massive drop in rape, in murder, in robberies, homelessness and poverty [and] for people to make informed decisions around politics in our country: that is our goal.”

During focus group discussions, a participant from Salt River commented on the alternative American programmes Adrian spoke about. He said, “Sometimes in the evening weekdays, there is an American show, it is basically critical media. They look at American politics, talking about the American government. That is quite interesting because it is the side of government you don’t get in the mainstream

media.”

Another participant suggested the station should contextualise the views of global political analysts and how their analysis of global events affects South Africa and more specifically communities in the Cape Flats. They suggested the station package the programme with a presenter and perhaps also some local political thinkers to share their analysis of global politics during the show.

### *Listeners’ feedback from the focus group discussions*

Focus group discussions were conducted with the following listeners

Focus groups were conducted with listeners from:

- Bonteheuwel – 10 participants from of this Cape Flats township.
- Salt River – 4 disabled participants.
- Khayelitsha – 7 participants from Ilitha Park.

The participants were recruited from within the broadcast radius of the station. The inclusion of Bush Radio in the research as a case study was strategic, with the aim of learning from the station. Bush Radio is one of the first radio stations in the country to use participatory methods in programme development and production. Projects such as CREW – the children’s radio production programme linked to the Media Kidocracy Konference, a children’s media conference, which brings together young people to learn about media and its role in building a democratic society, are evidence to the station’s

participatory approach.

The focus groups were conducted to augment interviews with the station staff and get a sense of what the listeners and people living within the station's broadcast area had to say. The views of participants are in no way a representative view of the station's target community in the Cape Flats because the station's broadcast area is one of the largest broadcast areas compared to the stations that were visited during the research. A bigger sample is therefore needed to get a balanced view of listeners from both the Afrikaans and African language speaking listeners.

### *Language*

Some participants said that the station should include a little more isiXhosa. All the participants in the Khayelitsha focus group spoke about Akhona Nqaqo's programme, but he had already left the station at the time of the research. Akhona presented in isiXhosa and the listeners felt for the isiXhosa speaking listeners no substitute would be able to match him. Another participant in the Salt River group also said that Akhona's programme was enjoyable because he spoke isiXhosa.

The same participant raised the issue of internal communication: "If people misunderstand each other, it comes across on air. A manager needs to communicate clearly with the presenters. A manager perhaps says something he or she wants to be done and the presenter misunderstands. He or she will be communicating the wrong message on air."

### *Presenting Style*

Victor Jantjies one of the presenters whose language skills are lauded by the participants "Victor as a DJ or presenter, he is on the community's level, he speaks both languages Afrikaans and English – to accommodate everyone, so no one needs to be scared when you phone in, and you feel quite comfortable when talking to him." A participant from Bonteheuwel said, "Victor talks down to the ground, his ears are on the ground, he knows what is happening in the community, he values what the children are saying right now. And that is why people listen to Bush Radio, because they can identify with him." Some participants said that they enjoyed Victor's interaction with the listeners: "It's very good. He is very energetic. I think he is very entertaining." Another added, "When you listen to Bush Radio you feel you have a friend you know at the station."

One participant said, "Presenters don't come out there and play their favourite songs; they don't talk more about themselves." The presenters' focus is mainly on the topic dealt with during the programme and not their personal interests, and this is a good thing, according to the participant.

### *Programme Topics*

**Breakfast Show called "It's all good"** – The station introduced a more commercial breakfast programme hosted by three presenters, Victor, Shiraz and Wesley called 'It's all good'.

One Salt River participant noted that the format

of the breakfast programme has changed to become more commercial. He said, “There is a celebrity slot that they recently brought in – in that specific case they are competing with commercial stations, since they are bringing in celebrity news.” The programme used a magazine-type format, including entertainment news. However, the focus is also on creating local celebrities: achievers in the community. Listeners call to nominate their local achievers and the station then calls them to let them know they have been selected to be celebrities for the day. The format, although light, adds elements that work to benefit the target community. One participant said the breakfast programme in its current format could compete with other breakfast programmes from the commercial stations. Most participants enjoyed the breakfast show format and said they found the programme exciting.

**Morning Cruise** – Some participants from Salt River said they enjoyed *Morning Cruise* and believed the presenter for the programme was also good. However, another participant said that because *Morning Cruise* and *Sakhisizwe* are aired one after the other, the themes dealt with in the programmes overlap. Some participants enjoyed the interviews, which are “community oriented”, as one participant said. A participant from Bonteheuwel appreciated the advice on how to manage credit and credit cards. He thought the programme is useful and gives listeners insight into minimising debt and getting out of debt.

**Back Chat** – One participant said the programme for-

mat worked well. *Back Chat* is suited for the afternoon slot, primarily because Bassie, the presenter, is skilful. One participant said, “The presenter there is quite in touch with the community. You can actually hear his passion for the community, his interviews are quite good and he tries to get as much information from the guest as possible.” Another participant added that the community should engage with the programme by phoning in. The participant thought perhaps there would be more interaction with the presenter with the recent SMS service because the programme is suited to this type of format where people phone-in and sms comments.

**CREW** – With regards to the children’s radio programme, one participant said, “To introduce radio to kids from an early age, I think that is quite a unique thing because when they step out of school, they will have a good level of confidence.” The participant was referring to the children presenting the programme.

**Hip-hop Show** – One participant said, “To be honest, the presenting is not of a bad quality as such, [but] I think they can do more research and create a bit more structure in the show.” Another participant said, “They need to play hip-hop music we can relate to, but now we are bombarded by hip-hop music which does not make sense.” The participant suggested the hip-hop show needed inventiveness and to inspire further innovation amongst the guest artists during the programme.



### *Programme Ideas and Topics*

Some participants noted the focus on local South African content as positive especially the music playlist and interviews with local artists promoting their music. Another participant added, “Local music can help you understand where you are coming from. We have so many cultures here and we can learn from each other. So having local music in the station helps you define who you are.”

One of the participants from Bonteheuwel was displeased because in one of the recent shows a presenter played music by an American artist Snoop Doggy Dog, whom he felt “is not a role model”. The participant was concerned about the star’s image, especially when he is seen posing with an alleged drug lord during his visit to South Africa. Furthermore, he believed that some young people emulated the lifestyle portrayed in the music and requested that the station “get rid of Snoop [from the playlist]”.

A participant said the station needs to update programmes, pointing to the radio drama which has become outdated. Salt River participants, similarly to participants from Bonteheuwel, say there is a need for more content to address drug abuse in the Cape Flats.

A participant from Bonteheuwel suggested the station should invite local residents who have experienced crime and substance abuse problems to share their problems on-air, in order that other young people learn the lessons from people they know. Another participant suggested the station’s journalists

go to where people ‘hang out’, to find people with such stories to tell.

A participant from Salt River requested the station develop a programme focusing on disability issues, saying, “They need to educate people about disability, dealing with issues disabled people are faced with... just to open the minds of the people.”

### *News Content*

One participant from Salt River said that Bush Radio was good in comparison to other radio stations in the Western Cape: “When you listen to Bush you get the longer [news] clip, you get the full content of it and the anchor reading just enhances the clip.” Some participant said while they appreciate the international news, they felt these should also be contextualised in a current affairs format. A participant from Bonteheuwel said that they would like to see journalists from the station coming to the community to cover news stories. However, one of the Bush Radio journalists in attendance explained the difficulty with holding interviews in areas such as Bonteheuwel, as interns some of them are afraid to venture into township areas. “We’re in the office when we are reporting on these things, [and] a lot of us are so sheltered.”

### *Listener participation and interaction*

Bush Radio used the Open Forum as a model for community participation. This is held each month. Also called the Imbizo, this is an open meeting

that any member of the community attends to meet the station staff and discuss the programming, management of the station and any other issues of concern to the community. However due to a lack of resources the community is not taking part in the open forum.

One participant said that the radio station should visit the communities. The same participant from Salt River during the focus group discussion said, “Each month they have a meeting at Bush Radio. The community is supposed to participate. But they are never here, it is always a presenter. They [Bush Radio] can get the community leaders, maybe a group of people to come in and participate. They will know what the community really want.” The listeners’ comments illustrated the point made by the programme integrator that more direct participation, even through the Open Forum, could add to other mechanisms used to gain feedback.

The SMS feedback system has been in place for a short while at the time of the research. Some participants heard about it and thought it would be useful for listeners. The station promotes the system regularly throughout the day on-air. One participant said, “A person can give a view and we don’t know their name and voice. The SMS gives more freedom to speak, even when it clashes with someone’s view.” The participant believes that the sense of anonymity would allow listeners to offer their views freely. Another participant noted the low cost of an SMS compared to a phone call as another positive aspect.

During the discussions one of the radio station’s journalists spoke about the daily blogs they wrote as an additional way of getting news and information to the listeners. The journalists compile their own stories and read the news on-air as well. They sometimes went out for interviews and events, depending on the accessibility of the location. The same journalist also spoke about how the station uses Bluetooth, a multi-media sharing device for cellular phones, where people transfer multi-media text from one cellular phone to the next. Bush radio uses bluetooth to move content to listeners. One participant thought blogging and Bluetooth message systems are innovative but inaccessible to some listeners. This participant said that he preferred phoning because “Victor [presenter Victor Jantjies] is always willing to take calls.”

The Bush Radio journalist explained that during their training, the Programme Integrator and Managing Director emphasised the need to mind the telephones. Valuing listeners’ feedback is ingrained during their training.

A participant from Bonteheuwel said that he likes the competition [promotional give-aways], but Bush Radio to him is more than that; he also tunes in because the programme content is good. Someone else suggested the station should “mix with the people” by broadcasting in public areas such as malls, schools and recreation places. It was pointed out that the major obstacle to such interaction is that the station has one vehicle.

A participant suggested the station have outside

broadcasts linked to campaigns such as anti-drugs and crime. Some participants expressed their concern about the lack of good role models in the community. One of the participants indicated that if the station is keen they can engage local businesses to sponsor outside broadcasts. Outside broadcasts can also serve as a platform for local musical talent where brass bands, church/community choir groups, pop bands, etc. showcase their talent.

The lack of role models and the recognition of local talent kept cropping up in the discussion, with one participant stating, “We have this boy here in Bonteheuwel, he’s a South Africa table tennis champion, but you don’t hear about it in the media...” Several participants pointed out the need for role models who portray positive values to young people and the need for a platform for successful local people to become those role models.

Some Bonteheuwel participants invited Bush Radio journalists to a primary school in the area. They suggested the station visit schools within their broadcast area so they are able to advise parents on schooling options for their children. A participant noted, “You want to send your child to a school, yet you don’t know which school.” Some participants complained that the station should not reserve outside broadcasts for commemorative days such as Youth Day, or Heritage Day, because they thought the direct involvement of the station in the community can help shape the community’s life.

One participant suggested the station air more

announcements on funerals and encourage people to send such announcements in order to publicise the funeral arrangements.

One Bonteheuwel participant said, “I phoned in and the response was immediate...it shows that they [i.e. Bush Radio] are with people, and that’s what you want.” Some participants said that it is difficult to stand up for your rights and against crime for fear of being victimised. It is still difficult for some people to understand and respect diverse opinions. One participant noted: “That is why the gangsters can take over. They see a loophole in the system, because people don’t speak out.” This participant meant that listeners should use the opportunity to phone the radio station and speak about some of the issues and events taking place in Bonteheuwel without fear of being victimised by some of the criminal elements in the community.

In conclusion of this section, the listeners appreciated the efforts of the station to come out on a visit to their location. They expressed a need for more visits such as this one with outside broadcasts at schools and recreational areas. They were also happy with the station programming and as indicated above gave suggestion of some of the topics the station should address, including disability, drug abuse, the recognition of role models in their locations and successful individuals.

In terms of language the participants wanted the inclusion of more isiXhosa. The news coverage was praised for their in-depth reporting on local stories. Although some participants stated that journalists

should also cover stories such as the primary school that was being vandalised by local people and stripped of its resources, such as taps and windows. These stories, they explained, are not reaching news bulletins.

### *Footnotes*

<sup>11</sup>[www.mg.co.za](http://www.mg.co.za)

<sup>12</sup>Fairbairn & Siemering, 2006

<sup>13</sup>[www.hst.org.za](http://www.hst.org.za)

<sup>14</sup>Urgoiti 2000 cited in Dagron, 2001

<sup>15</sup>Dagron, 2001

<sup>16</sup>[www.bushradio.co.za](http://www.bushradio.co.za)

<sup>17</sup>[www.commonfrequency.org](http://www.commonfrequency.org)

<sup>18</sup>[www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov)



# Chapter 3

*Compendium of Challenges & Successes*

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The two preceding chapters outline research methods used by other researchers such as Davidson (2004) Community Mapping, Van Zyl (2003), Programme forms and sheets and the Soul City Communication for Development Institute's formative target audience research. The research conducted for this report is an accessible research process that can be applied to content development and community participation. The two chapters are in this section synthesised into successes and challenges faced by community radio stations that have attempted to use research for identifying gaps in programming content, community networks and participation. Through the research process, content preferred by listeners is identified as well as ideas and suggestions for programme formats and topics listeners are interested in. The data gathered from the research process can be used in multifaceted ways to stimulate ongoing participation, develop content and to augment ongoing marketing and sales activities which require stations to know their market when selling advertising.

This final compendium outlines challenges and successes presented within the thematic analysis structure used in the presentation of case studies in Chapter 2, i.e. Management, Programme Content and Listener Interaction.

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## Management

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The station managers at all the radio stations managed a staff of full-time and part-time members as

well as volunteers and interns. The core management staff members are the station manager, programme manager, marketing manager, news editor and an administrator. On-air staff comprises mainly trainees, volunteers and interns, though some are full-time employees, especially those working on prime-time slots, to maintain consistency and give the presenters job security.

Challenges faced by management include:

**Managing volunteers** – four of the radio stations are concerned about the remuneration of volunteers with stipends. They felt volunteers lacked commitment primarily as a result of lack of basic stipends or very low stipends, which did not cover their travel.

**Recruiting presenters** – few stations had a structured process for selecting presenters and volunteers. Bush Radio had a structured process which included calling out for interns on the radio, placing posters at technical colleges and universities and creating an open day for aspirant radio people to come for an interview. Some students approached Bush Radio when required to do internships as part of their studies towards a degree or diploma.

Radio Riverside conducted a once-off training programme with some young people in the area and then selected from the participants of the training programme presenters to work on their prime-time slots.

**Remunerating presenters** – it was stated that presenters migrated to better paying stations in the commer-



cial and public sector. Large amounts of workload and multitasking contributed negatively to time available for training and motivation for presenters.

**Training presenters** – presenters are selected from ordinary community members with little or no radio skills as well as students doing internships. Therefore, it is the responsibility of radio stations to train them. Radio Zibonele relies on knowledge sharing among colleagues, while Radio Riverside and Kowsie FM look for external training opportunities for their staff offered by organisations such as Motswako Media, NCRF and IAJ. At all the stations new presenters are taught basic technical skills on how to use the studio, the radio desk and recorders. For Bush Radio, training is a core aspect of the station's activities where trainees are formally trained and mentored. The training extends to sources used for content development such as NGOs, from time to time NGOs are trained on how to deal with media. Training is also part of projects such as CREW, and ALCHEMY.

**Managing resources** – damage to production equipment and servicing of transport and outside broadcast unit is expensive and a barrier to increased visits to the community.

**Financial sustainability** – at all the stations, advertising is the main source of funding for daily and overall operations. Sponsored programmes and programmes bought by municipal departments also play a key role.

The difficulty with advertising is that community stations have to be selective as well because of their social responsibility, which impacted negatively on the amount of revenue stations can generate from advertising. For some stations, breaking even means the station can employ staff on a permanent basis. Donor funding, some of the station's staff felt, is declining and some stations like Bush Radio have begun to see the impact as they have to cut some of their projects.

**Managing growth** – three of the radio stations are at various stages of negotiating the increase of their broadcast area, with one of the stations in the advanced stages of this process. Part of increasing growth is audio streaming on websites and increased transmission of the station's frequency.

## Programme Content

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It is important to note that programme content is not static at all the radio stations, but constantly changes because of presenter rotation, new ideas and slots being bought by different stakeholders. All the stations visited broadcast content 24 hours daily, creating immense pressure to produce content, especially that which is relevant to the community. Broadcast hours also impact on resources needed to stay on air, resources that can only be retained by securing higher revenues through advertising. Against this pressure, community radio stations feel that they are competing with commercial radio stations and adopt programme



structures used by the commercial sector to survive.

Presenters develop their own programmes, select topics, conduct background research using other media and deliver the packaged content during their time slot. Each presenter's skill and personality guide the manner in which they deliver information on-air. Some presenters have received training and others are learning on the job. Presenters who spent time preparing had less difficulty on-air. And presenters who work with producers also seem to deliver well structured programmes.

The radio stations have varying programme structures – the format in which content is packaged. Some good examples of programme structures are from Maputaland Radio and Bush Radio; Maputaland Radio use a structure where a three-hour programme is divided into three segments e.g. the programme *Hloma Ngolwazi* has the following three segments: *Woza Dado*, *Get Wise* and *Asikhuleke Ndawonye*. Each segment targets a different listener in terms of issues discussed and language usage.

Bush Radio develops themes that inform overall content, e.g. human rights, gender, health, environment, arts and culture, with the main flagship programme *Sakisizwe* focusing for an hour on varying aspects of these broader themes. Each programme, especially weekday programmes, structure their daily content according to the themes. The aforementioned stations programme structures are clear and presenters are able to generate content on different aspects of their broader topics taking into account the themes as

a guide.

Projects are another aspect of generating content. Bush Radio's projects such as CREW are platforms for ordinary community members to produce content and air it. CREW is linked to the Media Kidocracy Conference and this association is evidence of niche content giving impetus to other projects that not only create further community participation and international networks, but also generate revenue for the station.

Other programmes slots are bought by local government departments and the private sector such as banks. Three of the five stations visited have a high number of paid-for local government content with local municipalities who use the platform to discuss their projects and campaigns. The problem with government content, is that some radio stations are unable to get local departments to respond to questions about service delivery. Presenters do not open the lines for calls from the public, or the listeners are advised to stick to the topic when calling during programmes with local government guests. Slots also bought by local government departments create a perception amongst listeners that the station is lenient towards the ruling party or the party of the guest politician on-air. Similarly local businesses whose service to the community is poor and questionable refuse to be interviewed by the station staff on their business practices. This leads to uncertainty among presenters about continued advertising from the business, so presenters censor themselves, which impacts on editorial

independence at the station.

In terms of sources for news and programme content, research and community participation is important to understand the community networks and enable presenters and journalists to identify the relevant sources. One of the presenters from Radio Maputaland said she spoke directly with members of the community, observing events and developments in her area to add depth and get fresh angles on issues she discusses in her programme. Presenters cite obtaining fresh ideas for their programmes, especially those relevant to locals, as a challenge. Regular rotation of programmes works to refresh content. As well as forming programme teams and co-presenting is applied to refresh programmes.

Most programme managers are concerned about quality. Radio Riverside's station manager defines quality as the ability to educate, inform and entertain the listeners. The Station Manager at the same radio station speaks about quality as an ongoing process of setting standards; which he agrees upon firstly with the presenters. He then after evaluates presenters against those standards. Kopsie FM's programme manager feels that discipline is important for presenters to understand their role. At Radio Zibonele the station manager stated that professionalism of presenters adds to the quality of programmes. And finally Bush Radio's programme integrator said he works towards a reasonable standard supported by ongoing training and mentorship of presenters, given the fact that presenters are still acquiring the necessary radio skills.

All the stations say negotiating language compliance with ICASA is difficult. At Kopsie FM the station and programme manager speak about the challenge of balancing language and cultural differences. Language quotas stipulated by ICASA create confusion in the production of content. Different languages are allocated percentage and it is these percentages that are not measurable for the stations. Some stations produce an hour-long programme a day in an indigenous language and say that this fulfils the 20% quota; other stations use co-presenters – one speaking in English or Afrikaans and the other presenter using an African language; while other programmes are presented by multilingual speakers. Another challenge is the balance to fulfil language quotas stipulated by ICASA in licensing agreements with the reality of how language is spoken and its interplay with culture in the geographic community. Presenters are mainly from the geographic communities they broadcast to and they sometimes take the issue of articulation and pronunciation for granted with little attention paid to voice and language training.

Programme managers provide support to presenters and at Bush Radio the programme integrator states that his role is more of a mentor. The difference between support and mentorship according to him is how training takes place. Some stations structure formal training and conduct the training in-house and for other stations training happens through sharing of skills on the job. The concern over fundamental issues such as training prevents programme managers

from fulfilling their role as leaders, providing editorial leadership. This would entail matters such as dealing with self-censorship, policy and providing structure for programmes derived from the programme vision.

Lack of resources is experienced by all the radio stations and surfaced across all the thematic areas of analysis i.e. management, programme content development and production, and listener interaction. Some presenters state that equipment to develop specialised features and dramas is not available at their stations. Programme managers are also concerned about the fact that they have to compete with commercial radio stations. Commercial stations are well resourced and play largely entertainment programming, which attracts high levels of listenership.

ICASA requires stations to prioritise local stories within their news content; according to Van Zyl (2003) a committee constituted by the geographic community must review stories continually. Setting up the committee Van Zyl argues and as observed during this research is practically impossible because stations need stories and fresh stories on a regular basis. National and international stories need local context to foreground their relevance to the community radio station's location, and at times journalists lacked the analytical skill to provide such contextual analysis. Secondly, as mentioned by journalists from Radio Zibonele, Bush Radio and Maputaland Radio, the community still needs to understand the role of journalism and how journalists contribute to public life. Some journalists live or had lived within

the geographic communities in which they gather stories and have a network of sources cultivated over time. The sources include the police station, NGOs, government departments, families and for Maputaland Radio chiefs and kings in the area. The News editor at Radio Zibonele said they do not have enough stringers. For Maputaland Radio, although the station has stringers the News editor says they have a high turn-over because the stringers are not paid for their work. News sources as mentioned are not adequate because journalists do not have resources to cover news in the entire broadcast area. The News editor at Radio Zibonele suggested the establishment of a national news agency that can supply news to community radio stations.

## Listener Interaction

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Research takes place at different intervals: research for daily programme production, research for ongoing content development, research to encourage community participation and survey research to measure listenership. The stations lamented the lack of direct interaction through platforms such as an Open Forum a meeting encouraging community participation in all aspects of the station i.e. programming, management, policy and planning.

During the research it was clear that without the programme managers it would have been difficult for the SPI researcher to gain access to the target communities. The programme managers have an understand-

ing of their location – social conditions, networks and relationships – and have built up trust within some of the social structures in the broadcast radius.

Of the five radio stations visited all mentioned the lack of resources to conduct research and community participation forums. However, because the stations recognise the importance of participatory interaction with the target community listeners, even amidst the lack of resources stations have set up simple feedback mechanisms. Some of the methods used to achieve participation and feedback include:

- SMS
- Telephone
- Suggestion boxes
- Bluetooth
- Social networking systems including Facebook, Word of Mouth Forum (WOMF)
- Direct community participation methods include outside broadcasts and in the case of one of the radio stations, a small research survey
- On-air radio programmes.

The main feedback and participatory mechanism that stations are unable to fulfil is the Open Forum meeting. The logistical planning needs capacity which is resource-consuming for the stations. The value of the Open Forum is undoubtedly the fact that it provides direct interface between the station and the target community listeners. Furthermore, it is a participatory method that allows for a three tier level of participation proposed by UNESCO in the 1970s. Nonetheless, some stations such as Radio Riverside

opted for an on-air Open Forum, which is similar to Maputaland's interpretation of *Imibono yabalaleli* 'listeners' views' programme. Bush Radio also conducts an Open Forum meeting, but they are unable to invite listeners to participate in the meeting due to the lack of funds to cover logistics such as transport.

***Radio Zibonele's feedback mechanism*** – Radio Zibonele conducts formative target audience research on a low-cost and low resource-consuming scale. Each year the station administers a questionnaire to its target community listeners. The research fieldwork begins in January and ends in March. The feedback is consolidated together with other feedback mechanisms such as SMSs and, the suggestions are reviewed by the programme review committee (PRC). The PRC makes decisions on changes and topics that will be discussed in future and reported back to the listeners on-air.

***Bush Radio's engagement with the community*** – Bush Radio engages with the community primarily through social responsibility programmes. CREW, ALCHEMY, SARI, volunteer and internship programmes with local and international stakeholders as well as universities and NGOs keep the station in touch with its target community listeners. Bush Radio's social responsibility programmes are funded mainly by local and international donors.

***Maputaland feedback mechanism*** – Maputaland

Radio's community participation and feedback system is held together by *Isixaxa*. This is a group of listeners who formed a listeners' club with a number of functions. The *Isixaxa* group has branches in most of the areas within the geographic community – and some of these areas are at least three to four hours' drive apart. The group works together to save money and assist each other with family celebrations and tragic situations such as accidents and funerals. They have members in most of Umkhanyakude, the station's broadcast radius. *Isixaxa* has a time-slot on-air and this is another platform where listeners give their views on the station's programmes.

Other stations use social networking platforms such as Facebook and WOMF. These methods are effective when listeners have access to the internet and resources such as telephones/cellphones to SMS messages.

Programme managers from Bush Radio, Radio Riverside and Maputaland Radio note that most listeners do not know how to give feedback and when they do comment they do not know radio well enough to make constructive comments. Those listeners who are familiar with the radio station walk to the station to speak to presenters and write feedback in suggestion boxes. However, for some listeners, distance and transport money is a barrier. The programme integrator at Bush Radio says feedback is a political tool and has power to influence the status quo at the station. Hence it is imperative for listeners to understand the power they have when they give

feedback and participate in platforms such as Open Forums. Another effective tool for participation is when community members participate in projects that lead to the generation of content. In this way community listeners learn about radio and can participate constructively in shaping the content.

Maputaland Radio and Radio Zibonele are the only stations visited during the research with a programme review committee (PRC). The PRCs review feedback from listeners and make decisions on changes and modifications.

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## Successes

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The following are key activities taking place at the station to counter some of the challenges. Some of these are partnerships and exchange programmes initiated by community radio stations with other community and commercial radio stations and newspapers to augment skills and innovations that help deal with technical problems.

***Partnerships and exchanges*** – Kovie FM has a partnership with a commercial radio station to help them conduct training with presenters. The exchange partnership is a programme where a presenter from the commercial station works on site with some of the on-air presenters refining articulation, interviewing and voice skills. Radio Zibonele has a partnership with news departments from other community radio station to broadcast breaking news in their area, especially when they are of national interest e.g. the

xenophobic attacks which started in Alexandra Township, Johannesburg in 2008. News exchange partnership with community newspapers are also important because they help cut costs and help access other local stories from local journalists.

**Innovating** – Because the station does not have a back-up generator, Bush Radio broadcasts off an iPod linked to their transmitters when they experienced power failures.

## Conclusion

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Some radio staff members suggest that government intervene and provide support for radio stations to host a monthly open forum. Stations suggested that open forums are imperative for ongoing community participation. Staff also requested support in the form of training to conduct low-cost formative target audience research. It was also suggested that organisations such as SAARF could offer talks or workshops to community radio about SAARF RAMS and how to interpret them. Zane Ibrahim suggested the following:

*“There should be a massive ... campaign by the authorities to inform the people that community radio exists. The people don't even know it exists! You can go to parts of Cape Town and say, “I work at Bush Radio,” and they say, “What's that?” (Zane Ibrahim, Managing Director, Bush Radio)*

As indicated by some of the interviewees at the radio stations most geographical communities are not aware that it is their right to participate in community radio,

to offer feedback and to hold the station accountable on how the station's resources are managed. Zane adds that;

*“The future for community radio lies in the consciousness of the government and the people that they serve. The government has to help us educate the people we serve, let the people truly believe that the station is theirs, but the problem is people in government have shares in the commercial stations, so it's not in their best interests to have the competition strong. When one person listens to community radio instead of commercial radio, then it's hurting commercial radio. If you hear that our top politicians are shareholders in the top stations, it's affecting their business, so they are not going to be willing to... strengthen community radio. We have to be the people with a conscience. We have to find a way of educating the community [about] community radio.” (Zane Ibrahim, Managing Director, Bush Radio)*

As reflected in the report, many of the staff members interviewed are optimistic about the growth of community radio and aware of the challenges that face the sector particularly with regards to the lack of resources. The main challenge with regards community participation is direct participation which requires resources to implement. During this research the researcher was able to conduct at least three focus group discussions at each radio station. Although focus groups are mainly a research tool they can also be used in a similar manner as an Open Forum. Support organisations such as the NCRE, DOC and MDDA

need to look closely at the value of Open Forums and focus groups with regards the need to fulfil ongoing research and participation that instils a sense ownership at the various levels of the stations strategic planning. The meetings and or focus groups can have multifaceted purposes if they are properly planned and station's staff are allocated different roles of gathering various data during the meetings.

Requesting stations to conduct research seems idealistic, yet some stations such as Zibonele are able to conduct their own research, something other stations can learn from. The research is not scientific listenership surveys but a resource that is cultivated over time and stations can tap into for fresh ideas and listener profiles for the purposes of their business within the geographic community. Programme managers and volunteers conducting research need to understand research methodology and be involved in other research prior to undertaking it at their stations. Of the five programme managers interviewed, four indicated that they would appreciate skilling in media and journalism research methods to augment their content development skills, and increase participation of their geographic community in programming.



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# Appendices

## Community Radio Selection Questionnaire

<b>1. Station's Contact Details</b>	
1.1. Name of community radio station:	
1.2. Physical Address:	
1.3. Postal Address:	
<b>1.1 Contact person's details</b>	
1.1.1. Name:	
1.1.2. Position:	
1.1.3. Telephone:	
1.1.4. Fax:	
1.1.5. Cell phone:	
1.1.6. E-mail:	
1.1.7. Website:	
<b>2. Station's Background Information</b>	
2.1. In what year was your station established?	
2.2. How long have you been on air, and has this been uninterrupted either temporarily or as a result of suspension? Please give a brief account.	

2.3. Is the station registered as: Please tick if it is within the first three, and specify if it is in the box named, other?	Trust	NGO	CBO	Other	please specify:
2.4. Does the station have a four year community sound broadcasting license provided by Icasa?					
2.5. Which community does the station serve?	Community in geographical terms.				
	Community of interest.				
	Or both				
2.6. Which areas does your broadcast footprint cover?					
2.7. What languages do you broadcast in?					

2.8. Please state the topics and issues that are important for your station and listeners give a percentage of air-time allocated to covering these?	e.g. HIV and Aids					
	25%					
2.9. What kind of programmes are prioritised at the station? Please give an estimated percentage of air-time allocated to those programmes.	e.g. Local news and Information					
	10%					
2.10. Please indicate the financial sources contributing to the station's overall sustainability. Kindly use an estimated percentage?	e.g. Personal loan	Donor funding	Investment	Advertising	Donations	Other, please specify:
	10%					
3. Audiences						
3.1. Please give a profile of your target audience. Age, LSM and, a brief demographic characteristic if available.						

3.2. What do you feel are the primary concerns of your audiences? How does your station seek to address these concerns?	
3.3. Has your radio station used audience research before? If yes, please describe and if not, please tell us why not?	
3.4. What were the three most interesting findings of the research? Briefly explain.	
3.5. Does your organisation access the results of the RAMS from the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF)?	
3.6. If your station has access to research findings from other service providers please give us details.	

3.7. How often does the radio station access RAMS or other results and how are they used to inform day-to-day operations?	
3.8. What is the radio station's current audience size? Please estimate and explain how you arrived at the estimated number.	
3.9. Has your audience size changed in the past 3 years? Briefly explain the reasons for the change or lack of change.	
<b>4. Staff details</b>	
4.1. Please indicate the number of staff who fall into each of the categories on the table below. And give a total figure for all staff working at the station.	

Staff Categories	Total number of staff in category	Part-time, Full time or volunteer?		
		Full-time	Part-time	Volunteer
Management				
On-air and programming staff				
Admin and Technical Staff				
Service Staff (e.g. cleaner, driver)				

### Daily Programme Outline

DAYS	ACTIVITY	OUTCOME	LOGISTICS	ASSISTANCE FROM THE RADIO STATION
Day One				
	<i>Staff Interviews</i>	<i>The aim of the first in-depth interviews is to get an understanding of the management and programming practices, policies and reviews.</i>		
	Board member	Station overall history, vision and mission and the role and influence of the board on editorial content. Role of the radio station in the community.	Arrange the meeting	Provide venue – one room to hold interviews.



	Station Manager	Station's overall strategy, market positioning, product identity and financial health.	Arrange the meeting	Provide venue – one room to hold interviews.
	Programme Manager	Programme design strategy and development. Programme focus, quality and overview of current programme choices. Also look into what the programme manager would like to know from the target audiences.	Arrange the meeting	Provide venue – one room to hold interviews.
	Marketing	Station's marketing strategy, branding and outreach. Audience research and community participation. And general market overview.	Arrange the meeting	Provide venue – one room to hold interviews.
	Technical Staff	Programme delivery, style and technical elements that make programming different from competitors.	Arrange the meeting	Provide venue – one room to hold interviews.
	Administrative staff	Working environment, public interface and public comments.	Arrange the meeting	Provide venue – one room to hold interviews.
<b>Day Two</b>				
	<i>In-depth Interviews with staff working on 3 or more programmes (some interviews will be conducted in groups of two.</i>	<i>The aim is to get an in-depth insight/detail on the programme formats, language, listeners responses and listener interaction with the station's presenters</i>		

	Programme 1 (Name of programme/ please insert here) Producer and Presenter/DJ (Names/ please insert here)	Presenters' and producers will be requested to give a brief presentation on the programmes and the aim. The research will inquire about programme format and listener reception and other modes interaction.	Confirm meeting date and time	Provide venue – one room to hold interviews.
	Programme 2 (Name of programme/ please insert here) Producer and Presenter/DJ (Names/ please insert here)	Presenters' and producers will be requested to give a brief presentation on the programmes and the aim. The research will inquire about programme format and listener reception and other modes interaction.	Confirm meeting date and time	Provide venue – one room to hold interviews.
	Programme 3 (Name of programme/ please insert here) Producer and Presenter/DJ (Names/ please insert here)	Presenters' and producers will be requested to give a brief presentation on the programmes formats and the aim. The research will ask about programme format and listener reception and other modes of on-air audience interaction and feedback.	Confirm meeting date and time	Provide venue – one room to hold interviews.
	Journalists and or the editor (Names/ please insert here)	The questions will focus on news packages. Style of reporting,	Confirm meeting date and time	Provide venue – one room to hold interviews.
	Start Survey	The survey will look at media consumption patterns and time spent on various media by the target audience.	Random in the community	

Day Three				
	<i>Focus group discussions with the station's target audiences</i>	<i>The focus groups are aimed at understanding the target audiences' responses and attitude to current programming formats and listenership/reception influences.</i>		
	Focus Group 1	The researcher will ask listeners about current programmes; awareness, engagement, relevance and how participants experience the role of the community radio in their community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invite 8 participants</li> <li>- Book venue</li> </ul>	Identify community hall or local library and make a tentative booking, which will be confirmed and paid by the researcher.
	Focus Group 2/ or continue with the survey	The survey will look at media consumption patterns and time spent on various media by the target audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invite 8 participants</li> <li>- Book venue</li> </ul>	Identify community hall or local library and make a tentative booking, which will be confirmed and paid by the researcher.

Day Four				
	Focus Group 1	The researcher will ask listeners about current programmes; awareness, engagement, relevance and how participants experience the role of the community radio in their community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invite 8 participants</li> <li>- Book venue</li> </ul>	Identify community hall or local library and make a tentative booking, which will be confirmed and paid by the researcher.
	Focus Group 2/ or continue with the survey	The survey will look at media consumption patterns and time spent on various media by the target audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invite 8 participants</li> <li>- Book venue</li> </ul>	Identify community hall or local library and make a tentative booking, which will be confirmed and paid by the researcher.
Day Five				
	Focus Group 1	The researcher will ask listeners about current programmes; awareness, engagement, relevance and how participants experience the role of the community radio in their community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invite 8 participants</li> <li>- Book venue</li> </ul>	Identify community hall or local library and make a tentative booking, which will be confirmed and paid by the researcher.

	Focus Group 2/ or continue with the survey	The survey will look at media consumption patterns and time spent on various media by the target audience.	- Invite 8 participants - Book venue	Identify community hall or local library and make a tentative booking, which will be confirmed and paid by the researcher.
	<i>Feedback Small Group Discussion</i>	<i>The SPI researcher will give the station's management feedback on the research and open up the discussion as well regarding the research process and the station's experience of this.</i>		
	Station and Programming Manager, Marketing and any other station staff members who are interested.		Confirm attendance from staff	Provide venue – one room to hold the feedback sessions.
	Research Ends	*****	*****	*****

*Radio Station: Focus Group Question  
Guide*

Age:

Gender:

Date:

Location:

*Please share any further comments or ideas for  
programmes?*

*Do you listen to Bush Radio?*

*How often in a week:*

*Hours in a day:*

*What do you like about the radio station?*

*What don't you like about the radio station?*

*Which programme do you listen to and at what time?*

*What do you enjoy in the programme/s you listen to?*

*Do you have any comment on the way the presenters use  
language and how they present?*

*Are the topics discussed in the programmes relevant to the  
community?*

*In what way are the topics relevant or not relevant?*

*When you are not listening to Bush Radio, which other  
programmes are you listening to?*