

Interactive document



PRESS TO START

INTERACTIVE RADIO!

TOOLKIT FOR STATIONS

JANUARY 2015



INTRODUCTION

This toolkit combines the knowledge and experience of Internews with insights from research conducted by the University of Cambridge's Centre of Governance and Human Rights and partners in the Politics and Interactive Media (PiMA) research project.

Politics and Interactive Media in Africa (PiMA), jointly funded by DFID and the ESRC, examined whether and how Africans, particularly the poorest and least politically enfranchised, use new communication technologies to voice their opinion and to engage in a public debate on interactive broadcast media, and its effects on modes of political accountability.

Africa's digital revolution continues apace, yet broadcast media are vital for reaching the poor, rural and remote populations and the more marginalised, and more now and in the foreseeable future.

By employing survey-based, qualitative and ethnographic methods to comparatively analyse interactive radio and TV programmes in the context of electoral and everyday politics, PiMA research critically interrogated the potential for digital communications and liberalised media sector to promote more

responsive and inclusive democratic governance, with a keen eye for turning project insights into relevance for policymakers, media houses, journalists and development organisations.

For more information on PiMA research and dissemination activities, visit <http://www.cghr.polis.cam.ac.uk/research-themes/pdtm/pima> or visit <http://eepurl.com/-L6l5> to sign up to receive research-related toolkits, multimedia resources and research briefings. PiMA research led to the spinout charity, Africa's Voices, to harness interactive radio and sophisticated data analytics to gather and amplify citizens' voice. See africasvoices.org

INTERACTIVE DOCUMENT

This Toolkit is an interactive pdf document optimized for Adobe Acrobat. Index page and url links are interactive. Use the buttons below to navigate.

TOOL 2: THE AUDIENCE IS THE SHOW

2.2 THE ONE WHO PROVOKES CONFLICT

✓ BEING A HOST BECOMES TRICKY IF A LISTENER CALLS IN WITH HATE SPEECH

For example based on ethnic bias. Some callers will voice opinions about gender and religion that belittle or insult others. Others may make statements that don't honour human rights or make comments that are insensitive or politically motivated. Some tools from conflict sensitive journalism will help. You may need to become an on-air mediator, which means you must be a go-between that helps callers and guests involved in a conflict come to an agreement.

✓ YOU MUST CHALLENGE THE CALLER

Ask: is the statement fair to all parties? Ask if it is necessary to mention ethnicity, for example. Ask the caller to consider how she/he would feel if someone said something similar about his/her group or beliefs. If the caller spouts hatred and uses hate talk, you need to bring him/her to order, which communicates to all your listeners that this is unacceptable.

✓ YOUR OWN LANGUAGE SHOULD BE NEUTRAL

That means your words should not contribute to bias, or make value judgements about people's beliefs. You have to become very aware of the words you use. It may take practice; ask your producer to practice with you and help to identify what is working and what isn't. Find some examples [here](#).

✓ RADIO TALK SHOWS CAN FAN HATRED

We know from 1994 in Rwanda and 2007/8 in Kenya that radio talk shows can fan hatred. Sometimes hate speech is subtle. Tune in to metaphors that belittle or exclude people and be bold enough to bring that kind of talk to an end by asking the caller what they mean. Even if the caller is from your community and you (secretly) agree, you will be respected as a professional if you challenge any dangerous speech.

✓ TAKE CARE IF YOU ARE IN A VOLATILE ENVIRONMENT

Take special care if you are in a volatile environment where violence is a possibility. You have the responsibility to be conflict sensitive. If there is talk of conflict on your show, you must bring in content about the causes and about possible solutions.

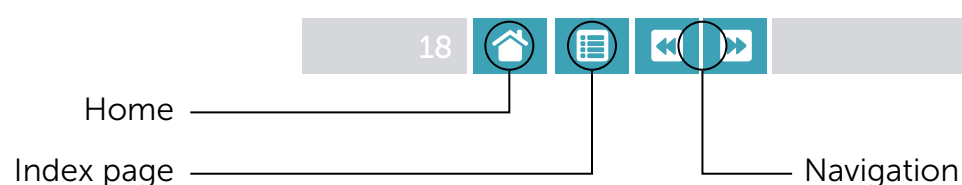
✓ INVOLVE YOUR LISTENERS DIRECTLY

And invite callers with a story about how differences were resolved.

✓ PEOPLE CAN DISAGREE ON THE SHOW

Of course, this does not mean that people cannot disagree on the show. Part of the attraction of interactive radio is that people can disagree and still have their voices heard. Your job is to give a platform to the differences but to ensure that no singular perspective is promoted as 'right', and no-one is insulted. Most of all, you must be sure that your program does not worsen real-life conflicts.

URL link



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TOOL 1

THE HOST WITH THE MOST:

INTERACTIVE SHOWS ARE THE MOST POPULAR - SO MAKE THE MOST OF THEM!

ALMOST EVERYONE WITH ACCESS TO RADIO LISTENS TO INTERACTIVE RADIO SHOWS, ACCORDING TO RECENT RESEARCH IN KENYA AND ZAMBIA LED BY THE CENTRE OF GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

Interactive radio gives ordinary people a chance to participate in conversations that matter to them. If you want to make programs that matter, be a part of making people's voices heard. If you want to attract more audience and more revenue, make your interactive shows even better.

This section will give radio hosts resources and tips to produce captivating interactive shows. Audience participation shows are not only the most popular radio format, they are also the most risky as callers can take over and derail the conversation, or even incite hatred. It may take some work to become a trusted talk show host. Hone your talent, let your personality shine and be prepared - to make the most of lively and tricky callers, and to produce shows that listeners keep returning to.

1.1 THE MOST POPULAR: HOW TO BE EVEN BETTER

BEFORE YOU GO ON AIR.

Backroom planning starts long before you go on air. It will help you avoid blunders and awkward silences once you are live. If you can tick all the boxes below, you have taken the simple but essential steps towards success.

✓ PEOPLE LIKE TO TALK ABOUT LOTS OF THINGS

Decide if your show will be about the issues of the day, social matters or health, sex talk, sports or business. Know the topic and what you want to achieve with the show. Consider how the interaction will work. Will you have studio guests and the audience interacting with each other, or the audience interacting with you and each other? Now think of a catchy way to introduce the subject so that listeners will call, text and interact in a focused way.

FOR EXAMPLE:

There is a new emblem for the national football team, and your show wants to test and reflect the audience's views. You need to do background research on the design idea behind it, the reasons for the change, interview the team captain about what it signifies for the team, etc., so that you will have interesting information to keep driving the show forward.

✓ THINK ABOUT THE SCHEDULE

Is the subject suitable for the time of day? Who will participate at that hour? If your subject is of interest to young mothers, it will be no good if it is scheduled at a time when they are unable to listen, (for example late at night). If it is explicit sex talk, it should be scheduled at night, after the children's watershed hour in your country. Plan to create continuity from the show just before and make a natural link to the content that comes after your show.

FOR EXAMPLE:

If the show before yours had a memorable quote, refer to it again and find a natural link or contrast into your show's subject. This creates a sense of seamless listening and station loyalty.

TOOL 1: THE HOST WITH THE MOST

1.1 THE MOST POPULAR: HOW TO BE EVEN BETTER

✓ **ARRANGE TO HAVE PROMO SLOTS FOR YOUR UPCOMING SHOW DAYS IN ADVANCE**

Tease your listeners with questions you'd like them to answer in their texts or call-ins. This creates interest and anticipation and makes for rich and well-considered contributions.

✓ **PREPARATION MEANS KNOWING YOUR AUDIENCE**

Be aware of any topics that may be culturally too sensitive to discuss in some communities, for example, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

✓ **ALSO PREPARE YOUR STUDIO GUESTS**

For some, it will be the first time in front of a microphone and the thought of addressing so many people can be daunting. Put your guest at ease, so that they are relaxed and tell them what to expect from on-air procedure. Also, remember to guide them not to have papers rustling in front of the microphone and to keep their phone switched off.

✓ **THINGS CAN GO WRONG ON LIVE RADIO**

The most important is to avoid 'dead air' – when phone lines are down, your guest hasn't shown up and no-one calls. Have back-ups ready. This can include a recording or some newspaper cuttings or current material to read from. Your back-up could also be a stand-in guest; let's call this person your back-up buddy. Your back-up buddy could be a colleague with

an interesting story, on whom you can call in an emergency.

See below for more about back-up buddies.

✓ **YOUR STATION SHOULD ALSO HAVE TECHNICAL BACK-UPS AVAILABLE**

In case of failures. Technical glitches can happen without warning. Have spare microphones available and a spare play-out. Don't forget spare batteries!

✓ **ARE YOU A MASTER OF THE TECHNOLOGY IN FRONT OF YOU?**

Things will also go wrong if you don't know the equipment, or how to fade and switch. Once you master the technology, it is easier to focus on creating great content.

1.1 THE MOST POPULAR: HOW TO BE EVEN BETTER

HOW DO I KEEP A BACK-UP BUDDY WARM?

Live shows demand of you that you always have compelling content ready. A guest you've invited may not show up or the call-in technology may fail. This is where the back-up buddy comes in. Everyone knows somebody (a colleague or member of the community) who has lots to talk about, because they travel often, read widely, have an interesting job or fresh perspectives on things. You should nurture a close connection with such a person, in case you need to call on them to bail you

out – to help you fill 'dead air'. But you have to keep this back-up buddy warm, so they don't feel exploited when you suddenly need to call on them. Call him/her regularly to ask how they are or make a note of their birthday or special events in their life.

Such back-up buddies can save you the panic and embarrassment of dead air. Keep him or her "warm"; you will thank yourself one day!

ONCE YOU'RE ON AIR:

✓ SMILE

Welcome your listeners in a way that will make them feel appreciated. From the word go, they must want and know how to interact – including those who have not called before.

✓ YOUR STATION SHOULD ALSO HAVE A STATION POLICY

Ideally, your station should also have a station policy, which outlines the style, content, tone and market position of the station. Know the policy inside-out; it will help you arrange and conduct shows that fit and enhance the profile of your station.

✓ GIVE A CLEAR SIGNAL ABOUT THE CONTENT

Tell your listeners and callers what question they should answer or guide them on how to focus their contribution. Open questions (what and how) are good, so that you don't limit your audience to yes/no responses, but you must make it clear that you are only talking about this one issue in the show.

Using the football emblem example above, your intro could be: "The team captain says he didn't like it at first ... One thing is certain, it will be noticed. Yes, we are talking about the new emblem for the national football team. This is the focus of our show today. We want to know what YOU think of it. Please call in with a brief comment on the choice of the new emblem".

TOOL 1: THE HOST WITH THE MOST

1.1 THE MOST POPULAR: HOW TO BE EVEN BETTER

✓ THE FIRST CALLER OR FIRST TEXT YOU READ IS VERY IMPORTANT

Deal with it well to set a good tone for the show and for further interaction.

For example:

"Thanks for calling Anabelle, I believe it is your first time"? Listen to her contribution and end by saying, "I hope you'll call again". Add: "maybe we will have other first-time callers today. Looking forward to your call! Remember the focus of our show is ..."

✓ USE A TALK CLOCK

Work with the producer to pace the program and to keep a time check on long-winded callers.

✓ LISTEN

Listen... for fresh ideas and new follow-ups. This is a win-win, as you get a new subject for a show and your listeners really feel you value their voices.

✓ AUDIENCE INTERACTION PROGRAMMES CAN BE A SPECIAL HONOUR

Often your listeners get rare access to people in power. You have a very demanding set of responsibilities: make sure questions are answered, prevent callers from hogging the airwaves and ensure the exchanges are worthwhile for the caller, the listeners and the guest (if you have one).

RULES OF PARTICIPATION

At the beginning of your program at regular intervals (at least once a week), spell out the rules in a simple but friendly way. It is only fair for your listeners to know what they are, and if you have many new callers (a good thing!) or if you hear a caller stray from the rules, you should repeat them again.

RULES MAY INCLUDE:

1. If you are comfortable to be identified, state your name and where you're calling from.
2. The show allows no swearing or profanity.
3. The show does not allow any insults or slurs.
4. Any allegations must be substantiated.
5. We will provide the right to reply if an allegation is made.
6. Please keep your calls to one per show.

1.2 THE MOST RISKY: STRATEGIES AND TIPS FOR MANAGING DIFFICULT CALLERS

YOU DON'T NEED TO REINVENT THE WHEEL.

Some basic rules of journalism and lessons learnt from almost 70 years of talk radio can help you manage the challenges.

✓ **THE EXCITEMENT OF LIVE RADIO COMES WITH THE RISK OF CALLERS THAT ARE ABUSIVE, DRUNK OR TALK NONSENSE.**

Tick here if you have had to deal with difficult, obnoxious or drunk callers.

You may be tempted to just cut off difficult callers bluntly, but you can achieve more and create a safer space for conversation if you remind the audience: *"Remember the rules I mentioned at the beginning of the program? I now have to cut you off and I'm moving to the next caller"*. This shows respect to other listeners and callers waiting to be heard.

✓ **IF A CALLER HAS USED A PROFANITY, APOLOGISE TO YOUR AUDIENCE**

Stick to the values of journalism and your show will become known for fairness and tolerance. When these values are central in your show, listeners will automatically sense that you attach value to their contributions. These contributions are their voices in the vibrant conversations of a democracy.

✓ **IT'S EVEN MORE OF A CHALLENGE IF PARTICIPANTS DISAGREE WITH EACH OTHER**

Now you have to be an on-air mediator. First, think about what a mediator does. Notice that the word 'media' and 'mediator' have the same origin. As middleman or moderator, you have to be sure that everyone understands what the speaker means. There will only be understanding if there is common ground. Find the common ground between two parties who disagree. Your job in the media is to mediate the message.

✓ **IF IT IS JUST YOU AND THE CALLER**

You must sometimes – for the sake of balance – take the opposite viewpoint, if the subject under discussion allows. You'll play the devil's advocate, meaning you present the counter-argument to the caller's point. If the caller insists, for example, that motorbikes should be banned from town because they are a nuisance, voice the opposite view: talk about the services motorbikes deliver and mention that they use less fuel and take up less space than cars.

Most differences of opinion add variety, are healthy for democracy and make radio better!

1.2 THE MOST RISKY: STRATEGIES AND TIPS FOR MANAGING DIFFICULT CALLERS

✓ **DEVELOP THE NOSE (AND EAR) FOR DISCUSSIONS ON ISSUES THAT ARE POLITICALLY SENSITIVE**

Develop the nose (and ear) for discussions on issues that are politically sensitive. Be very careful not take sides and don't be afraid to challenge callers to substantiate remarks that sound like political opinion. Invite other callers to join in the discussion. But be careful to avoid a slinging match on air. Think of ways to bring fresh thinking into the conversation. The show is successful if you have provided a platform for diverse opinions and it should never sound like you are hosting a match, with winners and losers.

In the next section, The Audience IS the Show, you will find tips on dealing with serial callers and politically motivated callers with one-sided political agendas.

TALK RADIO IS JOURNALISM

These journalistic values will guide you:

BE ACCURATE

The show allows no swearing or profanity.

BE FAIR

If you exaggerate or leave something out, you may have been unfair. Let your instinct guide you.

BE BALANCED

Remove your bias and your community's prejudices. Ensure that a variety of viewpoints are represented.

RIGHT TO REPLY

If an allegation is made, give the accused a chance to respond.

See also [US National Public Radio ethics guide](#) and [BBC editorial guidelines](#).

1.3 THE DIFFERENCE YOU CAN MAKE

Radio talk show presenters may be the most influential media workers in Africa today. It can be a tense juggling act. YOU can take it to the next level and it will be very rewarding.

'BE YOUR OWN SIGNATURE, MAKE YOURSELF THE BRAND'

"This keeps the talk show authentic and earns the host a loyal following. This is the most important thing I tell young hosts who try to copy the big names, and fail".

Benjamin Kiplagat, Manager: Sound Idea audio consultancy and former Internews in Kenya radio trainer.

✓ A REAL SENSE OF CONNECTION TO YOU WILL DRAW LISTENERS TO YOUR SHOW

Let your personality shine and manage the conversation – listeners expect that of you.

✓ MANAGE AND PROTECT YOUR BRAND

This means listeners must know what to expect. Have a consistent, recognizable structure and style.

✓ TAKE YOUR LISTENERS WITH YOU

Take your listeners with you. If you are discussing a new or controversial topic, tell them why.

Be aware of your own views and your background. They are part of you but you must be bigger than them so that everyone will want to talk on your show.

✓ JUST BE SPONTANEOUS

Sometimes, just be spontaneous, bring an unexpected element into the show, which will keep your audience in suspense and ensure that the show does not get dull.

✓ THINK OF INCENTIVES

Think of incentives and surprises to keep the show fresh, for example:

- Every 10th caller wins a prize (but you MUST honour this promise or you will lose your audience's trust).
- Get suggestions from listeners for the next day's topic.
- Host quizzes about content in past shows to create ongoing interest and loyal listenership. Ask listeners with a joke or relevant funny story to call in.
- Announce that you will only take calls from someone who has never called or from a region that is quiet (name the region).
- Invite a regular caller to host a show.
- Ask listeners to phone or text with feedback about past shows.
- Go into the streets to record vox pops which you play in the show – as a hint and invitation to the audience about the type of commentary you are looking for.

1.3 THE DIFFERENCE YOU CAN MAKE

✓ ASK YOURSELF: HAS MY SHOW MADE A DIFFERENCE?

Is there a new understanding of the issue? Did I make sure that listeners and callers heard something fresh and new today? Get feedback also from producers, colleagues, and even trusted regular callers (offline). Ask if they think the show has made a difference. If not, why not? If yes, your tick indicates success.

WHAT WORKS WELL: EXAMPLES

RADIO NAM LOLWE, KISUMU KENYA.

At times hosts request listeners to submit 'topics of the day' for discussion. Having one of these topics selected gives the community a sense of owning the radio agenda. The station sets strict rules for debate – so the host appears fair when he has to cut off or tell someone off for breaking the rules. The host might say: *“do not throw stones at the police”* (avoid foul language; do not provoke or attack others based on unsubstantiated claims, which could be libelous). Hosts also give practical suggestions, such as *“make sure you have enough air time before you call”*; or *“be brief and precise in your contribution”*.

'I HEARD', ON MILLENNIUM FM, LUSAKA ZAMBIA.

This show is different: it does not have a guest or preset topic for discussion each day. Callers are encouraged to phone in and tell the world what 'I heard'. People freely speak in whatever language they're comfortable with. The audience is not called to *“stick to the subject”*, and they feel a sense of 'ownership' of the conversation. Success in this free-form format requires an extremely skilled and experienced host.

KEEP IN MIND

The talk show format provides an opportunity for hosts to **build a trusted relationship with their audience.**

Interactive radio shows can be chaotic and challenging. **Apply all the journalistic principles** of fairness and balance, respect your audience, prepare well, listen carefully and guide the discussion, and the audience will reward you with loyal listenership and new stories to follow up.

Research shows that **the quality of the show drives participation.**

Audiences are most likely to participate if the host is tuned in to them, they feel they can get to know other participants and they trust the show.

This includes trust that the audience as a group **will not be exposed to dangerous or hateful speech.**

Plan well, **learn from experienced professionals,** grow your talent and nurture a unique style and you will be the host with the most.

TOOL 2

THE AUDIENCE IS THE SHOW!

DISCOVER THE GEMS IN THE CROWD, MANAGE SERIAL CALLERS, INSPIRE 'AVERAGE' CALLERS AND ACTIVATE THE ONES WHO DON'T INTERACT

ALMOST EVERYONE WITH ACCESS TO RADIO LISTENS TO INTERACTIVE RADIO SHOWS, ACCORDING TO RECENT RESEARCH IN KENYA AND ZAMBIA LED BY THE CENTRE OF GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

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Call-in shows are all about the callers. The audience gives you your show! This section will show you, the host, how to build a relationship with them, listen to them, make them feel important, and also set standards and limits for behaviour. Your audience will appreciate that you know their value, and will be inspired to engage even more.

Participants on your show have taken the trouble (and have spent money) to call, text or connect with you via social media.

You need to demonstrate that you value this investment by listening carefully and integrating the call into the show. Why did they call? Quickly get to the purpose of the call – it must have meaning for them and for all the other listeners. Your job is to get to that meaning and to make the interaction engaging. People participate best when they are having fun.

If your show also accepts text contributions, find a way to ensure that the texts you read out are representative of those received. If this is not possible

while on air, regularly go through all texts for new ideas and contributions. Then, make a point of mentioning some of these contributions on air – for example, the next day. This will signal to your audience that all texts are important and will motivate them to keep sending text contributions.

Radio can reinforce a culture of tolerance and free expression or worsen tensions. How you manage your callers will determine the role your radio station will play.

2.1 THE ONE WHO ALWAYS CALLS

✓ IS THERE A CALLER WHO MAKES YOU GROAN BECAUSE THEY HAVE CALLED YET AGAIN?

Swallow your irritation. Welcome him or her. This is often the first caller. Even if what they say is predictable, that is a lot better than dead air!

Research has shown that regular or 'serial' callers are often part of a network in their community. They have their ear on the ground. Tap into this expertise.

✓ SERIAL CALLERS ARE OFTEN A CRITICAL VOICE

A typical fault-finder, according to research. At times, they are aligned with the political opposition. Engage them and they will bring diversity to your show and make others think.

There is a common perception that serial callers are paid or planted by political parties to amplify a certain view, but research has shown this is often not the case. Serial callers are usually independent thinkers, who may have personal political ambitions. They don't need to be gagged if they have a valid point to make.

2.1 THE ONE WHO ALWAYS CALLS

✓ REWARD SERIAL CALLERS FOR THEIR LOYALTY

You could announce a prize on the show for the ongoing contribution caller X has made. Or you could even make contact with the caller offline and plan to have him/her co-host a show with you as a one-off.

✓ YOUR SHOW MAY ATTRACT A CALLER WHO IS JUST IRRITATING

Because they always say the same thing or they dominate the conversation. You have picked up that they annoy other callers, who feel they've been hijacked: they cannot get through to the show because of him/her.

- Ask yourself what could have turned this person into a serial caller and have compassion. It could be that in life, they never get heard. But you also know that it is not fair to impose this problem on all your other listeners.
- You can call a serial caller back when you're off air, show them you are aware of their contribution but that others also need to be given a chance. Then say they need to limit their contribution to once a week, otherwise you will no longer take their calls.
- Be aware that most radio stations have to deal with such cases. If these tips do not cause a change and the dialogue turns nasty, you will have to cut off the caller each time. Consult with colleagues and be sure you have your management's support and guidance in finding a solution.

✓ SOME REGULAR CALLERS ALMOST BECOME PART OF A SHOW'S BRAND

Other callers may look forward to hearing his/her voice! Think of ways to nudge the regular caller to talk about new things.

A SERIAL CALLER CAN HELP YOU BE A BETTER WATCHDOG

Serial callers like to act on behalf of the public. A caller to Radio Nam Lolwe in Kisumu, Kenya, says a politician threatened him after he talked about corruption relating to Kenya's Constituency Development Fund.

Even though he knows his inputs and efforts don't *"put food on table"* for the poor people he advocates for, he believes talking about corrupt acts on the radio would make the greedy think twice. And in the long run, he believes, voicing these issues will help improve livelihoods of the poor in the community. This caller told researchers he is *"fulfilling a society requirement."*

2.2 THE ONE WHO PROVOKES CONFLICT

✓ BEING A HOST BECOMES TRICKY IF A LISTENER CALLS IN WITH HATE SPEECH

For example based on ethnic bias. Some callers will voice opinions about gender and religion that belittle or insult others. Others may make statements that don't honour human rights or make comments that are insensitive or politically motivated. Some tools from conflict sensitive journalism will help. You may need to become an on-air mediator, which means you must be a go-between that helps callers and guests involved in a conflict come to an agreement.

✓ YOU MUST CHALLENGE THE CALLER

Ask: is the statement fair to all parties? Ask if it is necessary to mention ethnicity, for example. Ask the caller to consider how she/he would feel if someone said something similar about his/her group or beliefs. If the caller spouts hatred and uses hate talk, you need to bring him/her to order, which communicates to all your listeners that this is unacceptable.

✓ YOUR OWN LANGUAGE SHOULD BE NEUTRAL

This checklist is a useful guide to conflict sensitive language.
Find some examples [here](#).

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We know from 1994 in Rwanda and 2007/8 in Kenya that radio talk shows can fan hatred. Sometimes hate speech is subtle. Tune in to metaphors that belittle or exclude people and be bold enough to bring that kind of talk to an end by asking the caller what they mean. Even if the caller is from your community and you (secretly) agree, you will be respected as a professional if you challenge any dangerous speech.

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Take special care if you are in a volatile environment where violence is a possibility. You have the responsibility to be conflict sensitive. If there is talk of conflict on your show, you must bring in content about the causes and about possible solutions.

✓ INVOLVE YOUR LISTENERS DIRECTLY

And invite callers with a story about how differences were resolved.

✓ PEOPLE CAN DISAGREE ON THE SHOW

Of course, this does not mean that people cannot disagree on the show. Part of the attraction of interactive radio is that people can disagree and still have their voices heard. Your job is to give a platform to the differences but to ensure that no singular perspective is promoted as 'right', and no-one is insulted. Most of all, you must be sure that your program does not worsen real-life conflicts.

2.2 THE ONE WHO PROVOKES CONFLICT

CONFLICT SENSITIVE LANGUAGE

You should hear alarm bells when you hear ‘them’ and ‘us’. This polarizes people and creates the impression that some are ‘out’ and some are ‘in’.

Consider what is truthful and appropriate. Some trigger words can incite hatred, and should not be used – especially if someone has not been convicted.

Here are more dos and don’ts to beware of in your language:

INSTEAD OF ...

CONSIDER

Stock phrases or extreme language like all-out war, battle...

► Skirmish, conflict, disagreement...

Terrorist, Islamist...

► Religious extremist, or talk about acts of terror...

Murderers...

► Attackers, alleged killers...

Mob...

► Angry crowd...

Our people...

► People living here...

An ethnicity...

► Other attributes that describe the person...

‘Journalists can learn from mediators how to deal with conflicting ideas, for example the way you pose your questions should show you are facilitating a dialogue. How you angle the information shows your neutrality’.

Mary Kiio, BBC Media Action consultant trainer; former Internews in Kenya conflict sensitive journalism trainer.

2.3 THE ONE WHO HAS MORE TO CONTRIBUTE (RELUCTANT OR SHY CALLERS)

✓ ONCE YOUR CALLER IS ON AIR, S/HE IS ALSO A BROADCASTER

Think how much experience and on-the-job training you've had. Some callers are vague or ramble on, but they do have a point or they wouldn't have called. Think of polite and fun ways to bring them to the point. For example, ask them if they had to fit their point into a one-screen text, what would it be?

"People have issues, but they don't know where to take their issues to – because they don't have that platform to speak. [Interactive radio] is giving them a chance, a podium".

*Joseph Mazizi, Manager and presenter
Mudziwathu Community Radio, Malawi.*

✓ IF A CALLER TELLS YOU IT IS THEIR FIRST TIME...

Thank them for participating. Repeat their main message back, so that they know you've listened. This will encourage them to call again.

2.4 THE ONE WHO RARELY CALLS

The University of Cambridge research at radio stations in Zambia and Kenya shows that the type of person who is most likely to call or text the show is male, between 18-34 years old, educated, wealthier, and younger than his neighbours. But the role of the media is to mirror society. While this reflection will never be perfect, it can always be improved. If someone was blindfolded and had only your station to listen to, whose voices would they hear and what would it tell them about your community?

✓ **ARRANGE FOR A RECORDING OF YOUR SHOW**

Take courage and listen. What do you hear? Bearing in mind what your listener community is like, jot down a description of the voices you hear.

✓ **FEWER THAN HALF THE CALLERS ARE WOMEN**

Most likely, fewer than half the callers and texters are women. This is a dilemma that some media want to solve by going on to create “special women’s slots” with subjects like cooking and childcare. Think about what that does: it tells listeners that only childcare and similar topics are for women. Perhaps it also tells them that political discussions are for men.

✓ **RESEARCH SHOWS THAT WOMEN DO HAVE AN INTEREST IN POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS**

But there are things that can hold them back from contributing. Even if you have never told women not to call, your show can sound like it is mainly for men. Think about it, and tick if you think that is a possibility.

✓ **THINK OF ANY POLITICAL DECISION OR STORY IN THE NEWS**

And ask if it affects women and men differently. If no, you can mention in a lighthearted way that you have heard only from men about this issue that affects everyone. You can say, for example, that for the next ten minutes you will only read the texts of women.

✓ **IF A STORY AFFECTS WOMEN DIFFERENTLY**

For example a new policy on free maternal health care; then invite women to comment – also have some male voices here, because you want to make the point that important decisions affect both women and men.

✓ **THINK AGAIN OF THE LANGUAGE YOU USE**

Do you talk about some issues as if they were men’s issues and some as if they were the responsibility of women only? Such stereotyping can turn women off from participating.

2.4 THE ONE WHO RARELY CALLS

✓ WHICH OTHER GROUPS ARE EXCLUDED?

Think of ways to involve older men – by saying you are calling 40 to 70 year olds, for example. Thank a new caller and show that you have heard and valued what they had to say. People feel more courage to participate when they hear other people like them on a public platform. Take a small step to encourage new voices, and others like them will follow.

✓ WOMEN PARTICIPATION

Research shows that it is easier for women to participate at certain times of the day (e.g. late morning) and over weekends. Stations should make space to have interactive shows at those times.

✓ EVERY MONTH

Listen to a recording of the show again. Has there been any change?

"It's easy to get comfortable with serial callers and even to get comfortable with conflict. I realize we can do a lot more to attract new callers into the show and contribute to a wider set of views and values being represented on our station".

Thomas Bwire, editor Pamoja FM in Kibera, Kenya.

ROLE-PLAY EXERCISE

WORK WITH COLLEAGUES OR A FRIEND. TAKE TURNS AND DO THE FOLLOWING ROLE-PLAYS

1. You are the host and your partner is a serial caller. Your partner should do all the things serial callers do (remember, some have unique insights into their community and you must make them feel valued; some are just a pain). In a quick dialogue, work through your live interaction with a serial caller.
2. You are the host and your partner is a difficult caller. Let him act drunk, obnoxious. Let him express a strong view, so that you practice your skills as a devil's advocate.
3. Now your partner is a caller who insults a community who has been in conflict with his own. Practice being a live on-air mediator and try to find common ground. Humanize people on each side of the divide.
4. Next, your partner should play the shy or reluctant caller. Practice encouraging him to participate.

Take turns and repeat. This exercise will give you skills to rely on during live radio.

KEEP IN MIND

Your callers and texters are a goldmine of ideas. They may disagree and they may be shy, but without them you have nothing. To best mine their ideas, be more aware. Who is on the show and who is not? How can you change that?

It is bad journalism to have an imbalance of voices and opinions.

Attract more contributors by showing listeners that you care about the whole community. A radio talk show is like a community meeting where everyone has come together to work through an issue.

In the same way, **an interactive radio show is a space for people's voices to be heard** – all of their voices.

TOOL 3

LET'S TALK MONEY

INTERACTIVE SHOWS HOLD EXCITING POTENTIAL FOR GENERATING REVENUE. MANAGE SPONSORED SHOWS AND CREATE INTERACTIVE SHOWS THAT DRAW REVENUE.

ALMOST EVERYONE WITH ACCESS TO RADIO LISTENS TO INTERACTIVE RADIO SHOWS, ACCORDING TO RECENT RESEARCH IN KENYA AND ZAMBIA LED BY THE CENTRE OF GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

Interactive radio gives ordinary people a chance to participate in conversations that matter to them. If you want to make programs that matter, be a part of making people's voices heard. If you want to attract more audience and more revenue, make your interactive shows even better.

Your life is being on air but you can't live on air alone! This section helps you connect call-in shows with cash. It also helps you to avoid being a victim of commercialism. Your radio station needs to be sustainable to create ongoing value for the audience.

Lively and immediate. 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Topical. A loyal audience, which likes to engage with the station.

These are the rich resources that radio stations have and these are all buzzwords for advertisers, donors and public service organizations that need to reach people with their messages.

However, you do not want to dilute the value and impact of your service by

bowing completely to the interests of your funders. Station managers should drive a plan that markets the outlet's assets and the station should have a clear policy that draws the distinction between news and marketing.

This will allow talk show hosts to be true to the essence of their show – what attracted the audience in the first place. Whatever the funding model you have decided on, these basics apply.

3.1 GENERATE INCOME FOR SHOWS

Prove the point by understanding your audience

☒ YOU KNOW YOUR SHOW IS LIVELY AND AUDIENCES LOVE IT

You feel it. Listeners phone in and want to be a part of it. If yes, tick. BUT...

☒ CAN YOU DEMONSTRATE THIS?

Can you demonstrate this to the station's owner and board, and to advertisers, sponsors and marketers? Do you know the geographical reach of your station?

When people have to spend money, they want proof that it will be money well spent. The problem is: audience surveys are expensive. If you have a marketing and outreach department, they will have developed affordable ways for your station to attract sponsors, but if not: are you prepared to be innovative and make an effort? Get ready to answer YES - your station's survival depends on it!

3.1 GENERATE INCOME FOR SHOWS

✓ BE AWARE OF WAYS TO GATHER MORE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

If you have one, your marketing department may be able to help you, or work with a university or research institution to help support research.

You may want to try some very simple exploratory research yourself. Draft a simple questionnaire (see samples below). Ask staff, supporters and volunteers to go around the community to collect individuals' responses to at least 100 brief questionnaires. Analyse the results and pick out some of the best quotes. Present these in a document (1 -2 pages), which you can hand to potential sponsors.

See Sponsor Pack example:

- Adapt the questionnaire for your station's needs (pages 35 and 36).
- Before setting out, think about what you aim to understand.
- What would an advertiser or sponsor like to know?
- Identify the population and decide how you will collect the replies. For example, will you knock on doors? Find people in public places?
- Make sure you are asking the right question and that you are clear about how you will analyse and present the responses. Seek support in the analysis.

- You can have sections that are quantitative – where you'll need to tally yes/no responses or add up the responses in tick boxes. Because this is light research, it will not be representative of your audience but can provide some quick insights.

- Qualitative sections are nice to have to give you a sense of the texture and temperature of community responses. They also give you great quotes or anecdotes for reports, adding depth to a point made in the numbers part of the research. But: the analysis of responses to open-ended questions takes a specific kind of expertise, so engage knowledgeable people in this.

By the way, the results of the survey can be packed with ideas for your shows. Read the highlights of the results back to your listeners and ask them to comment further. Record their comments to amplify the data you collected in the survey.

It is important to pilot test the questionnaire with a few trusted colleagues and friends first, as one can easily forget to put in important questions, or some questions may be difficult to answer.

3.1 GENERATE INCOME FOR SHOWS

See other examples for ideas:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8RVM5DT>

<http://www.wksu.org/toolkit/chapter10/>

<http://www.communityradiotoolkit.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/StationPublicSurvey.pdf>

http://www.tffcam.org/radio/radio_listenership_survey.pdf

OR you can do SMS polling. The following are popular and not expensive to implement:

<http://frontlinesms.ning.com/>

(open-source software that runs on a laptop connected to a GSM modem, a mobile phone, or an online SMS service).

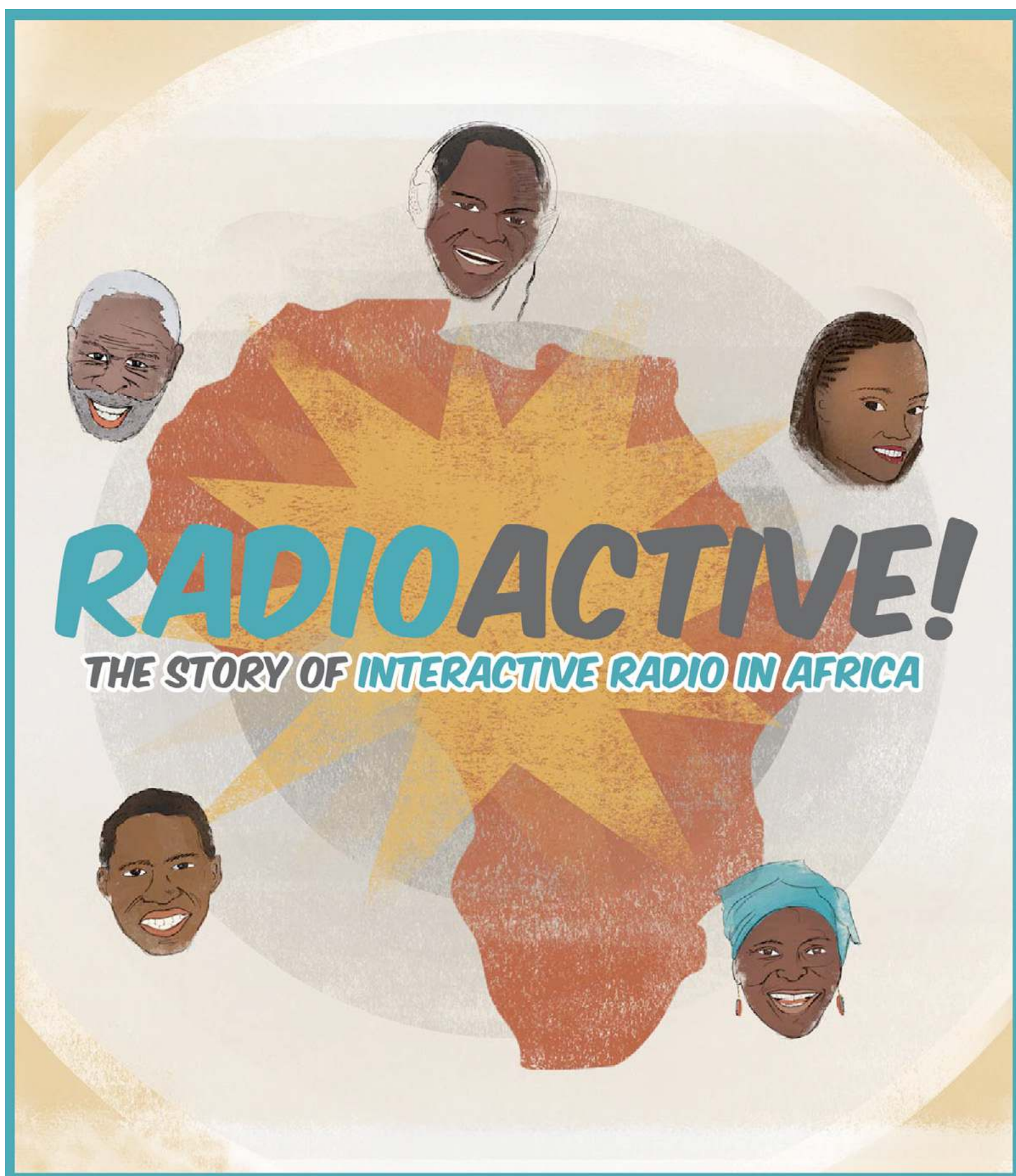
<http://www.smspoll.net/>

<http://www.polleverywhere.com/text-survey/?ref=sFSTQE6Z&gclid=CIXFwsrZ9MECFQKWtAod4XIAUw>

If your station has an experienced marketing and outreach department, reach out to them to tell them what kind of questions you would like to have answered.

Remember that this kind of quick research can only give a limited impression, but it will give you a sense of what people are thinking and doing. It can provide ideas for making the programs better, as well as getting your sponsors a taste of who is listening and what the impact might be. Be sure to tell your sponsors clearly that it was "rapid audience research" or "a dip into the listenership and participation patterns".

RADIOACTIVE: THE STORY OF INTERACTIVE RADIO IN AFRICA



3.1 GENERATE INCOME FOR SHOWS

SPONSOR PACK EXAMPLE: KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

RADIOACTIVE: THE STORY OF INTERACTIVE RADIO IN AFRICA

Almost everyone listens to the radio.
And almost everyone with a radio listens to interactive shows.

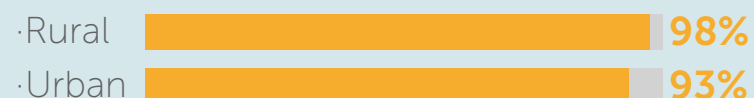
These are some key findings from "Politics and Interactive Media in Africa" (PiMA), a two-year DFID-ESRC funded research project in Kenya and Zambia led by the University of Cambridge's Centre of Governance and Human Rights, collaborating with researchers at the University of Nairobi and University of Zambia.

The research survey, conducted among 1400 households in two rural and urban constituencies in Kenya, shows that 89% of people have access to radio and 84% have access to mobile phones.

The key ingredients of interactive radio:
BIG AND GETTING BIGGER.

KENYA

Listen to radio



Use a mobile phone

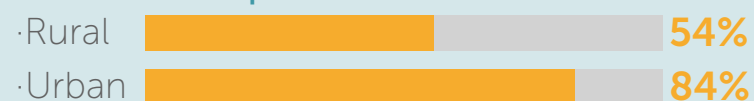


ZAMBIA

Listen to radio



Use a mobile phone



A PLATFORM FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND RESEARCH

Engaging citizens and listening to them about the decisions that affect their lives - that's a formula for good governance. Radio and mobile phones combined have the potential to ignite discussions and to amplify the voices of citizens. But we need to be able to analyse trends and patterns in large numbers of calls and texts. Africa's Voices leads innovation in making meaning of what contributors have to say: the audience is invited to participate via text messages, sent to a free short code. This data is then analysed using sophisticated techniques revealing rich insights into the themes of the conversation, the audience's beliefs and

behaviours, and how these change over time. In this way, the Africa's Voices platform helps organisations connect with and understand their target audiences, measure impact, and develop informed, evidence-based policy.

3.1 GENERATE INCOME FOR SHOWS

People love interactive shows and most of the same people who use radio also use cell phones. This is an opportunity for radio stations, who can maximize this interest to ensure even more listeners actively interact on radio programmes. It is an enormous opportunity for donors, advertisers and sponsors. With a low cost and big benefits.

Interactive radio is...

community engagement

Interactive radio is a public meeting where the community can come together to work through an issue. On air and by text, they can consult people and hear diverse voices.

Audiences feel that interactive programs recognize their right to speak their minds in public, even when their positions clash with those of leaders and experts featured on the show.

Interactive radio is...

the power of amplified voices

Live and local, interactive radio can take up key issues of the moment and have immediate impacts in the community. People can experience how they – together with the media – can be watchdogs for local politicians and service providers.

Interactive radio is...

more inclusive discussions

Interactive radio is the power of new voices, lively discussions and opportunities for public opinion to be formed, to be heard, and perhaps to influence politics.

Interactive radio is...

learning

Interactive radio, listeners say, teaches them about a broad variety of topics: development, politics, religion, and others.

Do you want to...

Engage audiences?

Bring broadcast to life?

Hear people's ideas?

Capture the attention of leaders?

Connect citizens and politicians?

Go where the people are...

Potential partners, sponsors and donors will get further inspiration from *Radioactive: The Story of Interactive Radio in Africa*. Show it to them!

It is based on findings from "Politics and Interactive Media in Africa" (PiMA), a two-year research project in Kenya and Zambia led by the University of Cambridge's Centre of Governance and Human Rights.

3.1 GENERATE INCOME FOR SHOWS

A win-win-win deal for the station, your sponsor and your audience

✓ STATION BENEFITS

You have income to support staff salaries, technical upgrade costs, communication and other running costs. High profile and trusted sponsors in turn attract other sponsors – a good thing! If your sponsor requires air-time for a specific message, you have content to build on.

✓ SPONSOR BENEFITS

The sponsor or commercial advertiser has reach into the community where they seek an ear for their message.

✓ AUDIENCE BENEFITS

If well crafted, the audience gets to hear important information, of benefit to them. Their trusted radio station has secure revenue, meaning it can continue to broadcast for them.

✓ WIN-WIN-WIN

It is only a win-win-win if you and your station have not compromised any values, and if you can show your listeners that you are still independently looking after their interests. Guess what: this is not as difficult as it sounds and will earn you more respect. The advertiser or sponsor is willing to invest, because you have the most valuable thing in media: **a loyal and trusting audience**. You can and should push back if you think your audience would not like something. What is the point, if the show will become less popular? The advertiser or sponsor will withdraw, because they will no longer have the dedicated audience.

FOR EXAMPLE:

You have a sponsor who wants to pay for air-time consisting of a long recorded message about malaria prevention and treatment methods.

Problem:

The audience will find a program that just talks at them, telling them what to do and is boring. Yet, you know the message is important.

Solution:

Have an audience participation show with a malaria expert. The audience should feel free to call in to talk about their experiences and challenges with malaria. The risk for the sponsor may seem very big: perhaps callers will say that they don't want to use bed nets or that they go to traditional healers. Let your sponsor understand that this is a reality in the community, and that hosting an interactive show is an effective way of acknowledging (wrong) perceptions, and correcting them in a way that maintains audience trust. There will be people in the audience who will advocate for proper malaria prevention and treatment, and the host and guest will have solid information and responses ready, as well as tactics to practically deal with malaria.

Win-win-win:

The audience likes listening to and participating in interactive shows (research has shown us that). Your station has compelling content. The sponsor has presented malaria prevention in a longer, more compelling and trusted format.

3.1 GENERATE INCOME FOR SHOWS

A win-win-win deal for the station, your sponsor and your audience

✓ A LONG SPONSORED MESSAGE

A long sponsored message can be predictable and can feel like it is telling people what to think and do. Do you agree? Then tick. Now prepare your pitch to sell the idea to do an interactive show instead – with a relevant example. Provide your sponsor with a package that could include audience analysis, if you've done research (see above) as well as a summary of research findings showing how compelling interactive radio is.

✓ BRAINSTORM

Brainstorm with colleagues how you can give sponsored shows the element of risk and excitement, free speech and healthy disagreements that attract people to talk shows and call-in shows. Persuade your sponsor to use an audience engagement format to promote a message. They may think it is risky, but show them how the message is more likely to 'stick' with your audience if they have looked at it from all angles and if they feel they are a part of it.

✓ SEEK A MIX OF SPONSORS

And income sources, which may include advertising revenue as well as sponsorship for shows. All your efforts should not be pinned onto one donor. If the donor withdraws, the station would collapse and you may not have the time to find a new supporter. It's hard to ask for money when you are down.

✓ HOW MANY ADVERTS YOU'LL ACCEPT

Establish guidelines for how many adverts you'll accept for every half hour on air. Some broadcasters say more than six minutes per 30-minute slot bombards the audience with commercial information and dilutes your integrity.

✓ WAYS OF GENERATING INCOME

Consider ways of generating income from the community itself - your audience - like donations, membership schemes, and/or payments for greetings read out on air.

✓ MARKETING

Every minute of every show every day is further marketing for your show. Research shows that the content and quality of a show drives participation. Your job is then to continue making quality radio.

✓ TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Look into training opportunities in your area on media marketing and media sustainability. Approach media development organizations with your wish to learn more about income generation and sustainability for community media.

3.1 GENERATE INCOME FOR SHOWS

ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP: SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

ADVERTISING

Short commercial clip.

Produced by advertiser, delivered to the station for broadcast.

Schedule for broadcast agreed.

Rates based on value for advertiser: package deal with number of broadcasts, placement in schedule, specified, etc.

No link to content.

SPONSORSHIP

▶ Duration negotiated. Can be short feature or hour long show.

▶ Content can be co-created.

▶ Schedule for broadcast agreed.

▶ Sponsorship fee based on value for both parties. Can be a series or a one-off broadcast.

▶ Linked to content, which can be a live show.

3.2 SPEND WHERE NECESSARY

✓ WAYS TO KEEP YOUR STATION UPDATED

You have several ways to tell if something at your station needs upgrading or updating: colleagues' and audience feedback, actual malfunction or a gut feeling.

Even if money is tight, part of your planning should include technology upgrades or replacement.

Spend to prevent losing income or support – make sure your station has a way of planning for and deciding about this. For example, perform an inventory, listing the age and condition of each piece of equipment. Ask a technical expert to evaluate the condition and recommendation on when it has to be replaced.

Make a note of the date, budget for it and **stick to the recommendation.**

Postponing the replacement date creates a bigger chance for a production or on-air disaster.

3.3 BE FRUGAL

This is true in our private lives, in our households and in the work that we do. Many radio stations across Africa have shown that once you have the equipment, a license to broadcast and a loyal following, it does not take much to run a radio broadcasting service.

✓ SERVICE AND PASSION

The essence of community centred radio is service and a passion for the issues that concern your audience. Someone who is driven mainly to earn money probably doesn't belong there. However, no-one working there should be exploited in the interest of saving money. Find a workable solution.

Here some possibilities:

- Work with students, who could volunteer at the station for experience.
- Draw radio staff from working people who like to volunteer at a radio station as a hobby after hours.
- Invite and train loyal callers who have potential to be a host – that is true radio for and by the community.

✓ THINK OUT OF THE BOX

Offer services in exchange for goods. Make an inventory of what you have to offer and barter:

- Technical equipment and studio recording facilities can be rented out to produce adverts, and music recordings, or charge for those services.
- Offer air time for advertisements in exchange for a service or goods.
- Work with the telecommunications provider. The station can generate revenue from calls received.

✓ CONTENT IS KING

You may know of high tech studios with expensive state of the art equipment. This is tempting for a tech lover, but radio is going the opposite way. The move towards online broadcasting and the mushrooming of digital stations means there'll be so much more variety and choice for your audience who will go to the content that attracts them most. Attract listeners through innovative programs and a distinctive voice.

3.4 WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

Often when there is talk of sustainability, thoughts immediately go to economic considerations, but that is only part of the story. How will the station, the show, the audience be sustained - in every sense?

✓ QUALITY

Do people like listening to your show? Is it popular and sought after? This is a key ingredient to being able to secure a long life for it. Research shows that the quality of a show drives participation.

✓ COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

Your audience shares a deep interest in their community – which can be a geographic community (countrywide or town-based, depending on the footprint of the station) or a community of interest (religion, language). If your show has the ability to create a new space for citizen dialogue, you have hit on the core value of interactive radio, which will help your station flourish.

✓ CASH

Explore all options in 1, 2 and 3.

Resources on community media and sustainability:

Internews Community Media Guide:

<https://internews.org/sites/default/files/resources/InternewsCommunityMediaGuide2009.pdf>

Radio for Peacebuilding - Sustainability of Community Radios, A Training Guide:

<https://www.sfcg.org/programmes/rfpa/pdf/2012-manual-sustain-color-en.pdf>

Developing Radio Partners Guidebook on Sustainability:

<http://www.developingradiopartners.org/downloads/Lo%20Res%20Guidebook.pdf>

KEEP IN MIND

You know your audience best. You know what will appeal to them and what kind of content they will find offensive or boring. A sense of community on radio can be translated to commercial value. However, be sure that the essence of what attracted an audience in the first place stays intact. Too much advertising may make a show suddenly unpopular, which is not what advertisers or sponsors want

either. Most important, independence and integrity in journalism and a loyal, engaged audience are what give your radio station value. If a radio programme really respects and engages its audience, it has created a community. Communicate all this to sponsors and advertisers. Take them by the hand to educate them about your medium and it will work much better for them, your station and your audience.

Radio audience engagement survey

Name of radio station

Station logo

Radio X requests your help. Please complete the following Listenership survey to help us undersyand more about our audience. Thank you for your time.

Name (optional)	Gender		Age: (tick appropriate block)			
	M	F	18 -25	26-35	36-45	45+
Tick which best describes the area and home you line in			What is the highest level of education you obtained (tick)			
Urban	Rural	Informal or traditional home	Small brick house (2 rooms))	Large brick house	Multi room brick house	Primary school
						High school
						Tertiary education
						Post-graduate

1. How many times a week do you listen to the radio? Tick where appropriate.

- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Twice a week
- ☐ 3 – 5 times a week
- ☐ Every day

2. How many times a week do you listen to talk shows? Tick where appropriate.

- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Twice a week
- ☐ 3 – 5 times a week
- ☐ Every day

3. What time of the day do listen to talk shows? Tick appropriate time slot.

- ☐ Less than expected
- ☐ As expected
- ☐ More than expected
- ☐ Consistently more

4. Tell us why this is a good time of the day to listen to talk shows.

.....
...

5. Rank our station's talk shows in order of preference. (1 is your preferred and 4 the least favourite).

☐ Talk show A

☐ Talk show B

☐ Talk show C

☐ Talk show D

6. Have you ever called into or texted into a talk show? If yes, how often?

☐ Never

☐ Once

☐ 2 – 10 times

☐ Regularly

7. Tell us about your experience (Note: prompt the respondent to tell you why never? Why regularly, etc. Ask this as an open question, so you get good information that really reflects the person's interest).

.....

8. What would make you call in or text more regularly?

.....

9. State why you like/dislike talk shows.

.....

10. What would make you participate in talk shows more often?

.....

☐ Please check this box to grant us permission to use your feedback for the purpose of inviting sponsorship/advertising to our radio station. Your feedback is valued and very much appreciated!

TOOL 4

LET'S GET TECHNICAL

MAXIMIZE AUDIENCE INTERACTION WITH CALL-INS, SMS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

ALMOST EVERYONE WITH ACCESS TO RADIO LISTENS TO INTERACTIVE RADIO SHOWS, ACCORDING TO RECENT RESEARCH IN KENYA AND ZAMBIA LED BY THE CENTRE OF GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

Interactive radio gives ordinary people a chance to participate in conversations that matter to them. If you want to make programmes that matter, be a part of making people's voices heard. If you want to attract more audience and more revenue, make your interactive shows even better.

By mastering technology, we can maximize the power of radio. But when technology fails, it can trap us. This section talks about how to master call-ins (connecting the caller to the program via a telephone hybrid), SMS messages (to hear other voices and collect trends from a crowd) and social media (extending the conversation online). These are all ways to make your listeners' views heard.

Research shows that overwhelmingly, in many parts of Africa, people are using mobile phones and listening to the radio.

It is thus not unexpected that the interactive programs that combine these two media should be so compelling to audiences. Picking up the phone to call is

the most direct way of communicating. SMS is cheap.

Social media build on networks of real life relationships. All of these tools make it possible for listeners to get their hands on being part of the story. How well do you know the tools?

4.1 RADIO IS LIVE! BE IN CONTROL OF THE CALLS

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO GET CALLERS ON AIR?

If not, read through before you tick.

✓ **BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE TECHNOLOGY**

Even if you are not the station's technician, it's a good idea to have a basic knowledge of the technology. A telephone hybrid unit connects phone calls to the mixer unit. You might have dozens of lines for callers or only one. An office PABX intercom system can double up as a hybrid for receiving calls and can be connected to the mixer. Some radio stations even make do with playing incoming calls over a speaker phone, with a microphone picking up the sound and feeding it into the mixer. If possible, a hybrid unit and multiple telephone lines are preferable.

✓ **YOU CAN STIMULATE DISCUSSION**

By pre-recording an audience participation show in a town hall and produce a shortened version for play-out. When you play this edited version, invite further interaction and even 'comments on the comments' from callers or from people who like to text in.

In this way, you are able to set the tone and give direction with the comments, whilst keeping the excitement of a live call.

✓ **DELAY**

A technical delay device makes it possible to delay the on-air broadcast for a few seconds. This allows you to not take the call on air or to disconnect the call ahead of time if the content is unacceptable.

✓ **TALK SHOWS CAN GO HORRIBLY WRONG**

You are juggling phone lines, which convey the thoughts and opinions of real people. You need to be skilled enough with your hands that you can focus on using your head. Are you? A colleague can help you practise.

See [TECH TOUCH EXERCISE](#), below.

4.1 RADIO IS LIVE! BE IN CONTROL OF THE CALLS

✓ IF THE TECHNOLOGY BREAKS DOWN

As much as call-ins can be satisfying for easy talkers, it can be frustrating for everyone if the technology breaks down or if the caller cannot get through. Did you know? Research shows the two most important reasons listeners say that they do not call is cost and an expectation that they won't get through anyway.

- Try to reduce cost for your caller by making a tariff trade deal with network providers.
- Invest in a hybrid system that can handle more lines, so that more callers can get through.

✓ BAD PHONE LINES CAN SPOIL YOUR SHOW

Don't rely only on technology that you cannot control – have a standby guest or recorded community voices available to tide over any periods when the telephone network is not functioning well.

✓ STUDIO EQUIPMENT CAN ALSO FAIL YOU

Is it time to think about investing in regular maintenance or an upgrade? Once you have thrown or given away equipment you can't use anymore, draft an inventory, showing the purchase date, condition of the goods and recommended replacement date. Every quarter, inspect the inventory for any repairs or replacements needed.

✓ DO YOU REALLY NEED TO UPGRADE TECHNOLOGY?

Assess what your station needs most to boost call-in quality and volume. Do you need to upgrade technology in order to field more calls into the hybrid system OR do you simply have to change your approach and be more inviting to listeners?

TECH TOUCH EXERCISE *You can do this on your own or as a (competitive) team exercise.*

ON YOUR OWN

Walk around the offices and studio and find every piece of technology you can see. Touch each one and name it. As you touch each item, ask yourself: what does it do and how would you use it? Take care to assess its power status: is it plugged into

the mains, is it a standalone, self-powered, or does it require batteries? Then, list all the items you have found and touched and complete the questionnaire. Ask a radio engineer or broadcast trainer to assess your answers.

IN GROUPS *(as a team building or group learning exercise)*

The exercise is led and adjudicated by a broadcast engineer, who randomly assigns all staff to two groups, who go around touching and naming pieces of technology. Ready, steady go: the two groups have 30 minutes to go in search of technology and to report back. The groups must list and accurately identify the technical and practical functions of each piece. This should be fun, and ‘wrong’ answers are just an opportunity to learn more about radio broadcasting, to set goals and timelines for better awareness and to guard against on-air disasters. If everybody knows how to ensure a piece of tech does not let them down, then they will take appropriate steps like learn how to use it, ensure batteries are replaced regularly or that the software is upgraded.

Of course, the winning group gets a prize for being Team Top-tech. This can be something technical, like USB memory sticks, or treats, like chocolate.

Then, have a group discussion at the end to share thoughts about the biggest surprise from the exercise. Conversation can also highlight all the tech pieces that both teams knew. Let the winning team give feedback on the additional pieces of technology that they identified.

Lastly, do gift or throw away any obsolete or broken pieces of equipment, which just crowd the space and confuse new recruits.

Name of item	Describe its function	How do you use it?	How do you ensure the tech does not let you down?	Essential (E) or Nice to have? (N)

Items likely to be found at a radio station

Microphones (different types for different uses); Field recorders; CD player; Editing console; Mixers;

Variety of cables; Software sets; Headphones; Monitors; Jack box; Computer playout systems, etc.

4.2 SMS: CONNECT AND ANALYSE TRENDS

THE MOBILE PHONE IN KENYA

Research found that the mobile phone reaches nearly everyone (97%) and SMS is very popular, with 72% of the urban population and 51% of the rural population sending at least one SMS per day. In most countries in africa, mobile penetration is on the rise. According to *African Journals Online*, the widespread use of cell phones has led to a proliferation of messages sent using SMS.

✓ TIME IS LIMITED?

On radio, texting is good for handling large numbers. Have you ever had so many calls that there is no way that everyone can get on air in one show, where time is limited? If yes, tick.

✓ ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTORS

Did you realize that many contributors prefer to stay anonymous or are shy to talk on live radio – but they DO want to make a point? If yes, tick and read on about how you can maximize text-ins to get more and better input from your audience.

✓ LISTENERS' FEEDBACK

It is a good idea to read some of the texts out loud and simply count the number of texts the show gets in response to an on-air question. This gives your listeners feedback and makes them feel connected. But you can do EVEN MORE. You can use text-ins to the show in a more sophisticated and systematic way.

4.2 SMS: CONNECT AND ANALYSE TRENDS

✓ MORE MESSAGES THAN YOU CAN READ

Radio stations usually receive far more messages than they can read through during a live show. This can lead to frustration for the audience member, who is texting in with his or her opinion. If the text is not read on air, the content is lost and the opportunity to actively involve your audience is wasted.

While you cannot read every text, you can use SMS software to collect views and analyse trends more effectively. Check out these services and select what will work best in your setting:

[Freedom Fone](#)

[Telerivet](#)

[RapidSMS](#)

[Jazler](#)

[FrontlineSMS:Radio](#)

These platforms strengthen interaction between a host and communities and capture feedback via SMS and voice messaging. They help you to see trends in SMS – which in turn gives you insights into the issues that are important to your listeners.

Using SMS software, your radio station can make sense of large numbers of text messages. Instead of reading text messages one by one, they are bulk-analysed to capture the pulse of listeners on a topic. These bulk messages can be viewed on a computer screen, which is easier to review and read than on a mobile phone. Such software also allows stations to permanently archive their messages instead of deleting

them from their phones. Now the station can quickly receive feedback, allowing the host to gauge interest in a topic. Responses can also be analysed by region or gender. To keep a personal touch, the station can still read individual messages, but it now can put that message into context. They can tell listeners if it is a typical comment or not (for example, “80% of texters say something similar”). Over time, understanding text trends can help the station decide on broadcast topics.

Other advantages of such platforms is that station staff no longer use their personal cell phones for receiving texts from listeners – something they often have to do and which can clog up their cell phones.

But beware:

Because such platforms aggregate text responses and reflect them as a trend (based on keywords or yes/no responses to a question entered), they can easily create the impression that the trend is representative of the entire population. Talk show hosts should be careful to always say: x% of the people who texted are of this opinion.

See also: [Case studies, examples of Frontline SMS below.](#)

4.2 SMS: CONNECT AND ANALYSE TRENDS

✓ DON'T FORGET

Work out carefully what data you need and how you want to use it. Focus on what interests your audience.

EXAMPLE 1

(using a simple yes/no poll)

You can ask your audience to respond yes or no to an issue in the news. Choose a debate or an issue about which the public seems to have divided opinions. For example: There is a motion that schools should close early for the annual summer vacation, to give children time to recover from the stress of disruptive political events. Some people think it is best for children to have a longer break, as the year has had many stresses, while others believe schools should not end early, as children need to catch up after so much of their curriculum has already been interrupted. You should frame the discussion: give context and examples of opinions. Then clearly spell out the question on-air. "Send us your texts, with a simple yes or no to number: XXXXXX. The question is: should schools close early for the holidays this year"? Yes, if you agree with the viewpoint that children need a longer break because of the stresses of this year, or no, if you think schools should end at the normal time, to give time to catch up with the curriculum".

The software allows you to tally numbers of yes vs. no (and even spoilt votes) from a total, so that you will be able to gather and feed back data to your audience. For example, you might say on the air: "Of the 400 listeners who texted, 312 said 'no', and 92 said 'yes'. That means more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of those who texted said no, schools should

not end early". Again, be careful not to say $\frac{3}{4}$ of listeners (only a small percentage of listeners texted, remember!), and also not to say: $\frac{3}{4}$ of Kenyans, Zambians, etc.

Being able to relay the vote tally back to your listeners has at least two important functions: First, everyone who texted really feels part of the interaction, because their vote (was) counted. Second, you get to gauge broadly the views of the listeners who texted in.

EXAMPLE 2

(key word response analysis)

Many SMS platforms: Radio can take your show to a level where you can identify and analyse key words from messages with more information than just yes and no. This service has been extremely helpful in disaster situations, where cell phones and radio combine to identify key emergency needs from the community and even send out specific alerts, based on text messages received. But it also can be used for fun or just to enrich your show. For example, ahead of a major soccer tournament, you could ask listeners to text in their location/town and the team they support. The software can be programmed to give you rich information like: 80% of the people who texted from town A have the Ghana team as their favourite. Or: texters from town B support either Zimbabwe or Namibia.

Read about radio stations that have used a platform for SMS analysis at the end of this tool and work out scenarios to use or improve on the way your station deals with text for audience feedback.

4.3 SOCIAL MEDIA

EXTEND CONNECTIONS AND LOOK AHEAD

We know social media is about social networking, and it is becoming more and more popular. Social media is an OPPORTUNITY for any radio station to connect even better with current audiences and to follow their audiences where they like to go, online.

✓ TECHNOLOGY

Specifically information and communications technology (ICTs) allow us a wide range of abilities to connect: we can reach into the lives of always-connected online audiences, whilst still connecting even with illiterate people, for whom phoning in is the ideal way to communicate. Know your audience and let the tech go where your audience is.

✓ CALLS, TEXTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

More and more radio stations not only have Facebook pages, but they use the Facebook and Twitter comment and posting system to connect on air with their listeners. Tick if you can list at least three reasons why they do this.

- Attract listeners in every possible way – through social media for those who prefer it.
- Connect with people who can't currently listen but who have been attracted by an item on your radio station's Facebook page.
- Amplify the efforts of journalists and talk show hosts – what you have created on air gets a second life online.

✓ POWERFUL DIALOGUE

Now a talk show host's work is no longer just about fielding the calls; it is about being able to analyse and give feedback on texts that have come in and about checking Twitter and Facebook (or other social media) comments. You are the one who can generate a powerful dialogue among all these forms of communication. It is very exciting and it is not easy.

✓ MANAGEMENT

Practice managing these many inputs with a trusted colleague or friend. Use a trending topic on Twitter, with similar content from another social media source; imagine that you keep feeding your audience with new input and they in turn keep feeding in interesting comments. Don't let it overwhelm you – it must be stimulating but not chaotic.

✓ THE FUTURE

Consider your station and where technology and trends in ICT will take you in five years' time: read about the potential benefits and challenges of [the migration to digital broadcasting](#).

4.3 SOCIAL MEDIA - EXTEND CONNECTIONS AND LOOK AHEAD

TIPS FOR COMBINING TEXT, SOCIAL MEDIA AND CALLS

Your show can have rich and diverse inputs from your listeners, who have contributed in a variety of ways. You don't have to have everything, but if your

station can handle it and you can juggle it, you can have all or a combination of the following:

- ✓ Calls.
- ✓ Texts.
- ✓ Analysis of texts to show trends.
- ✓ Comments from facebook, twitter or other social media.

HOW DO YOU DO IT?

For the mass text analysis and social media, you need a computer with reliable internet from which you read the social media feed and the texts coming in via a text aggregator like Frontline

SMS. You can have a deck or dashboard with easy access to both, or you could toggle between two screen windows. Handle the calls via the hybrid as usual.

NOW MASH IT UP

Switch between reading individual texts, comments from social media and taking voice calls on air.

To avoid clumsiness, work out your own routine. You could decide to just rotate between the three, but that would not work if there is much more activity via text than on calls, for example. In the same way, if there is a dynamic continuous trend on calls and the texts are quiet, follow the

calls. Go where the comments are and tell your audience where the activity is – this way, they feel their interaction is being noticed. Advertising breaks give you time to collate some texts. Read your selection out after the break for fresh input.

Do not juggle for the sake of juggling if you cannot handle it smoothly. It would feel like a cheap trick to your audience; and they will not feel that you appreciate the contact they've made.

Keep it straight and simple, until you build up some experience. Build experience by first handling one audience input method. When you've become fluent in relaying one method, then add another, and so on.

4.3 SOCIAL MEDIA - EXTEND CONNECTIONS AND LOOK AHEAD

CASE STUDIES ON THE USE OF SMS SOFTWARE ACROSS AFRICA

[Africa's Voices](#), a pilot research project by the Centre of Governance and Human Rights at the University of Cambridge found that SMS platforms such as FrontlineSMS and Freedom Fone helped to convert one-way information flow on radio into an open dialogue, allowing listeners to publicly express their ideas, perspectives, questions and feedback, sometimes for the first time in their lives.

The team saw a huge increase in the number of responses when radio stations began reading out the text messages received from listeners on the radio programs. Audiences like responding to questions posed on a radio program. Africa's Voices has worked with partner radio stations in Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Tanzania. In Zambia, for example, [Breeze FM radio](#) uses FrontlineSMS to update journalists. After gathering news tips received from the general public, the radio station organizes the evidence, and sends SMS messages to journalists out in the field, encouraging them to verify the facts and report.

From the software platform, auto-replies can be sent to incoming SMS, which lets listeners know

that their texts have been received and are being considered. Radio presenters conducting polling can quickly and easily visualize incoming data from listeners. At a glance, they will be able to understand the results, and incorporate the data into a live program.

Even stations without direct access to computers have used text aggregators. For example, producers would use a cyber café to upload data and read the results on air from printouts.

Search for Common Ground, an NGO that helps communities resolve conflict through media, also looked at the use of FrontlineSMS across three West African countries (Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea). This [research](#) warns that technical challenges can severely affect the implementation of FrontlineSMS. Frequent electricity cut offs, computer breakdowns and station generator blowouts took the stations off-air. These technical problems affected the stations' ability to collect data regularly and consistently. As a result, trends could not be analysed as frequently as stations would have wished.

The lesson: do not introduce an SMS software platform if your station does not have the infrastructure to handle it. BUT, keep striving for new ways to make your audience's voice meaningful. Check out the resources listed above for updates and for the right fit for your station and region.

KEEP IN MIND

Mobile phones give more people the chance to contribute content. In other media forms, user generated content is becoming very trendy, but the basic tools of radio have long made it possible for the user (the listener) to generate

content through their comments on phone-ins, SMS and social media. Make sure that you master the technology that makes this powerful interaction possible. And also take the technical and logistical steps to make calling easier.

TOOL 5

BECAUSE IT MATTERS

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE NEEDS TO
BE HEARD. INTERACTIVE RADIO MAKES
POLITICS MORE INCLUSIVE

ALMOST EVERYONE WITH ACCESS TO RADIO LISTENS TO INTERACTIVE RADIO SHOWS, ACCORDING TO RECENT RESEARCH IN KENYA AND ZAMBIA LED BY THE CENTRE OF GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

Interactive radio gives ordinary people a chance to participate in conversations that matter to them. If you want to make programmes that matter, be a part of making people's voices heard. If you want to attract more audience and more revenue, make your interactive shows even better.

People's opinions and ideas count. On radio, people can make their voices heard. For many it is the only way to be connected to decision-makers and it is a convenient and reliable way to be informed about everything that matters to them. This section reminds us how powerful radio can be: it can inform people of their rights, and it can help them hold powerful people to account. Working in radio comes with a responsibility to ensure people's voices are heard.

5.1 WHY AND HOW RADIO MAKES A DIFFERENCE

✓ INTERACTIVE RADIO IS LIKE A PUBLIC MEETING

Interactive radio is like a public meeting where the community has an opportunity to come together to think through an issue. Everyone is allowed to speak. People feel that interactive programs give them a voice, even when their positions clash with those of leaders and experts featured on the show.

✓ PEOPLE'S IDEAS NEED TO COUNT

More and more, politicians are realizing that people's ideas need to count. More countries are allowing and encouraging citizens to participate in governance. On the radio, new voices and lively discussions help form public opinion and hold powerful people to account.

✓ THE NEED TO INTERACT

The public, donors, media and government need each other and need to interact –that can happen on interactive radio. People get their voices heard, can be educated and get access to experts and leaders. NGOs and donors get important issues on the public agenda. The media attracts listeners and revenue. The government gets to know about the public's needs and can interact with the people they lead.

✓ TALK CAN BE THERAPEUTIC

Talking on radio has value in and of itself. And of course, what people say reveals insights into their interests, dreams and fears.

✓ ONCE LISTENERS START INTERACTING...

They are no longer a passive audience. They become a public gathering, voicing their opinions. Radio has incredible value when people feel their voices will be heard and they can hear others like themselves interacting with hosts, authorities and experts. Even when they are strangers, people become united through making their voices public.

✓ IMPACTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Radio can take up key issues of the moment and have concrete, noticeable impacts in the community.

✓ RADIO WATCHDOGS

People can experience how they – together with the media – can be watchdogs of local politicians and service providers.

TALK LEADS TO ACTION:

Mandevu:

Mendevu (Lusaka) has long had issues with flooding. After some young children drowned, a lot of upset and conversation was voiced on the local radio station. Not long afterward, a bridge was built. Community members believe that the radio conversations drew attention to the issue and pushed local authorities to build the bridge.

Kenya:

Radio Citizen in the Rift Valley had a show focusing on deteriorating security in Trans-Nzoia. A listener called in with an alert: thugs were raiding a home. Within ten minutes, police were at the scene. The talk show host believes that the radio conversation pushed the police to act.

5.2 HOW PEOPLE LEARN ON RADIO

✓ INTERACTIVE RADIO EDUCATES PEOPLE

Listeners say interactive radio educates them about a broad variety of topics: development in their area and nationwide, politics, agriculture, religion, and more. They learn by hearing others' opinions. They learn about the issues and topics under discussion. They learn about views other than their own.

✓ A PLACE OF LEARNING

Tuning into the radio is like gaining access to a place of learning. People are in the safety and comfort of their homes, yet they are also in a public place filled with discussion and new information. The radio brings the world into your home and takes your home to the world.

✓ LEARNING ON THE RADIO GOES BOTH WAYS

Experts can learn from people sharing real life experiences. A host needs to listen well and ensure that a meaningful conversation takes place between a caller and an expert guest.

✓ EXPERT OPINION AND PARTICIPANTS' LIFE EXPERIENCE

This mix can impart useful tips and guidance. For example, a programme with a health topic for discussion and with listeners contributing can both provide information on new treatments and paint a practical picture of how someone dealt with the experience.

WHAT THE MEDIA SAY ABOUT INTERACTIVE RADIO AND POLITICS

Martin, a talk show host on "Issue of the Day", Breeze FM in Zambia says that when citizens don't have opportunities to speak to their political leaders, politicians will be unaware of citizens' needs and priorities.

Jared, a talk show host on Radio Nam Lolwe in Kenya suggests that hosts can represent people in the way that politicians should: *"I don't want to compare myself with anyone, but what I know is that I serve more people than what [my] ward rep or MP serves."*

Citizen TV in Kenya advertises its interactive morning show 'Power Breakfast' as having an aim to bring *"leaders closer to you, so you can ask them the tough questions"*.

Norman, a station manager at Yatsani Radio in Zambia says, *"People are very willing to be heard on the radio because I think they want to have an audience with their area Member of Parliament.... This is a general complaint in Zambia that once elected they are hardly seen in their area."*

5.3 A PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY

✓ INTERACTIVE RADIO MAKES A DIFFERENCE

As talk show host or program editor, media manager or owner, every time you host an interactive show, you are making voices heard. More voices is good; it means more diversity.

✓ CONVERSATIONS ON THE RADIO CAN BE BOTH EXCITING AND IMPACTFUL

Skilled hosts make the audience feel like they are participating in a real life drama – with surprises and new insights from listeners who contribute and become part of the conversation. These conversations can shape politics and service delivery.

✓ MORE LISTENERS CAN BE REPRESENTED

Radio stations have a responsibility to reflect more voices of those who cannot afford or are too shy to call. Send a journalist with a recorder to the streets and play those opinions back later. Better still, be in the community when a live talk show is on, and give your listeners a phone to call in if they like.

✓ TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP BRING MORE VOICES IN

For example, FrontlineSMS allows you to turn large volumes of texts into trends to feed back to the participants in the show – creating an ongoing sense of participation and belonging in a space that is about people's voices and views.

✓ QUALITY COUNTS

Listen to what people are saying. Some interactions can be a bit empty and don't offer anything new. Interactions on radio should contribute to an understanding of our world.

✓ INTERACTIVE RADIO TEACHES TOLERANCE

An interactive show with many diverse voices and political opinions sends the message that people can be united in a community even when they have different opinions.

✓ INTERACTIVE RADIO OFFERS A CHANCE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

It is a privilege that audiences allow us into their lives – and that we in turn can amplify their voices. It is a responsibility to reflect their views fairly.

"Radio cuts across class and economic status. You don't have to be literate to engage in interaction on radio. On radio you can speak back. Voice-to-voice is the most human thing, using the most basic communication tool that humans have. It is a no-brainer: combine radio with a cell phone and it is a very personal communication – and at the same time this communication can make a difference in society".

Joseph Warungu, Director Content Strategy, African Media Initiative; former BBC Africa Editor.

“Politics and Interactive Media in Africa” (PiMA) was a two-year DFID-ESRC funded research project (ES/J018945/1) in Kenya and Zambia led by **the University of Cambridge’s Centre of Governance and Human Rights**, collaborating with researchers at the **University of Nairobi** and **University of Zambia**.

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