HOW SUPPORT TO LOCAL RADIO STATIONS CAN EMPOWER SOCIAL CHANGE

A case study from Zambia
The power of local radio in Zambia

**Media landscape**

Access to radio: 96%

Use radio: 67%

Number of commercial and community radio stations currently following liberalisation of radio broadcasting rules in 1991:

- On air: 89
- Licensed: 141

Radio is the most accessed medium, particularly important for reaching disenfranchised audiences (e.g. women and those in rural areas).


**Potential of local radio**

Local community and commercial radio stations are uniquely placed to provide a platform for a diversity of views and voices from marginalised sections of the population, and to provide an alternative perspective to the national media.

**Barriers to achieving this impact:**

- Organisational
- Practitioner

Legal framework:

- Finance and administration
- Editorial values
- Technical capacity and maintenance
- Professionalism (skills)
- Quality output
- Audiences
- Networks
- HR management
- Management
- Income generation
- Governance

Community radio
Strengthening independent media in Zambia 2014-2018

Support to 15 local radio stations throughout Zambia

**Practitioner level**
- improving editorial processes, production and technical skills, use and maintenance of equipment, understanding of audiences and use of audience feedback.

**Organisational level**
- improving effective generation and management of available resources, HR processes, and media networks.

1. Hot FM
2. Chikuni Radio
3. Radio Icengelo
4. Kasempa FM
5. Radio Musi-oa-Tunya

Experienced BBC Media Action radio production mentors working closely with partner stations throughout the duration of the project.

Training workshops on specific skills (e.g. news and editorial guidelines) held by international experts drawn from the wider BBC and media fraternity to complement the locally based mentors.

Production of weekly governance magazine programmes and outdoor debates by each partner station (supported by BBC Media Action mentors) holding local leaders to account and facilitating discussion with listeners on issues of importance.

Co-production of a radio drama (the Story of Gondo) tackling deeply entrenched social norms around political participation, such as voting by tribal affiliation, corruption and misogynistic attitudes to women's participation and representation in political life.

Community outreach through listening groups and community journalists.

Supporting local radio partners to improve their social media output.

1. Hot FM
2. Chikuni Radio
3. Radio Icengelo
4. Kasempa FM
5. Radio Musi-oa-Tunya
6. Itenzhi-Tezhi
7. Radio Maria
8. Radio Kabangabanga
9. Mphangwe FM
10. Radio Yangeni
11. Oblate Radio Liseli
12. Breeze FM
13. Radio Mano
14. Radio Luswepo
15. Iso FM

Community outreach through listening groups and community journalists.
How partner stations’ governance programmes performed

Audience profile

Reach

1,730,000
32% of the population aged 16–55 in the broadcast area

Value for money

£2.89
per person reached

Regular reach

973,000
19% of the population aged 16–55 in the broadcast area

Compared to non-listeners in the stations’ catchment areas, listeners of the governance programmes were more likely to be male (55%), older and better educated. This became more pronounced for regular listeners:

Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>16–24</th>
<th>25–34</th>
<th>35–44</th>
<th>45–55</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age (%)

Education (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No schooling</th>
<th>Some primary</th>
<th>Completed primary</th>
<th>Completed secondary</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Income (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cannot afford food</th>
<th>Cannot afford clothes</th>
<th>Cannot afford durables</th>
<th>Cannot afford a car</th>
<th>Cannot afford a house</th>
<th>No financial problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Location

Rural

56% of total sample

1 Figures from BBC Media Action household survey (n=3936) with 16–55 year olds in districts where partner stations broadcast. Data collected in late 2018. 2 Regularly reached is a listener who tunes in at least twice a month. 3 Samples are reflective of the population gender, age and location according to census data.
Why have people listened?

Factors of the capacity strengthening approach that helped to drive engagement of communities

- Use of community journalists to improve station’s interaction with the community
- Community engagement
- Better production skills
- More knowledge about governance issues
- Improved editorial integrity
- Better presentation, interviewing, scripting, and package-making skills

These factors led to people listening to and engaging with the content

“We use feedback from audiences to improve our programmes, and to come up with ideas for news. When people give you a full idea about what’s going on, you can then decide where the idea fits.”
Lead Producer, Iso FM

“Kabangabanga is now a household name, they air issues that affect our community, they are for us.”
Female listener, Radio Kabangabanga
Achieving impact

Pathway to impact

Exposure to programmes

Knowledge

Discussion

Confidence/self-efficacy

Political participation

Increased interest in local governance issues

• Regular listeners were **1.5 times as likely** to say that they follow governance issues ‘all the time’ compared to those who did not listen regularly.
• **84%** of listeners agreed that the programmes had led them to pay more attention to governance issues.

Increased knowledge of rights and politics

• Regular listeners were **1.5 times as likely** to be able to spontaneously name at least five civic rights compared to those who did not listen regularly.
• Regular listeners were **1.5 times as likely** to feel confident that they could explain to a friend or family member how the voting process worked compared to those who did not listen regularly.
• **82%** of listeners agreed they have more knowledge about important local governance issues as a result of listening to the radio programmes.

Discussed governance issues more

• Regular listeners were **1.6 times as likely** to say they discussed local and national issues with family all the time compared with non-regular listeners. People talked about how they now discuss topics that they used to be afraid of talking about openly.
• **32%** of regular listeners say they discussed local and national issues with family all or most of the time compared with non-regular listeners.

Increased confidence to engage in politics and civic life

• Regular listeners were **1.5 times as likely** to feel confident that they could have a good discussion in the community about the policies and manifestos of the different parties compared to those who did not listen regularly.
• **62%** of regular listeners agreed with feeling confident that they could have a good discussion in the community about the policies and manifestos of the different parties.
Achieving impact

Increased agency to influence governance issues in the community and hold local leaders accountable

- Regular listeners were **1.5 times as likely** to think that they could positively influence politics and governance issues that affected members of their community compared to those who did not listen regularly.
- **58%** of regular listeners agreed they could positively influence politics and governance issues that affected members of their community.

Increased political participation

- Regular listeners were **2.4 times as likely** to say they attended a political debate in the past year compared to those who did not listen regularly.
- Regular listeners were **2.1 times as likely** to report they contacted a local official, such as a counsellor or a government agency worker, in the past year compared to those who did not listen regularly.

Examples of impact of programming on service delivery

Case studies showed how the programmes helped to improve engagement between citizens and local authorities, resulting in examples of governance issues being addressed. These were verified by listeners, station staff and local stakeholders.

Helped farmers in Katete, Eastern Province, exercise pressure on government and agricultural company to compensate them for receiving rotten seeds

Exposed gender based violence in Gwembe, Southern Province, that led to the arrest and trial of the perpetrator

Prompted authorities to construct boreholes in Itezhi-Tezhi, Central Province, giving a community access to water

Contributed to the building of toilets in the main market, Kasempa, North-Western Province

Pressed for a new waste management strategy to be set up in Katete, Eastern Province

Held schools accountable in Luswepo, Northern Province, for not admitting girls back after having a baby

“By listening to comments made on radio, I have kept tabs on what the people say and want and add those things to my ‘to-do-list’.”

IDI with Stakeholder, Chikuni Radio, MONZE
Strengthening radio stations for lasting impact

Capacity strengthening support has improved the sustainability of stations and their ability to impact on local governance issues by:

- Building stronger working relationships with other radio stations
- Upgrading station equipment and enhancing its use and maintenance
- Strengthening stations’ social media engagement
- Boosting production and editorial skills
- Improving management processes
- Enhancing financial processes and income generation
- Upgrading station equipment and enhancing its use and maintenance