

EVENT: WORLD RADIO DAY 2022 11TH EDITION held at Shalom House on the 12th February 2022

THEME: “RADIO AND TRUST”

MODERATOR: Alex Ikambi

Panelists

Tom Mboya
Grace Githaiga
Abraham Marita
Hildah Ajema
George Mwamodo

Organized by

Kenya Community Media Network (KCOMNET)

Supported By

GIZ/CPS

Report written on

Saturday 12th February 2022

Abstract

The eleventh edition of World Radio Day was held on 13th February 2022 under the theme: **“Radio and Trust”**. Every year, 13th February is a date proclaimed by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to celebrate radio broadcast, improve international cooperation among radio broadcasters and encourage decision-makers to create and provide access to information through radio. It is an occasion to draw attention to the unique value of radio, which remains the medium with the widest audience reach and is currently taking up new technological forms and devices. This year’s theme **“Radio and Trust”** aims to not only look at how Radio can continue being the trusted source of verified information but also how to transform loyal audience engagement into the sustainability of the radio stations. The theme of this year is so significant as the _-world grapples with misinformation, disinformation, and fake news. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about the need for truthful and factual information which has placed the media on spot on many occasions. The pandemic has forced us all to look at what is true and trustworthy. In Kenya, we even need to be more vigilant as the electioneering season is here with us. This is the season where instances of incitement to hatred disinformation and propaganda are quite rampant and thus, can seriously erode the trust of radio, destabilize and seriously affect communities.

INTRODUCTION

Kenya Community Media Network in partnership with GIZ/CPS celebrated the World Radio Day on Saturday 12th February,2022. The event which was attended by representatives of 42

community radio stations as well as different stakeholders in the media industry aimed at reflecting on the theme, 'Radio and Trust'. Many milestones have been achieved in the Media sector especially for the Community Media and it was indeed a day everyone had a chance to reflect and give feedback and reviews that the sector needs to address for continuity. As the umbrella network for community communication group in Kenya, KCOMNET's mandate is to enrich community media through networking, capacity building, content development and policy advocacy for transformative social change in Kenya. The meeting was convened at 09.45 hours by Mr. Tom Mboya, the Coordinator of Kenya Community Media Network. He later on read the World Radio Day Statement and welcomed each participant to the event. In his remarks, Tom insisted on the need to remain on course despite the challenges faced by the sector and to always conduct any business with integrity and professionalism and strive to relay information that fosters Cohesion and Social integration putting emphasis on the ongoing Electioneering period and upcoming Elections in August 9th 2022.

Presentations by the Panelists

This session focused on the question of Trust, Accessibility and Viability of the Community Radio Stations. The moderator prepared three questions: 1). How can Community Radio stations transform loyal audience engagement into financial sustainability? 2). How can radio be used to build trust and cohesion between communities during and after elections? 3). Practical ways to build trust within communities during and after the electioneering period.

1. *George Mwamodo-Station Manager, Mwanedu FM*

Radio is a great tool to unite people. The question we should all ask ourselves is how we can synergize energies to come together and create an enabling environment where we can discuss the challenges facing the sector. So many regulations hinder our productivity and holding such meetings gives us a chance to engage, discuss, prepare and present our grievances and recommendations to the relevant bodies. Journalists have to research. We need concrete evidence of the stories that we produce.

2. *Hilda Ajema -Station Manager, Ghetto FM*

Radio is flexible and accessible. Journalists should uphold trust and integrity as we are the ones on the ground and so close to the community thus, we understand their needs. Giving the community credible information should be our mandate hence this year's World Radio Day theme of '**Radio and Trust**' resonates so much with our profession. We have to research as we need concrete evidence of the stories we produce.

3. *Abraham Marita, Internews*

Radio is a powerful media tool as journalists create an intimate nature with listeners. There is a need for one to be trustworthy. In my view, trust has not been lost, but it has decreased as Radio has been attributed to violence in very sensitive instances such as Kenya's 2007 Post Election Violence. Social media for example is a space that is coming up really fast but at the same time, most mis-information is spread through this platform. Radio is the most consumed form of media at 74% from a survey conducted by.....Four radio, there is a chance to verify information but time has to be invested as we seek to verify the truth. When journalists do not research well, Trust diminishes. In a nut-shell, fact-checking is a must. Trust has not been lost but it has been decreasing over time. Radio has been attributed to fuel violence world

over and for Kenya, we cannot forget about the 2007 Post election Violence. Social media for example is a platform that has had immense growth in the last few years. However, social media is known for mis-information and spread of fake news. With Radio, there is hope because there is a chance to verify information before releasing it for public consumption. Journalists need to invest time so as to verify the truth. When we don't research, the truth diminishes. Fact -checking is a must.

4. Grace Githaiga-KICTANET

Many assessments have been conducted and Radio remains the most powerful accessible tool for news especially among rural communities. In a world where fake news and mis-information is the order of the day, what distinguishes Radio is verified stories. Radio is the second trusted form of media in Kenya. There is confusion on the categorizations of media, especially Community Radios, Vernacular and FM radios as sometimes there is no clear-cut definition of what each does. There is a need by the regulator to ensure that Community Radio is well defined because the work we do is distinct, it is different and the target population is different. Community Radio Stations serve those who haven't benefited from the formal structure of information. Young voices must take on the battle because we cannot accept to be clumped with stations that spread hate and foster war thus, we must be trustworthy as we do our work. Trust has not been lost but it has been betrayed. In such a year with electioneering, the slant news take is alarming. Information that is objective is no longer the aim. Social media sometimes channels false information and sometimes when radio stations want to remain relevant, they copy that information with verifying the truth. Our focus as Community Radio Stations should be to rebuild trust. The point of Trust betrayal is competition, we focus on advertisements and the number of audiences without realizing that Trust is what distinguishes us from the rest. We have to be keen on divergent views and be accommodative of other people's opinions as we do our work with utmost professionalism.

Success Stories from a few CRS.

1) Mohammed, Garbatulla Ranet FM.

The station is part of the Ranet stations. The founder and license owner is the Kenya Meteorological department. They withdrew their support in July 2019. Ever since staff have been volunteering as there has been no income enough to run the station's operations. However, because the community trusts us, bearing in mind that the population we serve are pastoralists as Garbatulla is an ASAL with extreme climatic conditions. This means that we are very close to our listeners and they have owned the station. The community pushed an NGO to approach the government to push the coverage from 30km to 100km with a total of 10,000 people. An NGO has partnered with us and soon the staff salaries will be catered for. This could not have happened if we were not truthful to our listeners. We are glad that they support the station fully and they own it, they always refer to it as "our station".

2) Sirbana, Serian FM, Samburu

The listeners trust us because we do a good job regardless of the fact that we have minimal resources. Last year after the KCPE examinations, a needy lady approached one of our journalists as she had no money to take her son to secondary school despite having done exemplary well in the exam. The least he could do as a journalist is to air the plight of the lady

to listeners and hope that a good Samaritan will help the boy join secondary school. Because of the trust the community has for us, the county Government took it up and the boy was given a four-year scholarship and many others were supported to fulfill their dream of achieving formal education. If we were not trusted by the community, it would be difficult for the story to get the kind of feedback that it did. We endeavor to be professional and trustworthy at Serian despite the challenges that we face.

3) **Morris Otieno, Waumini Communications**

Having pioneered all the Catholic Radio stations in Kenya, the biggest lesson has been to be trusted. We are so close with our listeners because of the content we produce for them and the level of trust that is there between us and the listeners do not do short cuts when it comes to protecting our brand. The listeners link us with what we produce. The communities we serve know us hence trust us. They should not be cowed by the challenges that face us from time to time. In the wake of social media which is awash with non-factual stories we should strive to be different by fact-checking and telling stories that are well researched.

Parting Shot from The Panelists

1. **Abraham Marita-Internews**

A journalist must know. One is supposed to fact-check and there is no excuse about that. Experienced journalists have a role to play by mentoring the young journalists. A good journalist should:

- I. Practice journalism that meets professional standards
- II. Practice fair reporting
- III. Recognize the code of conduct put in place
- IV. Do investigative journalism, go in-depth

As community media practitioners, we are intimate with our audience. We live with them, associate with them and interact with line other from time to time. This, we should only strive to tell stories that are verified.

2. **Grace Githaiga-Kictanet**

Community media is supposed to serve the needs of the community. Journalists working for community radio stations are best placed to unpack that news. Find out the rules of the station, the objectives and take responsibility to find out what works. You need to transform your audience so that they can support the station financially. Community broadcasting is a service to the community. Ownership and structure of management how the station will run. For sustainability,

- I. Target the local clientele like the saloonists, car wash operators, shop keepers e.t.c.
You can create a card for them that is not costly
- II. Be a bold journalist as you engage your audience
- III. Discuss sustainability with the listeners. Ask them to support the station financially.
Sell cards in the local shops.
- IV. Be creative. Seek adverts for single series if need be.
- V. Diversify your sources. Look for donors, partner with local citizens. Protect your brand and people will trust in your work.

ACTION POINT

1. Journalists should seek to practice professionalism all the time

2. Radio stations should practice diversifying their sources for sustainability.

MEDIA REGULATIONS

This session was taken through by the KCOMNET'S coordinator Mr. Tom Mboya. Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK) is the regulatory body Authority for the Communications sector in Kenya. The Authority is responsible for facilitating the development of the information and communication sectors including; broadcasting, cybersecurity, multimedia, telecommunications, electronic commerce, postal & courier services. Journalists present appreciated the work CAK is doing, however there are some recommendations:

1. The regulations published by CAK last year took many stations by surprise. Challenges faced by Community Radio Stations and journalists towards compliance are immense. We would like to engage with CAK officials to give our views on areas where we feel strong and where we need
2. CAK to conduct timely training to journalists and stations regarding compliance to the set regulations. During the meeting, many stations complained especially on the equipment required as they are expensive and most community radio stations cannot afford them.
3. On the issue of quarterly returns to CAK, most stations feel that they need to be guided further so as to be compliant.
4. The Licensing process should be accommodative thus if CAK can review it especially for the community Media category, it will be of great help.
5. Lack of information or ignorance is a factor when it comes to compliance. The community stations are willing to be trained and light shed on areas where they feel needs clarification. On the Community Media side, people need to familiarize themselves with the regulations but CAK also needs to create awareness in a structured way that the stations will benefit in time before they fall victims of non-compliance.
6. The Community Radio stations to read, understand and abide by the approval documents process so as to comply fully.
7. CAK to monitor or govern MCK'S invasion of the Media. Currently MCK stipulates that Community Radio stations should pay **10,000 kshs** a month on top of other monies that we are required to pay by the Authority.
8. KEKOBOS mandate and demands are extravagant as the money they want us to pay them is too much based on the fact that we do not generate much revenue.
9. CAK to expound on the power output transmission issue as the community radio stations are struggling to adhere to this regulation.
10. Community Radio Stations to map out what they are capable of and with the help of CAK and reach out to the Government Advertising Agency so as to get tenders.

CONCLUSION

In their concluding remarks, the panelists noted that community radio stations and journalists have to invest time to conduct research. Representatives left the venue with the theme Day deeply etched in their hearts. Journalists renewed their commitment to abide by the truth and maintain professionalism as they do their work which is relaying truthful information to their listeners even in the forthcoming general elections. Stations have to adhere to the

regulations set by governing bodies like CAK and that way the sector will grow. The moderator summarized the session in three conclusions: a widespread call for research and verification of information, recognition that there will be challenges that face the sector therefore need to be professional and adhere to the regulations set and need to conduct our business with truth and integrity.