

**COMMUNITY RADIO'S IMPACT ON COMMUNITY BUILDING:  
CASE STUDIES FROM KWAZULU-NATAL**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The major objectives of community radio are to "encourage widespread community participation in broadcasting, provide an opportunity for horizontal communication between individuals and groups in the community, stimulate more free and open debate of community issues and reflect the cultural and social diversity of the community" (White 1990: 4). The article focuses on six community radio stations in the greater Durban and Pietermaritzburg metropolitan regions of KwaZulu-Natal: Highway Radio; Radio Khwezi; Durban Youth Radio; Radio Maritzburg; Radio Al-Ansaar and Radio Phoenix. The ultimate purpose of the project is to explore the radio stations' relation to, and representation of, the audiences they define as their communities. The article traces the history of community radio in South Africa by assessing each of the radio stations in the province. The schema developed here can be further developed, modified and applied to other radio stations elsewhere in the country in later research. The project tests the thesis that community radios which have stable and representative governing bodies; adopt their budgets on time; spend their money as planned; and fulfil the requirements set down by the IBA, are for the most part the same radio stations with strong community ties, effective "development programming", sustainable funding situations and high listenership levels.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Community radio can play a vital role in development and democratisation by enabling communities to articulate their experiences and critically to examine issues, processes and policies affecting their lives (Bonim and Opoku-Mensah 1998: 18).

The major objectives of community radio are to “encourage widespread community participation in broadcasting, provide an opportunity for horizontal communication between individuals and groups in the community, stimulate more free and open debate of community issues and reflect the cultural and social diversity of the community” (White 1990:4). Taken together, these are onerous aspirations, and few community radio stations worldwide have been able to achieve them in their entirety.

The present study focuses on six community radio stations in the greater Durban and Pietermaritzburg metropolitan regions of KwaZulu-Natal: *Highway Radio*; *Radio Khwezi*; *Durban Youth Radio*; *Radio Maritzburg*; *Radio Al-Ansaar* and *Radio Phoenix*. *Highway Radio* is the largest station with 107,000 audited listeners, defining itself as a contemporary Christian radio station with an evangelical purpose. *Radio Khwezi* is located at the KwaSizabantu Lutheran Mission, Kranzkop, and broadcasts in Zulu, English and German. Most of the 68,000 audience are adherents of various shades of Christian Protestant faith (SAARF 2003). (The listenership for *Radio Kwezi* has dropped considerably since the initial research was carried out in 1999, when it boasted of 82,000 listeners. The reason for the drop seems to be attributable to a greater choice of radio stations broadcasting in Zulu). *Durban Youth Radio*, a now defunct radio station previously based on the campus of the University of Natal in Durban, had an audience of between 84,000 and 100,000, made up of both university students and youth within the neighbouring areas. *Radio Maritzburg* with a listenership of approximately 60,000 over a week, is the third largest station. *Radio Al-Ansaar*, meaning “The helpers” in Arabic, is a Durban-based community radio station with an annual license to broadcast during the Islamic holy month of Ramadaan. Finally, *Radio Phoenix*, with an estimated audience of about 111,000 listeners, focuses on the needs of people of Indian origin.

The material for the project was gathered between 1999 and 2004, to explore the linkages between the stations and their relevant “communities”. Against the background of a critical outline of what is expected in the “ideal type” of community radio broadcasting, the material will be organized in a thematic series of comparative analyses, covering areas of

- ethos, representivity and governance
- staffing and institutional organisation
- programming production and community participation, and
- funding and sustainability.

The ultimate purpose of the project is to explore the radio stations’ relation to, and representation of, the audiences they define as their communities. Definitions and

abstractions of who precisely makes up the imagined construct labeled “community” are notoriously difficult to pin down, and in part, this article is a consideration of the process of identifying the “community” in the phrase “community radio”.

### WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COMMUNITY RADIO?

Radio is rightly acknowledged as a crucial medium of mass communication, both more widespread than television and more accessible than newspapers in Africa. Throughout Africa, the phenomenon of community radio emerged in the early part of the 1990s but has had a long history with the first station KPFA in California, USA. Its omnipresence in everyday life, whether in rural or urban settings, explains its strategic importance as a means of communication (Daloz & Verrier-Frechette 2000: 180). Recurrent in many media studies is the confidence in the potential of radio to act as an instrument of “social engineering, capable of shaping listeners’ knowledge, opinions or even behaviour” (Daloz & Verrier-Frechette 2000: 180).

In reviewing the state of international media in the face of the challenge posed by globalisation and the “new technologies”, UNESCO’s *World Communication Report* notes that the extension of large-scale media, concentrated in ever-fewer hands, has done much to reduce the diversity of information and the access to expressive opportunities (UNESCO, 1997). In the light of this, localised, community-based media, take on greater importance in the fostering of a culture of civic responsibility and empowerment. The word “community” in this sense is used in its geographical and sociological sense, designating the basic unit for horizontal social organisation.

The UNESCO document states that the purpose of community radio stations is to facilitate the free flow of information by encouraging freedom of speech, and by enhancing dialogue within the communities concerned in order to promote better participation by their populations (UNESCO 1997: 147). The South African NGO concerned with networking and support for community radios, the National Community Radio Forum (NCRF), has stated that “Community media emerged as the voice of the oppressed and played a significant role in informing and mobilizing communities, at grassroots level, against apartheid” (NCRF 1999: 2). These definitions have strong normative and idealist overtones to them. In assessing whether real-life community radio stations fulfil their participatory, democratising potential, the researcher is faced with a dual problem:

- the relationships with the “community” from which they supposedly spring, and which they represent on air, are oft-times tenuous and contradictory
- and secondly, their style of operation, in terms of civic responsibility, financial responsibility, staffing and technical capacity, frequently is unstable.

A common denominator between the above standpoints is that it seems to define alternative communication practices as a struggle for democracy, which is seen as “a practice of freedom to define one’s own present and future history. In the context of

social movements, this conception of democracy is seen as a collective project; a collective practice of freedom and government by the people" (Ambrosi 1991 in Riano 1994: 12). To achieve desired levels of democratisation, all systems of political repression, censorship, and coercion of expression should be eliminated to pave way for a democratic society. Participatory communication aims to provide the means to express the claims and protests of communities and the advocacy of their rights. Access and equal participation in media are largely seen as a form of democracy. Implying the public's involvement in the production and management of the communication systems is necessary. To this end, Servaes (1996) argues that the notion of participatory communication stresses the importance of cultural identity of local communities, and of democratisation and participation at all levels: international, national, local and individual (Servaes 1996: 75).

In order to share information, knowledge, trust, and commitment in development projects, participation is very important in any decision making process. In the same vein, participation in communication becomes very important as it allows people to get involved in the planning and overall decision making process of their broadcasting stations. This is an ideal to which community radio broadcasting subscribes. Different community radio stations should reflect their locale, which in turn should promote more understanding of diversity and plurality, with full respect to the dignity and equality of peoples living in different conditions and acting in different ways (McBride Commission in Servaes 1996: 75).

### **HISTORY OF COMMUNITY RADIO IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The history of community radio in South Africa originated in the grassroots politics of the political and cultural struggle of the 1980s. Community media in general was seen as a potential for the "voice of the oppressed" to play a "significant role in informing and mobilising communities against apartheid" (NCRF, 1999). At a discursive level at least, this fitted well with the international concept of community radio as amplified by organisations such as the World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC), to which members of the ANC in exile had been exposed. Diverse organisations played a key role in contributing to the debate on future broadcast policy. A particularly important marker in this campaign was the "Jabulani! Freedom of the Airwaves" Conference hosted by Radio Freedom (the ANC radio in exile) and the Dutch group "Omroep voor Radio Freedom", held in Doorn, Netherlands, August 1991 (Jabulani 1991). At this conference, the most important outlines of the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act were conceptualised. (Following the post-apartheid government of 1994, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) was established with the purpose of regulating broadcasting in the public interest, ensuring fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing South African society). The Conference recommendations, which are echoed in the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act (No. 153 of 1993), made provision for a three tier broadcasting system:

- public service broadcasting
- commercial broadcasting, and
- community broadcasting.

The IBA issued the first temporary one-year (community broadcasting) licences in 1997. These licences have been renewed twice since, and the first full-time four-year licenses were due to be issued in the course of the year 2001 or 2002. Quoting from the IBA Act, the Authority's *Position Paper on Four Year Licenses for Community Sound Broadcasting Services* (IBA 1997), a community broadcasting service is defined as one which

- is fully controlled by a non-profit entity and carried on for non-profit purposes
- serves a particular community
- encourages members of the community served by it or persons associated with or promoting the interests of such community to participate in the selection and provision of programs to be broadcast in the course of such broadcasting service; and
- may be funded by donations, grants, sponsorships, advertising or membership fees, or by any combination of the aforementioned.

Again, the definitions provided are empirically slippery and tautologous, since they propose that a community radio station is one which serves a particular community, while begging the question of what constitutes a community. In attempting to give some clarity on the latter point, the Act further provides for a community broadcasting service to cater either for a geographic community, or a community of interest. In a geographic community, the broadcasting service caters to persons or a community whose commonality is determined principally by their residing in a particular geographic area. With respect to a community of interest, the test is that the community served has a specific ascertainable common interest, and its common interest is the distinctive feature of this kind of broadcasting service. "Common interest" in this sense is relatively narrow, and the Act makes provision for three types of community of interest radio stations: those that serve "Institutional communities", "religious communities", and "cultural communities". An institutional community is primarily designed to meet the needs of persons directly associated with an institution of learning, labour or indeed, any other institutional formations. Religious community stations cater for the religious needs of a specific community whose common interest is based on a religion or belief. The final type of community of interest station, the cultural community station, is designed to meet the cultural needs of a defined "community group".

Five of the six radio stations surveyed in the present study are all "community of interest" stations, rather than geographic community radio stations. The exception, *Radio Maritzburg* is defined under the heading of a "geographic community radio",

purportedly serving the entire population of Pietermaritzburg but, in fact, this radio station focuses on a smaller subsection of the potential audience, predominantly catering for the needs of Zulu-speaking black listeners in the area.

### **KwaZulu-Natal case study**

*Highway Radio* began broadcasting in December 1995. Defining itself as a contemporary Christian radio, the station's mandate is to recognise Christianity as a community of interest, and to give full meaning to those who are religious, as well as those who are not (Mjwacu 2002: 45). This is achieved through the provision of lifestyle information, and easy-listening contemporary Christian music. Part of the mandate is that "strict attention is paid to programme and presenter content to ensure that the tone of the programming is smut and innuendo free, ensuring that listeners are not subjected to questionable input". The majority of its listenership ranges from 20-40 years, but programming extends beyond this age group.

*Durban Youth Radio* (DYR) is a community of interest station with the legal persona of a project of the students of the University of Natal, Durban campus (UND). (Information on *Durban Youth Radio* was researched by Musa Ndlovu (1999) and Ruth Teer-Tomaselli). It is run under the auspices of the Student Representative Council and is subject to the control of the university (*DYR Constitution*, 1998a). Emerging as a student project in 1991, its first broadcast was on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 1995. In terms of the application lodged with the IBA, the station described it as a community broadcasting (station) developed into a tool for community development; DYR positioned itself as a radio for youth empowerment and entertainment for communities of the greater Durban metro area. (DYR Licence Application, 98/99, 1998b: 1). The station broadcasts 18 hours a day, Tuesday to Thursday, from 6 a.m. to midnight, while from Friday to Monday the station operates 24 hours. It is currently broadcasting on its third successive one-year licence, pending the granting of a four-year licence by the independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA).

From its inception, there has been an unstated ambiguity about who is considered as the core "community" for DYR. Although its IBA application stated that DYR would be a student project, in the three years of broadcast it has functioned as radio station for off-campus youth, with very little interaction with UND students. In a recent strategic planning exercise, the emphasis has moved from the external community to an internal (student) community.

*Radio Phoenix* is a community broadcasting station founded in mid-1996 by Francis Naidoo, who began broadcasting illegally from his home in the Phoenix area. (Information on *Radio Phoenix* was researched by Sunita Kaihar (1999)). Despite being closed as a pirate station, the interest in the concept of a radio station in which the listeners were involved as producers was aroused among the residents of Phoenix. Capitalising on "community radio" being popularised at the time, Naidoo advocated for the formal establishment of the service. As per IBA regulations, a general meeting was held to democratically elect a governing board wherein a vote of "no confidence" was recorded against Francis Naidoo.

Despite being established with the objective of serving a geographic community, i.e. Phoenix, *Radio Phoenix* was granted a "community of interest" license. The *Radio Phoenix* community is made up of the South African "Indian Community", i.e. South Africans of Indian descent. Most of the listenership lives in traditionally "Indian areas" as defined under the now defunct Group Areas Act. There is a strong affiliation to the culture, particularly the musical culture, inherited from earlier generations and RAMS measured listenership for June to September 1999 was 111,000 per week, the highest recorded audience among all the community stations in KwaZulu-Natal (SAARF, 1999). (Radio Audience Measurement (RAMS) is a measurement instrument conducted by SAARF, dedicated to quantification of radio audiences through means of media diaries. It is accepted as the most "objective" measure of audiences for radio and the evaluation against which advertising time is sold).

*Radio Khwezi* began life through the vision of a single person, Reverend P. Stephen, whose first project was to broadcast a series of sermons over *Radio Pulpit* and other religious broadcasters. With the inception of the IBA, Reverend Stephen applied for a licence under the auspices of the KwaSizabantu Lutheran Mission, Kranzkoop. As the station is classified as a "religious broadcaster", the licence was granted as a "community of interest". The first transmission was aired on September 2, 1995. The languages broadcast are English, Zulu, Afrikaans and German. The use of German reflects the Lutheran Mission background to the station, and is the result of a substantial number of German immigrants settling the area around Greytown from 1848 onwards. *Radio Khwezi* has reached 14 major rural towns, and the station's slogan: "The heart of the KwaZulu-Natal beats at 90.5 and 107.7 FM" is well known in the region. The RAMS measured listenership for the period June-September, 1999 was 82,000 per week (SAARF, 1999). (Research on *Radio Khwezi* was undertaken by Rev. K. Feyissa (1999).

Since 1997 the Al-Ansaar Foundation, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) dedicated to the educational and social upliftment of the Muslim community of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), has developed and presented *Radio Al-Ansaar*. *Radio Al-Ansaar* is a community radio station, granted a temporary 30-day licence to broadcast during the Muslim Holy month of Ramadan. Based in Overport, Durban, *Radio Al-Ansaar* broadcasts 24 hours a day on 108FM, reaching out to greater KwaZulu-Natal. The roughly estimated eighty thousand listenership of *Radio Al-Ansaar*, which is made up of individuals of all age and race groups, is mainly of the Islamic faith with a small number of listeners from other religious communities. The station broadcasts in English, which is the major home language of listeners, with programmes in Urdu, an Indian language, and Zulu making up the rest of the broadcast. (Research on *Radio Al-Ansaar* was conducted by Ayesha Mall (2003)).

*Radio Maritzburg* began life as an outreach programme of the Evangelical Church in the Midlands of Natal and greater Pietermaritzburg area. Although planning started in 1993, the radio first broadcast in March 1995, attesting to the long gestation period required for community radio. Its mission statement articulated its purpose as the promotion of peace, understanding and community upliftment through the production of relevant programmes. Behind this thrust was a wish to contribute to the peace process between the then-warring members of the African National Congress (ANC), now the ruling party in South Africa, and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the Zulu-nationalist party headed by Mangosutho Buthelezi. Under the control of African Enterprise (a religious institution), Radio Maritzburg was licensed as a community of interest to serve specific interests in the Evangelical Church, but a year later in 1996, the station detached itself from its Church beginnings to become a full-fledged geographically founded station, serving a community covering the areas of Pietermaritzburg, Mpophomeni-Richmond-Cato Ridge-Wartburg, a very large area of land. According to South African Audience Research Foundation (SAARF) figures, with a listenership of approximately 60,000 over a week, Radio Maritzburg is the third largest community radio in KwaZulu Natal. (SAARF - This audience measurement foundation is owned jointly by the large media houses, and the monitored figures are accepted as the basis on which all advertising media is sold). Despite this, the station has had a chequered history, experiencing two periods of closure for several months each. The station is aimed mainly at a black Zulu-speaking listenership, aged between 24-36, in the lower income bracket with an average income of R2,000-00 per month (RAMS June-July 2003). (Research on *Radio Maritzburg* was undertaken by Z. Aria (2003)).

### GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

*Highway radio* is a Section 21 company, directed by the Highway Christian Outreach Association. (A Section 21 Company, or “not for profit company”, is one that has been established for no financial or commercial gain, but for the benefit of the stakeholders. Fine et al. (1999) defines Section 21 companies as a body, group or organisation that registers as an association “not for gain”, with the main purpose of promoting religion, arts, sciences, education ... or communal or group interests). *Highway radio* is a community-oriented organisation with community members making up the seven-person Board of Directors. The Executive Board comprises of the Manager, a public relations officer and a productions manager. Annual general meetings are called with the listenership, members of the public nominate and select board members. While no specific qualifications are required for board membership, the radio encourages equal representivity in the community. However noble these sentiments, during the 2002 research period, only two of the ten board and management members were women. (Mjwacu 2002: 49)

*Radio Maritzburg* is owned by a democratic and co-operative society, and run by a voluntary committee of management. A board of trustees, elected by the community, is responsible for running the station on behalf of the community. This is done through a

Program Advisory Committee and a Human Resource Committee. The station is directly run by a station manager who controls various departments (Program, Sales, Technical and Co-operative Services) and is answerable to the Board.

Control and material support for *Durban Youth Radio's* activities reside with the University of Natal. The Board of Control is a committee of the University and is responsible to the University for the proper management of DYR. Eighty per cent of the Board members are from the University, while 20 per cent are from the outside community into which DYR broadcasts, selected from a broad Stakeholder's Forum. The Board meets monthly and is complimented by the "worker's committee" who is responsible for the daily running of the station, consisting of 10 members under the leadership of the station manager. The committee is elected at the Annual General Meeting. *50 community volunteers, 35 of who are men, currently staff Durban Youth Radio.* This corps of volunteers is responsible for DYR's abundance of daily activities, chief of which are programming, presentation, production, research and general listener service.

The station manager holds the only post that is paid a salary. None of the volunteers are paid a wage, but are provided with stipends or reimbursements to cover travelling and meal allowances.

A Board of Directors, which is the pre-eminent level within community radio, heads *Radio Phoenix* management structures and the chairperson is the nominal head of the station. The management committee, headed by the station manager and made up of a programs and advertising manager, is answerable to the Board. The station comprises more than 40 voluntary presenters, a "management committee" of seven people, and a Board of Directors. Based on a questionnaire administered in 1999, the organisational culture of the station is best characterised as a "clan culture", in which the commitment of organisational members is ensured through participation and organisational cohesiveness. This is reflected in the amount of freedom given to the presenters to use their creative abilities and strengths to produce their shows in a distinct style. The management committee, the Board of Directors and the staff meet once every six to eight weeks.

At *Radio Khwezi*, the Board of Directors is made up of missionary staff and people drawn from the surrounding listener-community, with the widest volunteer base (approximately 150). The Board meets approximately once a month. Management procedures include regular departmental staff meetings, covering all aspects of station operation, from marketing to audience penetration and program development, and are held four days a week.

A very important aspect of community radio is the issue of community participation to guarantee that the community really owns and controls the station. Community participation in the following activities will be used as an index to measure if *Radio Al-Ansaar* fulfils this requirement:

- election of leadership (board members or trustees)
- policy-making for the station
- management of the station
- selection of provision of programmes, and
- production of programmes (Bonim & Opoku-Mensa 1998:23).

The six trustees of the Al-Ansaar Foundation make up the management board of *Radio Al-Ansaar*. The board comprises of individuals who are all Muslim males of Indian descent who are either businessmen or professionals who have a history of community involvement. One of the board members is the appointed station manager. He oversees the day-to-day running of the station and reports back to the board at daily meetings. Marie-Helene Bonim and Aida Opoku Mensa (1998:20-21) contend that the "leadership of a community radio station is meant to represent the community interests in the day-to-day running of the station's activities and ensure that policies guiding the daily management are developed and that they reflect the community that the station serves". At Al-Ansaar, decision-making is claimed to be done in accordance with the Islamic concept of "*Shura*". *Shura*, in essence, means that decision-making should be done on the basis of consultation with all involved. Whether decision-making in terms of policy making is made in the true spirit of *Shura* is debatable, as the station is owned and controlled by a privileged few and the board evidently is neither elected by, nor fully representative of, the community it purports to represent. Presenters are to refrain from debating those issues of Shari'ah (referring to Islamic law based on Qur'anic injunctions and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammed) in which there are different shades of opinion (*Radio Al-Ansaar* will not engage in Shia – Sunni issues and Sunni – Tablighi issues).

Approximately sixty people make up the staff at *Radio Al-Ansaar*, comprising of individuals who range in age from eleven to seventy and who are students, businesspeople, housewives, professionals and pensioners. Roughly seventy per cent of these are female. Robert White (1990: 2) contends that community volunteers play an important role in the production of programming and distinctions between "professional staff" and ordinary users are played down. Every user, White argues, is a potential producer. This important characteristic is encouraged at *Radio Al-Ansaar*. Besides management level, volunteers work at all other levels from administrative to technical to production. Volunteers are expected to indicate the areas they are interested in working. Most of the volunteers are of Indian descent with a very small percentage of staff deriving from the Malay, Zanzibari and Zulu Muslim communities.

Except for the station manager, the advertising team, and administration staff – who work full time for Al-Ansaar Foundation – who are remunerated, the rest of the station personnel work on a voluntary basis.

Training workshops for presenters and technical staff take place in the month before broadcast. Experienced broadcasters from local commercial radio stations or professional broadcast trainers are commissioned to conduct these training

programmes. The volunteers have shown tremendous commitment and the majority has been with the station since inception in 1997.

### **ASSESSMENT OF THE WORKINGS OF THE CASE-STUDY STATIONS**

The survey of *Durban Youth Radio* presents a more stable picture than is actually the case. Over the three years of operation, numerous disruptions within the volunteer workforce have taken place, and these need to be fully investigated in order to be able to assess whether they are incidental, or endemic, to the structural organisation of the station. At the root of the problems (which include financial mismanagement, personal enrichment and interpersonal aggression), appears to be the lack of a culture of commitment to a community good, while, at the same time, the unpaid status of the workers makes the enforcement of corporate discipline difficult. Since the volunteers for the most part are not students, the Disciplinary Committee has little jurisdiction over them, and the rules of the station are difficult to enforce.

The relatively horizontal system management that marks out *Radio Phoenix* is able to work because of the tight-knit structure of the community served by the radio station. "Feedback" is plentiful: listeners are quick to respond by both telephone and mail to aspects of the radio station that they wish to praise or criticise. As is common with all phone-in responses, criticism makes up the majority of non-solicited responses to the radio station, while praise frequently comes in the form of requests for certain musical tracks to be played for friends or family, a popular form of interaction called dedications. The radio station also has a strong relationship with community and national newspapers serving the South African Indian community.

The radio station that shows the greatest degree of order appears to be *Radio Khwezi*, a circumstance that may be attributed to the missionary ethos of the station. While it is true that the managerial staff are not paid a "salary", they do receive a stipend from the mission, and most of the managerial staff live on the premises, and are integrated into the inner-community life of a larger mission project: the children attend pre-primary school within the compound, daily facilities such as a clinic and convenience shop are provided, all of which add up to a cohesive sense of "belonging". This is further enhanced by the informal, but strong practice of discipline and commitment evidenced in the daily management meetings, and business-like approach to broadcasting.

### **FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY RADIO**

Community radios are non-profit broadcasting institutions that survive financially through donations, grants, sponsorships and advertising. The Independent Broadcasting Authority stipulates that the financial requirements with which a community radio station must comply are that it must prove to have sufficient funds in hand to enable it to operate for at least three months after it has come on air. It must also have evidence that:

- further funds would be forthcoming to enable it to survive for a further three months;

- it has to remain the object of interest to the community; and
- it intends to apply its profits (if any) back into the community.

Funding is a major challenge in the entire community broadcast sector. All the stations face the difficulty of attempting to be financially self-sufficient, which demands the sale of advertising space, which in turn demands the availability of audiences with strong consumer power. This is difficult and, indeed, may be inimical to their role as community broadcasters providing a service to their identified constituency. A further difficulty arises from the small absolute size of the audiences. In order to overcome this problem, a number of agencies have been established which amalgamate audiences from various stations, and sell them *en masse* to national advertisers. Studentwise, employed by *Durban Youth Radio*, is one such agency, and Network Radio Service is another. However, without some form of donations, or some institution to support the infrastructural needs of the station, it is difficult to see how a community radio station can thrive.

*Highway Radio* relies on advertising, personal donations, subscriptions and support from churches. People from the community support the radio station directly through a system of membership fees, with approximately a 1,000 households each paying a small month amount to “belong” to the Association. The station also undertakes live fundraising drives over the radio, asking listeners to donate what they can afford. Listeners phone in and commit themselves to give money and gifts. Through these mechanisms, the radio station has an income of R 30,000.00 per month, over and above advertising revenue. This makes *Highway Radio* the most financially secure of all the stations surveyed in this research.

Advertising is also the main source of income for *Radio Phoenix*, but the station faces many problems in getting large organisations to advertise. As a direct result of being granted a license as a “community of interest” broadcaster, and not a “geographic broadcaster”, the management of *Radio Phoenix* feels that the station is at a disadvantage, arguing that advertising is not easy to sell when the audience is as dispersed as that of *Radio Phoenix*. The station does accept donations, but finds it difficult to raise large amounts of money.

*Radio Maritzburg* relies on funding from promotion (52 per cent), advertising (33 per cent) and donations (15 per cent). *Radio Khwezi* also sells advertising as its primary source of income. As with the other two stations surveyed, the money raised in this way is insufficient for the station’s needs. A substantial (although undisclosed) portion of the income is sourced directly through the Lutheran Mission.

ICASA stipulates that a community radio station must apply its profits (if any) back into the community. This provision envisages that surplus funds generated from the radio station, over and above the capital reinvested into the station, be used for community projects (Teer-Tomaselli, 2000: 13). *Radio Al-Ansaar* fulfils this criterion, as the Al-Ansaar Foundation is a non-profit making organisation. Its main source of revenue is derived from advertising and sponsorships. A thirty-second advert varies in

price range, from seventy-five rand for a "low" time slot to two hundred and fifty rand for a "prime" time slot. As a result of *Radio Al-Ansaar's* relatively reasonable advertising rates, many small businesses, which are otherwise precluded from advertising in the mainstream media due to the exorbitant advertising rates, have the opportunity to advertise their wares or services.

## PROGRAMMING

As per the IBA Act (1993), the minimum requirements of community radio is 30 per cent of talk (news, current affairs, educational and discussion programming); 20 per cent of local music (RSA 1993).

### *Highway Radio*

<i>Talk</i>	<i>Music</i>	
30% = sermons, religious homilies and inspirational dialogues written and produced in English, Afrikaans, Zulu by local clergymen and women from surrounding churches of various denominations	<i>Local</i> = 35%	<i>Foreign</i> = 35%

The philosophy of *Highway radio* is premised on the idea that shared knowledge and practical advice are resources that empower communities. Thus socially relevant programming address issues including gender inequality in the workplace, health matters, intergenerational conflict and economic development.

### *Durban Youth Radio*

<i>Talk = 50%</i>		<i>Music = 50%</i>	
60% = Current Affairs	40% = Talk shows	60% = Local	40% = Foreign

In its report to the IBA, DYR submitted the above breakdown of content. This information appears to be unreliable, as the music play-sheet logs submitted to the monitoring department of the IBA consistently have shown discrepancies between local and foreign content. Much of the "talk" component is fairly *ad hoc*, with little direct connection to community-based organisations.

Since community broadcasters are required to serve the language needs of their communities, *Radio Phoenix* is challenged with providing programming in five languages, each representing the different cultural backgrounds of its listeners, as well as English, which services as the overall "common" language. In attempting to fulfil this mandate the stations language breakdown is as follows:

**Radio Phoenix**

<b>Tamil</b>	<b>Hindi</b>	<b>English, Gujarati, Telegu, and Urdu</b>
45%	45%	10%

*Radio Phoenix* far exceeds the IBA requirement of 20 per cent local music, also featuring live interviews with local artists in the studio. Interactivity with listeners is encouraged in the form of call-ins with questions and responses.

News bulletins are an essential part of the program-mix as the IBA Act requires all community radio stations to broadcast bulletins regularly. *Radio Phoenix* has its own news department which comprises students of journalism and communications from various universities and technicians in the area, who prepare the community news on the basis of what is deemed to be of relevance to the listenership. With local news bulletins compiled and presented by student-volunteers and for national, international and regional level news, the station crosses over to the Network News in Johannesburg.

**Radio Maritzburg**

<b>Talk = 64%</b>				<b>Music = 36%</b>	
<i>Factual Programmes</i> = 27%	<i>Youth Programmes</i> = 21%	<i>Community Notices</i> = 9%	<i>Light Entertainment</i> = 7%	<i>Local</i> = 42%	<i>Foreign</i> = 58%

As a geographically founded station, *Radio Maritzburg* struggles to meet the demands of its listeners who belong to a range of assorted racial groups.

Religious and developmental programs form the backbone of the *Radio Khwezi*'s output. More than 60 per cent of the station's programs cover development topics. *Radio Khwezi*'s producers are able to pitch programs at the local communities because they themselves come from these communities. They speak the language and understand the culture, both vital characteristics for community radio producers. This experience and knowledge allows producers to address many of the real educational needs within communities. Thus programming spans language lessons in Zulu and English, youth life skill programmes, small business and financial management, information and advice on domestic violence, farming and cooking.

News is an important element in the programming whole of the station, with news bulletins broadcast throughout the day, frequently with a local flavour. As an avowedly community broadcaster, *Radio Khwezi* makes a point of collecting news items from school functions, council meetings and other local gatherings. In the provision of news, *Radio Khwezi* illustrates the interaction between the very local, the national and the global. In interviews, the management showed themselves to be keenly aware of the

challenge of providing for the needs arising from the disparate cultural and informational needs of its audience. In this spirit, it provides news about the world beyond its broadcast footprint, using direct satellite links negotiated with the British Broadcasting Corporation, Deutsche Welle and the National Radio Service, the electronic arm of the South African Press association.

The bulk of programming at *Radio Al-Ansaar* is in the form of talk shows. Advertising and religious songs account for the rest of the airtime. One of the aims of *Radio Al-Ansaar* is to conscientise people about the challenges facing the Ummah and to encourage involvement in the broader community in terms of social, political and economic development (Al-Ansaar Policy Guidelines 2001). Therefore, most of the talk shows at *Radio Al-Ansaar* deal with educational, social, legal or health issues, children's programmes, business and food.

Most of the programmes mentioned thus far are interactive and encourage listeners to call in with comments, questions and to participate in quizzes and competitions. The studio gets approximately forty to fifty calls during each phone-in programme.

The news at *Radio Al-Ansaar*, which is broadcast in English and Zulu four times a day with headline news on the hour, as well as two programmes, *Talking Point* and *Current Affairs*, which are aired three times a week each, focus on local and global issues and politics. The news team is made up of nine school and university students and a businesswoman and is lead by a news editor. The news focuses mainly on local news and live crossings are done during the main bulletins with police, emergency personnel and stringers who work for NGOs or are students in other parts of the province.

### **Assessment of programming**

In each of the radio stations surveyed, the mandate of community broadcasting was catered for in slightly different ways. Both *Durban Youth Radio* and *Radio Phoenix* have music-driven formats, accommodating talk shows as a secondary element. The reasons for this appear to be twofold: the enormously difficult logistics and expense involved in talk-show production when compared to musical formats; and the strong identification with a specific musical genre and tradition among the targeted listener-community. *Radio Khwezi*, on the other hand, has a stronger organisational basis from which to draw, and is better able to produce talk shows of directly local interest. The quality (as opposed to the quantity) of talk-components appear to be a direct measure of community cohesion, with both *Radio Phoenix* and *Radio Khwezi* being able to draw on locally-based contributors, and serving a well-defined "need" for these programs. *Durban Youth Radio* has struggled to find a niche in which to broadcast talk shows, and more importantly, the resources and will, to produce them well. These conclusions are relatively tenuous, and further research needs to be carried out in order to explore the dynamics of programming properly.

In terms of music programming, the three stations each show a strongly distinctive style, which distinguishes them not only from each other, but from other public service and commercial radio stations as well. The promotion of local content is an important

consideration in community radio, and all three stations surveyed pay careful attention to this. Both *Radio Phoenix* and *Radio Khwezi* go beyond the requirement of simply airing local artistes, they actually contribute to the corpus of home-grown music through their own recordings. *Durban Youth Radio* and *Radio Phoenix* both promote local music through organising “events” and “promotions” at which live audiences participate in on-stage performances.

All three stations rely on outside organisations to provide international, national and regional news. *Radio Phoenix* and, until recently, *Durban Youth Radio* use Network Radio News based in Johannesburg, and *Radio Khwezi* avails itself of the BBC, Deutsche Welle and National Radio Service. The reliance on external partners for the provision of news is a clear indication that community radio stations, given their present level of resources and capacity, cannot “go it alone” entirely.

With respect to community involvement, all three stations surveyed attested to the strong interest on the part of their listener-communities to phone, write or fax personal messages, often as “dedications” to accompany chosen musical tracks. Another indicator of the involvement of the community, that is, presence at the Annual General Meeting of the radio station, was less positive for *Radio Phoenix*. According to an interview with the station manager, on occasions when the station has held its general meetings and has desired the presence of the community, there has been a failure of the public to attend these meetings.

Activities within the community include the support of community based organizations, notably old age and children’s homes. The Aryan Benevolent Home Fair has been heavily promoted on the radio station, with *Radio Phoenix* broadcasting live from the show site for five days at a time.

## CONCLUSIONS

Radio can be the most wonderful public communication system imaginable, a gigantic systems of channels – could be, that is, if it were capable of not only of transmitting, but of receiving, of making listeners hear, but also speak, not of isolating them, but connecting them (Brecht 1930 in Lewis & Booth 1989: 186).

Radio is very popular - aided by its mobility and flexibility, it certainly appeals to a wide section of society. Despite new technological developments in the media industry, radio’s future is still generally guaranteed. “It may be best known as a medium for music, but its unique feature is the transmission of the spoken word. It preserves the tradition of oral communication... its future therefore is the future of the human voice as a mass medium” (Weddell & Crookes, 1990: 14).

In this initial survey we have concentrated on four areas of community radio: structure, personnel, programming output and interaction with the community. Each of these areas is a critical indicator of the success of the community radio project. If a community radio is to fulfil its mandate effectively, it has to be responsible to the citizens within the “community” it has identified, whether that is defined along

geographic or "community of interest" lines. The present work is an exploratory study towards a larger project, with the objective of developing a set of indicators that will be able to provide a preliminary "map" of the degree to which the community radios under investigation have been able to fulfil the requirements of a "civic culture" (Putman 1994). By extension, the schema developed here can be developed, modified and applied to other radio stations elsewhere in the country in later research. The project tests the thesis that community radios which have stable and representative governing bodies; adopt their budgets on time; spend their money as planned; and fulfil the requirements set down by the IBA, are for the most part the same radio stations with strong community ties, effective "development programming", sustainable funding situations and high listenership levels.

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