



Empowering Local Radio with ICTs

Geographical scope/benefitting country(ies):	<p>This concept note includes 18 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Mali, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Uganda • Asia: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar and Thailand • Latin America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Paraguay <p>Project can be supported partially or as a whole.</p>
Duration (in months):	36 months
Name and Unit of project Officer	Ms Mirta Lourenço, Chief CI/FEM/MAS
Partner(s) institutions:	National and regional expertise will be sought for increased sustainability of results
Total estimated budget inclusive of Programme Support costs	USD 15 million

Rationale and background

Citizens from Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Mali, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Uganda suffer from overwhelming effects of recent conflicts. Vulnerable groups from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar and Thailand endure increased levels of poverty, vulnerability to disasters and lack of access to information on issues of relevance for their development. Vulnerable groups from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Paraguay undergo income inequality, lack of basic services and marginalization. Yet these issues are seldom covered on radio broadcasts. This project proposes to turn local radio stations into inclusive platforms for discussing and raising awareness on issues of local concern. They will provide their communities, in particular women, youth, indigenous populations and ethnical minorities, with a service that the community needs and values. Trainings on ICT and journalism skills will develop the capacities of local, often humble, local radio stations for raising the voices of vulnerable groups as well as providing relevant local information for the improvement of living standards. Pressing issues in the region can be discussed on the airwaves provided the local radio stations have the capacity to lead an inclusive debate.

Why UNESCO?

- UNESCO Communication and Information Sector is currently carrying out activities on free-independent-pluralistic media that will complement this project.
- The Organization is the only UN agency with a mandate to develop pluralistic media worldwide.
- The proponent is already responsible for the implementation of a successful radio project in 7 countries in Africa: the project “Empowering Local Radios with ICTs”, funded by Sweden (USD 4,5 million), which has been progressively improving 32 radio stations on journalism quality, use of ICTs, sustainability and provision of social service. Its annual reports and independent external evaluation report are available for perusal. This project proposal constitutes its scale-up, in order to answer to growing demands to implement the same type of project in other countries.
- Regular Programme activities are developing national media environments. Moreover, under the framework of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), UNESCO has recently approved the financing of communication-related projects in most of the targeted countries, reinforcing UNESCO’s commitment to media development.
- This project answers to UNESCO’s 37 C/5 (2014-2017), Expected Result 2, Main line of action 1 of Major Programme V.

Overall Goal/Objective

The overall goal of the project is that local radio stations raise awareness of and discuss local issues of public concern. Specifically, through capacity-building on applied journalism and the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), radio stations will have:

- Increased knowledge in editorial, programming and monitoring matters
- Increased gender sensitive reporting
- Increased capacity to report issues of local public concern
- Increased knowledge on ICTs for radio production, broadcasting and audience engagement
- Local radio news from an increased geographical range within signal area
- Increased knowledge of financial management and income-generation

The sustainability of local radio stations ensures freedom, pluralism, and editorial independence. Ultimately, local radio stations will become social service providers capable of bringing silent voices into public debate of local issues.

Main expected results

RESULT I: Improved journalism and ICT skills for development

RESULT II: Local radio news from an increased geographical range within signal area

RESULT III: Strengthened sustainability of local radio stations

Activities and outputs/deliverables relating to the achievement of expected results

RESULT I: Improved journalism and ICT skills for development

I.1 Increased knowledge in editorial, programming and monitoring matters

- I.1.1 Baseline survey of a) radio programming quality and b) listening habits of audiences
- I.1.2 Two workshops on editorial, programming and monitoring matters, including radio formats
- I.1.3 Three workshops on youth radio production (specific for Latin America)

I.2 Increased gender sensitive reporting

- I.2.1 Two workshops on gender focus

I.3 Increased capacity to report issues of local public concern

- I.3.1 Analysis of issues of local public concern
- I.3.2 Four workshops to raise capacities to produce radio programmes in three areas using ICTs
- I.3.3 Two workshops on local radio stations supporting disaster preparedness and mitigation (specific for Asia)
- I.3.4 Mentoring on journalism in the local interest, including investigative journalism

I.4 Increased knowledge on ICTs for radio production, broadcasting and audience engagement

- I.4.1 Three workshops on the use of Internet to report on the three selected areas
- I.4.2 Three workshops on the use of ICTs in radio programming and diffusion
- I.4.4 Two workshops on a) management of daily contacts and b) broadcasting software (editing of radio content, using mobile applications, cloud applications for broadcasting).
- I.4.5 Monitoring of radio programmes
- I.4.6 Mentoring on ICTs as a support for local radio broadcasting

RESULT II: Local radio news from an increased geographical range within signal area

- II.1 Feasibility study on the choice of and incentive schemes for correspondents
- II.2 Three workshops on the role of correspondents to feed local news
- II.3 Two workshops on the use of ICTs by correspondents for reporting and interviewing
- II.4 Two workshops for news desks on work with correspondents' networks and ICTs
- II.5 Mentoring on correspondents' network

RESULT III: Strengthened sustainability of local radio stations

- III.1 Identification of radio stations' needs
- III.2 Analysis of ICT/media funding opportunities (specific for Latin America)
- III.3 Three workshops on entrepreneurship and income-generation
- III.4 Three workshops on financial planning
- III.5 Three workshops on the use of ICTs for better financial planning
- III.6 Two workshops on marketing strategies for radio stations
- III.7 Workshop on technical proficiency aimed at building technical capacities and strengthening technician's networks
- III.8 Workshop on management
- III.9 Two national fora of all sponsored radios on ICTs and sustainability
- III.10 Mentoring management

Beneficiaries and stakeholders

- The primary beneficiaries are poor populations, with special focus on women and youth from vulnerable locations such as urban pockets of poverty, rural hard-to-reach locations and indigenous locations.
- Local radios' staff – including reporters, managers, technicians, presenters and correspondents – are the secondary beneficiaries and will be trained with the aim of enhancing radio relevance for and reach to the communities.
- The participating local radio stations will be closely involved in the project, not only as recipients of training but as planners of capacity building activities and co-managers. Thus they will subsequently be able to spread their acquired knowledge to new staff as well as to other radio stations.
- Local radio stations are considered as pillars to support vulnerable groups in having access to information on topics of relevance to them, resulting in a better quality of life for the whole community.

Africa

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been the scenario of violent conflicts among ethnic groups including escapees from the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. It can be noted spread discrimination against indigenous peoples and violence against women. Radio in DRC is the most accessed media. According to the *Fédération des Radios de Proximité du Congo*, the country counts with more than 400 community and associative radio stations playing an important role in rural and poorer areas. Access to informatics and communication technologies is under development and knowledge on how to use them is still very precarious.

Liberia

Liberia has gone through violent conflicts officially ended in 2003. Radio is central to the continuity of peace and stability in Liberia. Local radio offers the population opportunities to link up and promote reconciliation as the trauma of war is still pervasive. However, most local radio stations do not function effectively due to inability to produce programmes that will foster national development, limited know-how and staff capacities, and infrastructural challenges that the whole country faces following the devastating civil war.

Mali

Mali enjoyed one of the highest levels of press freedom in Africa, having more than 360 radio stations and freedom of the press guaranteed by the Constitution after the referendum of 1992. However, after the military coup in 2012, media in general experienced censorship and violence against journalists. Recently, with the progressive return to a state of rule of law throughout the entire country, there is the possibility of discussing ways to ensure social consistency and development. Community radio, especially in the north region of the country, can play a vital role in promoting peace, diversity and discussing local issues of public concern.

Rwanda

Rwanda's constitution provides for freedom of press and information, yet these rights are severely restricted by certain rules. A 2009 law strictly defines the regulations and issuing licenses are under the government's discretion. There is also considerable control of media content, exposing journalists to censorship and penalties. However, in 2011 three licenses were awarded to community radio stations, in addition to over 20 private local radio stations. Although the quantity of people using these technologies and Internet users are still low, ICT proliferation can support radio stations in planning, broadcasting, and interaction with the audience on how to improve health, agriculture and social development.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is recovering from a violent conflict ended in 2002. In the past decade, the country has progressively developed a democratic culture. The importance of local radios to the stability of Sierra Leone can be exemplified by the fact that the country's National Electoral Commission always partners with the Independent Radio Network (IRN) in the conduct of elections. These stations are the main source of information for the population, also providing a platform for debate and dialogue in the country. International observers in the elections of 2012 commended IRN for contributing to stability and reduced electoral violence due to their pro-active engagement with the population to provide a variety of voices. Sierra Leone remains fragile, with some of the underlying causes of the conflict, especially marginalization and deprivation, not yet addressed.

South Sudan

South Sudan suffered from prolonged violent conflicts (1955-1972 and 1983-2005) in which approximately 2.5 million people died and at least 4 million were displaced. South Sudan is highly diverse, both ethnically and linguistically, with 63 ethnic groups, speaking at least 50 different indigenous languages, though the official working language is English. The largest 10 ethnic groups constitute approximately 80% of the population. Radio remains the most popular medium of communication, particularly given linguistic diversity and far-reaching rural populations as it allows for access to information in local languages. In recent years there has been a proliferation in the establishment of radio stations, and today there are more than 30 radio stations that were created after the peace agreement of 2005 (community organizations, religious, NGOs, state owned and private).

Uganda

In Uganda, radio is the prominent medium that is affordable and widely acceptable to the general public, especially in the rural areas. In the recent years, there has been a tremendous growth in the radio industry catering for various regions. According to the 2012 Assessment of Community Multimedia Centers in Uganda, these community radios need support in establishing a sustainability framework to improve management structures, and build capacity in content development and radio broadcasting.

Asia

Cambodia

Cambodian local radios lack equipment and capacity building programs in journalism, technical radio equipment operating skills and radio production. It is important to support local radios, encourage local communities to produce programmes and content in local languages and build their trust in the media so that the media becomes a platform for expressing their voices, a tool for dialogue, information and education. Community Radio stations exist in Cambodia and had been supported by UNESCO with capacity building projects.

Lao People Democratic Republic

Lao People Democratic Republic's media face serious challenges such as delivering quality information, reaching remote areas and using updated production and broadcast equipment. Radio remains the most promising medium to fulfil citizens' urgent needs for more information. It is envisioned to increase the production of content in local languages, facilitate access to information and open up new debate platforms for rural and ethnic peoples. Community Radios started to be established in 2007 by International Organizations, serving community development goals. The Lao Government supports the establishment of community radios after the 2003 Constitution, which asserted the right of freedom of speech, press and assembly.

Mongolia

In Mongolia, radio is a very relevant medium in the national context as it is in accordance to the traditional oral/story-telling culture, its cost-effectiveness and its capability to reach out marginalized groups, as well as ethnic and linguistic minorities. More than hundred are the FM licenses, including about fifteen community radio stations. After years of delays, there is now a

growing trend of adopting ICTs in the country across various sectors of society; hence there is great need to support the transition to digital production technologies, to support managers and production staff in taking full advantage of ICTs to produce professionally and efficiently.

Myanmar

Myanmar's government, since 2009, has given permission to private companies to run FM radio stations. The draft broadcasting law that the government is committed to enact along 2014 envisions four types of broadcasting services in the country—public service, private, community and subscribed broadcasting. It specifies that community-broadcasting institutions shall be owned by “social organizations”. UNESCO has been assisting in the drafting of these laws for more than two years now. Learning from positive experiences of other countries, UNESCO and its development partners in Myanmar plan to increase pluralism and diversity in the media by delivering training for ethnic media. Local radio is envisioned to provide the platform for dialogue and consensus-building among stakeholders in the on-going peace process, especially at the community level.

Thailand

In Thailand, community radios have a significant role in increasing and promoting pluralism and participation among Thai people. The Broadcasting Act 2008 provides for three forms of broadcasting: public service, community service and commercial service. Community licenses must have a local or community focus. Thousands of local radios already played a crucial role in 2010 during Thailand's political conflict situation and the flood emergency in 2011. Community radio is also crucial in terms of responding to natural disasters such as tsunamis and earthquakes, and crisis management activities.

Latin America

Argentina

Argentina saw community radio emerge in the mid-'80s but only in 2009 a law recognized the modality of non-profit radio stations, aiming to address the media concentration in the country. The law reserves 33% of the airwaves for this type of radio, including community radio. Nevertheless, until now community radio stations do not fulfill this share and face difficulties to obtain incentives from the government. Indigenous peoples are victims of prejudice and violence, and local radio stations can play an active role in safeguarding their rights and culture.

Bolivia

Bolivia's development indicators figure among the lowest in Latin America, with a HDI of 0,675 (32nd out of 35 American countries). Education does not reach evenly all sectors of the society, giving less literacy opportunities for indigenous peoples and rural communities. Community broadcasters have a supportive legal framework. However, they have been threatened by violent attacks.

Brazil

Brazil is one of the most economically unequal countries. Social exclusion, corruption and high crime rate are challenges faced by Brazilian citizens. Community radio sector is large and active, despite the bureaucratic licensing procedures and legislation restrictions that are not adequate to many radio stations' realities. In spite of the constitutional provisions in its Article 22, there is no entity that monitors the broadcasted content, nor is there a law establishing quotas for regional and independent productions.

Colombia

Colombia is a country with high income inequality, with more than one third of its population living below the poverty line. The Afro-Colombian and indigenous peoples are affected by forced displacement due to violence among guerrillas, paramilitary groups and the Colombian security forces. There are 686 community radio stations recognized by law.

Ecuador

In Ecuador, high poverty and income inequality are challenges faced by rural and indigenous population. The country has 1173 radio stations, of which only 19 (1.6%) are community radios. There are no anti-concentration rules or laws on media ownership, and no cross-media ownership limitations for domestic private and foreign companies. A diverse mix of public, private and community media is the only way to serve the needs of society.

Paraguay

Paraguay falls below the Latin American average in several socio-economic categories, including child and maternal mortality, sanitation and secondary school enrollment. More than a third of its population lives below the poverty line. The community media sector in Paraguay has a high degree of self-censorship, which is encouraged by direct pressure from powerful sectors of society and neglects the interests of marginalized groups.

Implementation strategy

- The project is planned to be set up through partnership with a selection of local radios that comply with determined characteristics, such as being community-oriented and editorially independent.
- Radio station staff will be trained by UNESCO to take the lead in supporting discussion of issues of local public concern involving vulnerable groups, especially women, youth, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities.
- This project will be broken down into country-specific work-plans at month 1 of project execution.
- Initial analysis will identify each radio station's local issues of concern.
- Workshops will be flexible enough to be adjusted to the needs of individual radio stations.
- Whenever possible, workshops will gather different radio stations to enable knowledge sharing and networking.
- One of the training methods will be on-the-job coaching, supplemented by theoretical and discussion-based learning.
- Networking activities will allow sharing experiences and reflections, regularly inform on achieved results, and galvanize general support to local radio stations. This will not only immediately nourish the project for better execution but also provide for resilient relations and thereby result as well in increased sustainability upon project termination.
- Monitoring will be a constant resource along project implementation.
- Other organizations (UN Agencies, NGOs, media training organizations, etc.) acting in the selected communities will be contacted to collaborate wherever possible and to share lessons learned, enrich training schedule and avoid duplication of activities.

Sustainability and exit strategy

- This project is designed to involve local radio staff not only in receiving training but discussing its contents and planning activities in a way that they will be able to replicate trainings and disseminate gained knowledge to other radio stations.
- From the outset, local radio stations will be in charge of assessing changes produced by project activities and will have easy access to local trainers and mentors for solving doubts and mitigating setbacks.
- Part of the project strategy is to tap into national or regional expertise, that is: involve professionals whom local radio stations will feel comfortable enough to hold durable relations with – even after our external UNESCO assistance ends.
- Local radio stations will be trained in financial management and entrepreneurship along project implementation so each of them can plan actions to get necessary financial resourcing before the project is terminated.

- Through the improvement of programming, strengthened financial management and increased relevance in their communities, benefitted radio stations will become more credible for advertisers and donors, helping them to become financially independent.
- Local radio stations will also be sensitized about community media legislation, their rights and professional conducts. Furthermore, it will assist radios in achieving greater accountability and proficiency in addressing local matters of public interest.