



WORKSHOP RADIO JOURNALISM FOR COMMUNITY RADIOS

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INTRODUCTION

There are different kinds of community radio. To give a single definition would be very difficult. Some stations may reach a very small area with their broadcasts, while others have broadcast to a larger audience. Certain stations focus on special areas of interest. Others have broader programming to include all community concerns. The resources and equipment available also vary from station to station.

Even with these differences, the community radio stations in Kosov@ share very similar principles. They are owned, managed and programmed by the people they serve and are accountable to community structures.

The keywords are community involvement and participation. Without this involvement and participation, community radio cannot exist. But the extent of community involvement in managing and programming differs from one station to the next.

The aim of community radio is to serve particular communities, informing, educating and entertaining them, as well as allowing active participation of the listeners in the radio stations/programs/broadcasts. These stations very often give a voice to those who were silenced and help make information available.

Unlike *to* most other community radios world-wide, the stations in Kosov@, although responding to the community's expressed needs and priorities and trying to offer a "service public", are – or intend to be – profit radio stations. They have to be self sustainable in order to exist and therefore depend on their community's market. The stations should be aware that, owing to difficulties in achieving real participation and the need to generate income, the principle of community involvement and participation could be compromised. The stations should evaluate their own work on an ongoing basis to see to what extent the station is serving and involving the community to which it is broadcasting.

It is important for community radio stations to steadily increase their audience. It is difficult as the competition is strong, the economy is in a depression and, as studies have shown, listeners remember very little of what they have heard on the radio. This is partly due to the fact it is not relevant to them but also because the broadcasts and programs very often sound boring.

Medienhilfe developed this short manual as a resource for community radio stations in Kosov@ to support them in creating professional broadcasts and programs and in gaining a wider audience. It is through quality and not through quantity, which you gain and keep listeners. It is important that you offer a professional program, adequate to the size and the capacities of your station. Less is definitely more.

The manual outlines some of the ways in which you can liven up your bulletins. Try to use some of these methods and ideas in every bulletin and some of them in every program. Be as creative as possible, experiment, involve your community.

(Many thanks to The Open Society Foundation For South Africa for having copied some of their publication.)

TYPES OF PROGRAM

Every station competes for listeners' time with other radio stations, other life activities, and other media. Therefore you have to be aware of the way people use radio and when. You have to think about the following (main) principles:

• **Timing**

- Program bulletins and then slowly increase these when you have more resources.
- Decide when to broadcast your news by looking at what time your target audience is most likely to be listening to you.
- Think about how long each bulletin will be, how long each story will be and how many stories you will have in each bulletin. This might be affected by the number of languages you broadcast in.
- Some stations have separate community news bulletins and national and international bulletins. Others combine local and national news in one bulletin.
- Decide whether or not you will have headlines on the half hour (in-between your bulletins). These headlines sum up the main stories in a few sentences - without the background to the story. They allow people who are rushing to work to get an idea of what is happening. They also encourage others to stay tuned to your radio station to hear the full story.

• **Focus**

- Schedule your strongest programmes and talent when most people are listening. Usually, more people listen in the morning than at any other time.
- Invest your resources here where it matters most.
- Promote other programmes on the station during this peak period.

• **Consistency**

- Make the schedule consistent across the week. Radio listening is a habit and people get used to hearing a particular programme at the same time each day.
- Group as many programme elements that have the same appeal in large blocks to keep people listening longer.

• **Weekend pace**

- Keep in mind that people have more time to listen on weekends and make this programming strong as well.
- The pace is more leisurely, the programming can be reflective, longer pieces.
- Programmes should tie in with weekend activities, eg sport, festivals and other events.

• **Audience needs**

- Schedules are determined by the needs of the audience, not the convenience of the programme host.

TYPES OF BROADCAST

Community radio stations exist thanks to the listeners they have. They have to keep or even to steadily increase their audience. It is known that radio-listeners are very easily bored and change the program. To keep them tuned to your own program you have to create a professional and diverse program so that people are entertained by listening to your program. There are some ways to change the usual way of presenting news and information.

• News

News and information are some of the most important programmes on your station - and the most difficult to do well. Giving your listeners news about what is happening around them is providing them with a real service. News is really anything that people talk about. Radio news is essentially things that are close to the hearts of our listeners. It is what people are talking about when they are in the taxis, sitting having dinner, or relaxing. Here are some tips to help you decide "what is news?"

- News has to be relevant to the people listening. It must affect them in some way. This means we must find out how it will affect our listeners to make it interesting to them.
- It must be close to our hearts. People are more interested in what happens in their village, region, country than in what is happening in the USA - unless what is happening there affects them. People are even more interested in news about people they know.
- News is also about conflict - and not all conflict is unhealthy. There are always different opinions on issues and it is important to broadcast those different views.
- News is about good things that happen in our communities, things that make people proud of each other and their community.
- Everybody also likes to hear news about important people. The people who are important to your listeners might not be interesting to listeners in another province or village. The local school principal could, for example, be an important member of your community.
- News is about people organising for change. A street committee organising rubbish removal is an important news item. Men marching against rape is also news. This is the sort of news that can inspire other people to organise for change.
- News is about events and about issues. A local soccer match is important, as well as HIV and AIDS in our communities.
- News is not only about what is happening in local government, but about how this affects Fritz Maier down the street, and what is happening in our community organisations. We must make sure we have the voices of our listeners in our news - not only the voices of elected officials.
- The news stories we remember, and talk about, are often about people. These are called human interest stories.
- Different things interest different people. If you are trying to reach your whole community, you must try to interest all sectors, eg old and young people; women and men; workers and unemployed people alike.
- Try to broadcast how something will affect different members of your audience. For example, the way the government will handle child benefits will affect people differently. Some women in your community might end up having a lot less money given to them, while others will be getting government money for the first time. You should interview women from both sides.

Before you go on air, you should also develop your own style of delivering news - and stick to it. Your style will help listeners know, when they tune in, that they are listening to your station. Community radio generally should sound different, and your station should sound different from other community stations. These are some ideas on delivering the news:

- Choose a news jingle or signature tune (sig tune). This is the music or sounds you will play before the news that will tell listeners the news is coming up.
- Decide who will introduce the news reader. Will the person presenting the programme before the news introduce the reader or will she/he introduce themselves? How will they do it? Will they be formal or casual?
- Think about whether you will develop a special news slogan which you will play. For example, first with the news, or News you can use are two well known slogans.
- Decide on whether or not you will use headlines or extracts (teasers) at the beginning of each bulletin. These teasers give the listener an idea of what is coming up, but do not tell the whole story. If you tell the whole story, people might as well stop listening.
- When you use voice reports from reporters, will they sign off themselves ("Fritz Maier, reporting from Pristina")? Or will they leave it up to the news reader ("That was Fritz Maier in Pristina")?
- Decide on how you will write stories, e.g.:
 - When broadcasting in other languages, will you allow English words?
 - How will you address people? Will you use their title (Mr, Ms, Dr, and Prof.) or just their full names and then their surnames?
- How will the news reader end the news? Will you allow presenters to chat about the news to the news reader after the bulletin?
- Will you sum up the main stories at the end of the bulletin or not?
- At what sort of pace or speed will you read the news - slowly or quickly?

• **Vox Pop**

Vox Pops are usually very much liked by the audience and simple to do. You only need a (mini disc) recorder, a microphone and a good idea. But Vox Pops only make sense, if they talk about common, well know and easily understandable subjects. Funny Vox Pops are very amusing and very much liked by most people (e.g. to sing a song, to explain a foreign expression, to tell someone's dreams). If you do a Vox Pop, think of these points:

- Vox Pops are very entertaining, but aren't representative. Mention it on the radio before or after the Vox Pop.
- Keep your question short and clear and try to get a long answer instead of just a No- or Yes-answer. Questions should not be asked in a suggestive way.
- Choose the right place and the right time. When and where will you find a lot of people who are very likely to be interested in this subject?
- Get as many answer as possible (e.g. 12 to 15 people for a 50 second broadcast).
- When you choose and cut the answers, try to have a mix: different opinions, different ages, different sex, different lengths and different voices. Put pro and contra always one after the other.

• **Sound-bites**

Sound-bites are real sounds or bits of interviews used during the news. The sense of using sound-bites is in making the news more interesting and in achieving more authenticity. The statement becomes more important if you underline it with a sound-bite. To collect sound-bites is easy, as you only need a recorder or a telephone.

- You can get sound-bites almost everywhere: Sound-bites can be in form of a single statement, as a part of a speech or of a conference, as background noises and sounds.
- Sound-bites should be introduced by the news reader.
- Keep sound-bites short as news stories are short. They are, at most, about 40 seconds long.
- Don't cut a sound-bite in the middle of a sentence or after the voice gets high.
- Don't change the meaning of the answer through cutting.

• **Wrap around**

Wrap around is a broadcast mixed with the reporter's voice and sound-bites. The reporter's voice is wrapped around the sound-bite. To do it, you need a recorder to record the sound bite and something to edit it on.

- Sound-bites must be introduced, but don't repeat what will be said in the sound-bite.
- Sound-bites shouldn't be longer in the whole than 50 percent of the whole broadcast piece.
- Distribute the sound-bites regularly through the broadcast.
- Don't start or finish with a sound-bite and don't wait too long with the first sound-bite. If you start or finish with a sound-bite, the speaker has to introduce it or to catch it up.

• **Feature / Reportage / Documentary**

Mini-Features are short, atmospheric broadcasts. They need quite a lot of time to do, as features include a lot of different sound-bites in form of statements, noises, sounds, music and the reporter's voice. A feature is not a wrap around. It has much more different sounds and is more emotional and artistic than a wrap around. Features are the radio movies.

- Choose the right subject for the feature. Not every subject is good for a feature. They should offer the possibility to collect a lot of different sound-bites and to be emotional.
- Start with a sound-bite to create instant atmosphere. (e.g. if you described yourself standing in the middle of the street with a lot of traffic, let us first here the sound of the heavy traffic)
- Text and atmosphere / noises or sounds in the background should be adequate to the text your reading.
- Sound-bites which aren't spoken statements should always be faded in and out.

• **Commentary**

A commentary is a critical statement by a journalist or by the editor-in-chief himself about an actual incident or a popular subject after the news or after a report. A commentary is never objective. It gives the radio station a certain image. A commentary can also be an explanation of a difficult subject treated in the news or an analysis of an actual incident.

- Every subject is good for a commentary (e.g. the building of a school, the power cut during the weekend...)
- Know the subject very well if you comment on it.
- Be courageous to tell your opinion, but don't be polemic or offensive. Be serious, independent, well thought.
- If you would like to tease, to blame someone, to expose or to be hot, make the commentary short and artistic.

- **Question and Answer**

The news presenter interviews the journalist. This can be done on the phone or back at the station. It doesn't need a lot of resources.

- **Interview**

Interviews are very common on radio – especially to get sound-bites for the news or a wrap around. But an interview can be a whole broadcast in it. In this case, you have to respect the following rules.

- The interview can be live or be prepared in advance; it can be in the studio, in some other place or on the phone. (The interview on the phone should be the exception as the quality is always bad.)
- Before making a commitment to have a guest on the show, talk to him on the phone first. Does he know the subject? Is he a good talker? Can he talk about the subject in a way that ordinary people can understand?
- Before going on air, focus on what exactly you need to know from this person you're interviewing. The clearer you are about what YOU think, the clearer it will be for your listeners.
- Plan your questions in advance and a beginning and an end. Figure on six questions for a ten minute interview. There are only six questions in every interview that really matter: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How.
- Keep your questions short and tight. Stick to the questions you've prepared.
- Prepare the intro in advance. Avoid Jargon and explain expressions used by your guest in case your listeners don't understand them. Your listeners aren't experts: It is your role to make the interview understandable.
- Watch the clock: Don't make your interview longer than scheduled.
- The interviewer can be one person or two – especially if the guest is an important person (e.g. politician)
- There are three different types of interview: the interview about a subject, the interview about someone's opinion (commentary) or the interview about a person (the guest himself not a subject is important)
- Never broadcast an interview which is recorded secretly, without knowledge of the interview partner.
- A phone interview is a very good method to involve the community

Think, too about the possibility as a medium to highlight points of agreement between two sides in a conflict rather than emphasising the differences. Broadcasters can deal with hot issues by focusing on areas of genuinely shared values and concerns, and so contribute positively to the eventual resolution of that conflict rather than emphasising the divisions.

- **Live on the scene**

The reporter files his story live on the scene. As equipment, a cell phone is needed. There are two possibilities for a live report: either the story is broadcast at the same time the reporter tells it or it is recorded some time in advance. As it is always more difficult to do a real live report, do think, if it is really necessary to do it live or if there is enough time to record it. The live report can be done as a single report or in the way of an interview (the moderator asks the reporter what he sees)

- Live reports are subjective, emotional
- Describe what you see and hear – no background stories
- Not every event is good for a live report

• Discussion

There are a lot of different sorts of discussion on the radio: discussion in the studio between a journalist and guests, discussion with the participation of the audience by phone (Phone-Ins), discussion between several journalists and only one guest (meet the press) and discussion between several journalists from different media. Discussions have to be well prepared in advance; the moderator has to know the subject and his partners.

- The subject has to be controversial
- The moderator has to be an independent, but strong discussion leader; he leads the discussion but he doesn't participate
- Phone-ins need well qualified studio guests who are able to answer the questions people ask on the phone
- Phone-Ins are easy to realize and are very popular with the audience; it is a good way to involve the community
- Issues well treated / *easily tackled* by Phone-Ins are: Health, education, psychology
- Check, who is phoning, try to eliminate offensive phone-ins

IDEAS FOR CONTENT

Community radio stations do have to inform their community, but also to entertain and to involve the community they serve. It's their task to give a voice to these who are silent most of the time. There are different ways to do both – entertain and involve – at the same time.

• Radio competitions

Radio plays are entertaining parts of a radio program. It is a very good way to involve and communicate with one's audience. But to attract the audience to a play, you usually have to offer the opportunity to win something. Radio plays are usually very popular and are a medium to gain and to keep the audience. Contestants can be involved by phone, fax or e-mail. Competitions can be a standard part of the daily/weekly program or last just some days for a special occasion (competition by a new radio in the area, to promote a new radio, program...). But don't overdo it; single competition can have a very positive influence, but if there are too many, the program begins to lack authority.

- Speak with every contestant for a short time; ask what his name is, what is he doing, etc. Personalize the competition!
- Radio competitions are a way to attract sponsors as well
- Radio competitions are a very good method to impart knowledge, to educate....
- Radio competitions are a very good method to promote your own program (eg. you have to answer questions about issues treated in the morning news, about songs played during the evening hours, etc.)
- Try to create new competitions, suitable for your audience. A good competition has
 - To entertain
 - To promote other programs of the radio
 - To create a positive image for the radio
 - To cooperate with partners (not sponsors) such as sports clubs, print media, communities
 - To cooperate with sponsors
 - To be easy to realize
 - To have fixed and easily understandable rules
- Radio Competitions can involve its listeners by letting them **do** something (creative, for the environment, help, etc.)

- **Humorous programs**

Radio informs **and** entertains not only by music or plays but by humorous programs as well. Don't be too serious all the time, make fun, think, too, of comedies and comics. This is definitely a way to keep the audience.

- Fake interviews: you can make a parody of the reality or an actual situation by faking an interview
- Parodies of voices
- Funny noises
- Funny Vox Pops

- **Wishes and greetings**

Bulletins where people can make their music wishes or send their greetings are a very good way to involve the audience and to ensure a diverse music program.

- You can do it live: people call and make their wishes and send greetings on the phone. Take the chance to ask them two or three personal questions.
- If you prepare the bulletin, the presenter has to read the wishes and greeting received in advance by e-mail, fax or phone (answering machine).
- Give every bulletin a main title: birthday wishes, wishes to ill people, to friends....
- Invite a youth group, a club, etc. as guests who create today's bulletin together with the presenter and make the music wishes.

- **Market**

A place where listeners can sell or offer goods, look for things, partners (leisure and sports activities, club members etc.), job opportunities, exchange things, etc. It can be done either by phone – listeners call and tell live what they want to offer or search; it can be done by the moderator who reads offers and wishes, transmitted to the station by fax, letter or e-mail.

- **Special Issues**

Every program should include special bulletins from time to time. Most of the time these are bulletins treating "heavy" issues like politics, drugs, HIV, minority's issues. It is important to think of other issues as well – issues which are entertaining to listen to and which are a good way to bring together different ethnic groups.

- Education
- Morning sport
- Language course
- Cooking
- Women
- Children
- Health
- Portraits of "outstanding" people, help activities
- Customs

- **Necessary news**

Daily news should include also all news about the situation and changes in the daily life of the listeners (traffic, weather, interruptions of electricity or water, etc.) People are most interested in news which touches their daily life.

In such cases, no news is news as well. Do for example a report, that there is no news about any traffic disruptions.

Gossip can be amusing as well – if the community is small, tell who has opened a new shop, who has gotten married or died, etc.

Journalism and Programming for Community Radios

Workshop
Medienhilfe

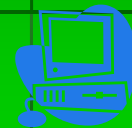
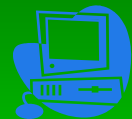
Program of the workshop

- Introduction
- Community Radios
- Group work
- Types of program
- Coffee break
- Group work
- Types of broadcast
- Group work
- Ideas for Content
- Evaluation

Objectives:

- To involve the community
- To let the community participate
- To improve the program
- To bring diversity into the broadcast
- To promote the program
- To become more professional and creative

A-----B



What is a community radio? What is its aim?

A community radio is:

- Owned, managed and programmed by the people it serves.
- A non-profit radio station responding to the community's expressed needs and priorities.
- Accountable to community structures.

The keywords are:
Community involvement and participation

The aim of community radio is:

The aim of community radio is to serve particular communities, informing, educating and entertaining them, as well as allowing for active participation of the listeners in the radio stations.

**How do you involve your community?
How can you let your community participate?
How can you attract your community?**

You attract your community by:

- Program, which is adapted to the needs of the community
- Diverse broadcast, which are attractive to the listeners
- Good and interesting content

What are the guidelines of programming?

(Group work)

Guidelines of Programming

- Timing
- Focusing
- Consistency
- Weekend pace
- Audience needs

Timing

- Program bulletins and slowly increase them.
- Broadcast your news at the time your target audience is most likely to be listening to you.
- Think about how long each bulletin will be, how long each story will be and how many stories you will have in each bulletin.
- Decide if you have separate community / news / international news bulletins or if you combine local and national news in one bulletin.
- Decide whether or not you will have headlines on the half hour.

Focusing

- Schedule your strongest programmes and talent when most people are listening.
- Invest your resources here where it matters most.
- Promote other programmes on the station during this peak period.

Consistency

- Make the schedule consistent across the week. Radio listening is a habit and people get used to hearing a particular programme at the same time each day.
- Group as many programme elements that have the same appeal in large blocks to keep people listening longer.

Weekend pace

- Keep in mind that people have more time to listen on weekends and make this programming strong as well.
- The pace is more leisurely, the programming can be reflective, longer pieces.
- Programmes should tie in with weekend activities, eg sport, festivals and other events.

Audience needs

- Schedules are determined by the needs of the audience, not the convenience of the programme host.



LESS IS MORE!

What type of broadcast do you know?

(Group work)

Typ of broadcast

- News
- Vox Pop
- Sound-bites
- Wrap around
- Feature / Reportage / Documentary
- Commentary
- Question & Answer
- Interview
- Live on scene
- Discussion / Debate

For what do you use which broadcast?

(To be discussed in Plenum)

News

- Relevant
- Close to the heart
- Different views
- Good things
- Important people
- Changes
- Events and issues
- Voices of the listeners
- Human interest stories
- All sectors of the community

News style

- Which jingle or signature tune?
- Who introduces the news?
- What slogan?
- Headlines and/or teasers?
- How do the reporters sign up?
- What style of language?
- How do you end the news?
- What speed?

Vox Pop

- Entertaining, but not representative
- Short questions – long answers
- Right place and right time
- Lots of answers
- Different answers, different opinions

Sound-bites

- Single statement, part of a speech, background noises and sounds
- Introduce the sound-bites
- Cut the sound-bites at the right moment
- No change of meaning through cutting

Wrap around

- Introduce the sound-bites
- Not longer than 50% of the broadcast piece
- Right distribution
- Don't start or finish with a sound-bite

Feature / Reportage / Documentary

- Choose the right topic
- Start with a sound-bite
- Adequate text and sound
- Fade in and out background sound- bites

Commentary

- Every topic is good for a commentary
- Know the topic if you comment
- Tell your opinion, be serious, independent
- Don't be polemic or offensive
- Be short and artistic, if you blame or tease someone

Question & Answer

- News presenter interviews the journalist

Interview



- Life or prepared
- Choose your guest well
- Focus
- Plan your interview
- Short and tight questions
- Stick to the questions
- Explain expressions and avoid jargon
- Watch the clock
- One or two interviewer(s)
- Different interview-technics
- No secret recording
- Involve the community

Live on scene

- Subjective and emotional
- No background stories
- Tell what you see and hear
- No every event is good for a live report

Discussion / Debate

- Controversial topic
- Independent, but strong moderator
- Keep the lead
- Choose your guest well
- The more guests you have, the more difficult it is
- Phone-ins need qualified guests
- Involve the community
- Eliminate offensive phone-ins



**Quality and diversity
are more important
than quantity!**

**How do you
entertain and keep
your audience?**

(Group work)

Ideas for content

- Radio competitions
- Humorous programs
- Wishes and greetings
- Market
- Special issues
- Necessary news

**What are the risks and
assumptions of the
different contents?**

(To be discussed in Plenum)

Radio competitions

- Personalize the competition
- Attract sponsors
- Impart knowledge and educate
- Promote your program
- Create new competitions, suitable to your audience
- Activate your audience

Humorous programs

- Fake interviews
- Parodies of voices
- Funny noises
- Funny Vox Pop

Wishes & Greetings

- Personalize the life questions
- Get the questions in advance
- Give the bulletin a main title
- Invite a guest

Market

- Sell and offer goods
- Social activities
- Job opportunities
- Exchange things
- Life or prepared in advance

Special Issues

- Cooking
- Women
- Children
- Health
- Portraits
- Customs
- Morning sport
- Language course
- Literature
- Education

Necessary news

- Changes in the daily life (electricity, water supply, etc.)
- Traffic disruptions
- Openings, Weddings, Deads, etc.
- No news are news as well



**Be entertaining!
Give the community
the news the want!**