MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRIES IN NIGERIA
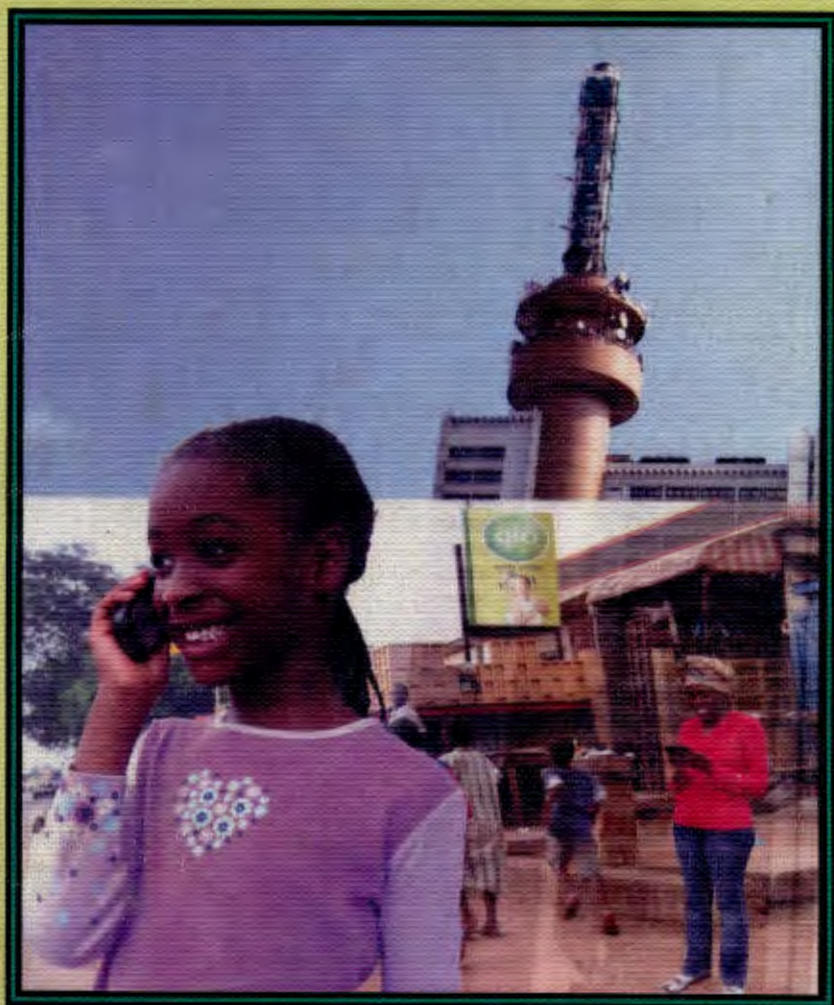
Chapter 2

Community Radio Broadcasting for
Rural Community Education

Andrew A. Moemeka (Ph.D)

Community Radio Broadcasting for Rural Community Development

Introduction

In the age of Neo-Liberal Reforms, an examination of the place of radio broadcasting in the development of rural communities in Nigeria is necessary. This is because the incessant call for the use of radio broadcasting to raise the awareness level of rural and poor populations and create opportunities for education and development has faced near insurmountable difficulties since the introduction of broadcasting into Nigeria in the 1940s. These difficulties range from selfish fear of enlightening the rural majority *through* the desire to spend resources only on providing for the privileged elite minority *to* a frightening arrogant insouciance towards the rural communities. The existing relationship between radio and rural communities can be summed up as one in which the rural

communities' struggle for access to the airwaves has been frustrated by the silent campaign of the elite to crush it, and the benign neglect of these communities by the government. Can Neo-Liberal reforms, such as deregulation of broadcasting and the latest attempts to establish Community Radio, make any significant improvement on the right of the rural populations to be active part of the radio communication environment of the country? In the face of political jobbery and morbid selfishness of the majority of the country's political leaders, and the better-than-thou attitude of the educated elite, it is very difficult to tell.

Conceptual Clarification

Community Radio Broadcasting: This is broadcasting by the local community, for the local community and about the place of the local community in the nation. Another name for it is Local Radio Broadcasting (Moemeka, 1981). Both concepts—local and community—are interchangeable. After all, every community is local within its environment ... *"Community broadcasting is broadcasting which is for, by and about the community, whose ownership and management is representative of the community, which pursues a social development agenda, and which is non-profit,"* (African Charter on Broadcasting, 2001). Community (Local) Radio Broadcasting is predicated on the principle of total community involvement in the policy-decisions, management and administration of the radio organization, program decisions, planning and production. It is run on the basis of what McQuail (1983) has called Democratic Participant Media. Community needs, not the wishes of the government or the whims of media personnel drive the program content. Program content is entirely made up of issues directly or indirectly relevant to the life of the community. To ensure that community need is what is reflected in the programs, a lot of interpersonal interaction takes place between program producers and community members.

Community Radio Broadcasting is not Community Broadcast Programming. The latter is a system of broadcasting in which programs meant for

local communities are planned by and broadcast from a national radio station. It goes without saying that such a broadcasting arrangement has very little room for contact with local communities. It also means that the decision about program content is not made by the community but by 'distant' program editors and producers. This has been the best that broadcasting has ever offered Nigeria's rural population. It has and continues to be a problem because the identification, by elite-based broadcasting, of marginal *"audience segments either for commerce or for public service is often guided more by convenience than by consideration of the identities actually held by members of the (marginalized) target populations,"* (Gandy, 2000).

Rural Community Development: To begin to fully understand the painful condition and depth of deprivation that exist in rural and urban poor areas of a nation, it is better to describe what development is not. The rural and urban poor communities in Nigeria constitute 70-80% of the population of the country, and over 80% of the land area. This rural population suffers from a high rate of illiteracy and absence of social amenities like pipe-borne water, electricity and good roads. In many of these rural areas there are schools, but school buildings are generally below standard and lack such amenities as libraries, gymnasia, desks and such teaching tools as audio-visuals, radio and television. The schools are poorly staffed and equipped. Majority of the men are farmers, who live on subsistence agriculture; and majority of women are very small scale traders. Politically, rural communities are on the outskirts of the mainstream and are used by the political elite as tools to gain political power, but forgotten as soon as the politicians have gained their desired power. What they frequently get are socio-economic promises for improvement of their communities; but these promises are hardly ever kept, creating a feeling of perpetual frustration and fatalism.

The other segment of the Nigerian population that is dangerously deprived is the urban poor. This population is all but rural even though it is found on the outskirts of urban areas and cities. This is the conurbations, inhabited by barely-

educated and restless illiterate citizens forced out of the rural life by the harsh realities of economic deprivations, but unable to breakthrough into the urban elite circles because of poor education and lack of skilled knowledge. This population, which suffers like the rural poor, is in addition, generally underfed, poorly-housed, unemployed and/or unemployable, and live under frightfully unsanitary conditions. Everyday, they face the psychological mortification of seeing wealth and affluence a stone-throw away while they themselves live in abject poverty. Both this conurbation population and the rural community population suffer the impact of what Ugboajah (1972) called the umbrella of mass media dysfunction (see appendix i). The model shows that educated elite and urban rich have full access to the mass media; the suburban population less so, and the urban-poor and rural populations have very little or no access at all. They are virtually cut-off from fruitfully engaging in national mass media communication.

All the above socio-economic, environmental and communication handicaps that face the rural communities are the reasons why rural development is imperative for any nation. For the poverty of this largest segment of the nation's population constitutes a heavy drag on national development. Any action taken to reduce or eliminate the problems of these rural and conurbation populations is action taken towards fostering development in the rural area and towards relieving the burden of poverty and underdevelopment on national development. And the most important action would seem to be setting up an interactive communication system in order to build understanding and create active participation. Radio broadcasting has been identified by UNESCO (1965; page i) as a veritable channel for such interactive system that is intended to establish development communication processes in impoverished communities, when it said:

> Effective communication with rural people and their active participation in the life of their country are essential for all developing societies. Radio broadcasting, when skillfully used, has proved to be the most effective medium of communication with these far-flung populations.

Community structure shapes information flows (Tichnor et al, 1973), and facilitates (or discourages) social interaction (McPhee et al, 1963) thereby regulating citizen knowledge and participation. Community Radio Broadcasting facilitates effective flow and utilization of information through the exchange of ideas that it makes possible. Participation also has a strong connection to social power, in that it reflects attempts by individuals to influence the world around them. The close relation between participation and knowledge acquisition ensures context-relevant understanding that fosters development education.

Historical Perspective

The first attempt at getting the world to recognize the importance of building communication (the mass media) into the task of national development was made in 1964 by Wilbur Schramm, in 1969 by Roy, et al., and in 1974 by Seay. The works of these intellectuals were followed by the writing of Everett Rogers on Radio Forums (1970) and the Diffusion of Innovation (1971). McAnany (1973), concerned about the information gap between cities and rural communities, discussed five strategies for using radio to bring the rural communities into the mainstream of national communication environment.

Early attempts at bridging the gap of broadcast facilities between the urban and the rural communities and stimulating social change in Nigeria, were made in the 1950s by the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation. The corporation established Provincial Broadcasting Stations to take broadcasting to the provinces. But these were nothing more than relay stations which depended completely on programs broadcast from Lagos—the Headquarters of the Broadcasting Corporation. Not only were these stations not near enough to the heart of the rural communities, there was little or no local content in the programs broadcast to the people; they were merely being informed of what was happening in the townships and in the United Kingdom which was then the country's colonial master. The stations were effectively dumping information on the underprivileged rural majority.

After independence in 1960, the provincial stations were slowly but surely disbanded in favor of stronger and better equipped regional stations. This further made it difficult for the rural communities to have any influence on the broadcasting environment. But a very bold attempt was made in Western Nigeria to get rural communities involved. The Western Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (WNBC) established a Mobile Rural Radio—Radio O-Y-O—to bridge the disturbing yawing gap between broadcasting for the cities and urban areas and broadcasting for the rural communities. It created availability, accessibility and active participation for the rural communities in the West and vicarious participation for rural communities in other parts of Nigeria. A study of the activities and commitment of that mobile rural radio (Moemeka, 1987) which, unfortunately and to the disappointment of participating rural communities, was put off the air in the mid-1960s, proved that the station was the best broadcasting had ever given to ordinary citizens of Nigeria. But the station was dismantled by the government on pretext that there was not enough money to continue financing it. But money was not a problem when the same government began building a highly expensive television station ... for the rich and the elite ... in 1955.

In 1978 this author expressed great concern about the blunt neglect of rural communities in the broadcasting set up in Africa to the then UNESCO Adviser on Communication for Africa, Alex Quarmyne. In his very short but pointed response, the Adviser said:

> The type of broadcasting we have in Africa today, was suitable for the political era in which it was instituted. The political situation in each African country has since changed, and along with this have come directional changes in the social and economic goals. If broadcasting is to be used to support the present aspirations of African countries, then there must necessarily be a new structuring of Broadcasting to make these possible. Localizing of radio should feature prominently in the new directions, (Alex Quarmyne, 1978: p.v).

This was a much needed impetus for studying the role local radio has played in a number of countries around the world with particular reference to Scotland in the United Kingdom, the Northwester territories of Canada, Mexico, the Philippines, India and Colombia. These were studied in light of McAnany's Radio's Role in Development: Five Strategies of Use (1973), and Waniewicz's Broadcating for Adult Education: A Guide-book to World-wide Experience (1972). These studies led to the publication of *Local Radio: Community Education for Development* (Moemeka, 1981).

The latter book examined the role of interpersonal communication in rural development and showed that it is too restrictive and slow in reaching the underprivileged rural majority. It then examined an alternative approach, that is, the mass media approach. After looking at the strengths and weaknesses of each of the major mass media—Print, Television and Radio—the author concluded that radio, because of its versatility and wide ownership in rural communities, its mobility and low cost, was the most appropriate medium. But it must be radio used, not for dumping information on unsuspecting rural majority, not for talking *at* or *to* the people, but radio used for *talking with* the people—radio for communication. As a result, some specific recommendations, the most important of which are discussed below, were made in the book. The recommendations took into account the experiences of near-rural communities' neglect by the existing broadcasting system.

Adoption of a Local Radio Strategy.

The over-riding need of viable local radio broadcasting is an appropriate strategy. After a careful study of the five strategies discussed by McAnany (1973), it was clear that the most appropriate strategy for Nigeria would be a combination of the positive aspects of the Rural Radio Forum, the Radio School, and the Radio and Animation. For the purposes of providing a clear perspective, the basic tenets and advantages of these strategies are given below.

Rural Radio Forum is the strategy which uses radio to create opportunity for discussion and decision-making for rural groups. The strategy involves a presentation of a regular weekly magazine program to rural audiences formed into listening and active participatory groups. The programs usually comprise rural news, answers to listeners' questions, advice (family, work, health, etc) and discussion. The groups—usually between ten and thirty listeners each—listen to the programs and discuss their contents under the guidance of a group leader, and then take decisions on the points raised. The leader sends a monthly report to the source of the programs for review and possible inclusion in subsequent programs.

The first and perhaps the most subtle yet very important advantage of this strategy is the sense of involvement and self-worth which it engenders in the rural population as a result of its demand for some action-decision, after discussions, by the group. The follow-up of a radio message with localized discussion and decision ensures commitment to agreed actions and consequently to social change. McAnany (1973, p.10) pointed this out when he said:

> The communication of a message carried to many groups by a mass medium like radio, then localized by discussion in small groups and guided by a group decision conforms closely to existing theories of communication and social change.

The second advantage of this strategy is that it exposes participating group members to information important to the rural community thus turning such individuals into opinion leaders whose views would tend to be respected in the community. This is one aspect of the radiation effect of Rural Radio Forums (Roy, Weisman & Rogers, 1969). The other aspect is that non-participants could also listen to the radio messages and possibly be affected by them. The interplay of these two aspects does have effect on the quantity, quality and understanding of development messages available within the community.

Thirdly, forums send back reports and messages with which group members express their views and opinions, thus providing the vital feedback

which is often lacking in mass media activities. And finally, the forum strategy is based on the conviction that rural development must essentially come from the rural people themselves, and not be dropped from above. The in-built localized discussions and decisions ensure that the rural community is put in a position whereby it can be both the subject and object of its own development.

Radio Schools is the most widespread strategy for using radio for rural community education in Latin America. The 'schools' are small organized listening/learning groups that meet in houses, or churches under a guide. The audience of the 'schools' is primarily illiterate rural adults. The basic aim of this strategy is to offer fundamental, integral education which goes beyond mere reading, writing and cognitive skills, and tries to change the passive and dependent attitude of rural citizens, creating a deepening of their sense of dignity and self-worth, and turning them into "new human beings." The approach is basically multi-media, employing at least radio and printed booklets almost everywhere, but also frequently adding newspapers, charts, booklets, film strips and traditional teaching/learning methods. The 'schools' are based on the principle of homophily, so that group members not only know each other, but largely have identical perception of the world and of their own environment. Outreach staff act as supervisors, co-ordinating activities, distributing materials, and visiting groups from time to time in order to encourage them.

Radio and Animation (also known as the Radio Participating Group) aims at promoting among local communities a trained cadre of decision leaders. The role of the trained leaders is to promote, in a non-directive way, a dialogue in which community members participate in defining their development problems, putting them in a wider social context and devising ways to mobilize their people to common action. The strategy places on emphasis on radio defining, but not suggesting, solutions to the people's problems. Radio programs are made from recorded responses to a definite problem given by some members of the listening public. The participating groups then listen to these responses and views, discuss

the problem further, thus creating avenues for further responses from the public and subsequently eliciting decisions.

The basic rationale of Radio and Animation is that no solutions to problems can be successfully imposed on local communities from the outside; that local communities must first arrive at the problem definition and then its solution on their own. In this strategy, feedback is not an 'extra' but an essential ingredient of the radio programs.

These three strategies were combined as one under the name Local Radio Strategy predicated on the principles of the Democratic Participation Media theory (McQuail, 1983) which lays strong emphasis on serving the people according to their well-identified needs and wishes, and with the full participation of the people in every aspect of their community radio station. It is a strategy which capitalizes on motivations and calls for a heavy new emphasis on self-instruction supported by well-programmed broadcasts. It calls for a fairly loose supervisory relationship with the State owned Regional Broadcasting Organization, with State and Local Advisory Councils. (For more details see appendix ii). This strategy takes into account the three factors that are necessary for any radio communication to be successful. These are a *transmitter*, *effectedness* of messages and *effectiveness* of decisions. The first factor is a transmitter that is capable of taking messages to the target audiences in a clear and audible manner. The second factor—*effectedness*—is the necessity for messages to be in the code and context that audiences can understand. These two factors—a viable transmitter and effectedness—assure the carrying of messages to target audiences in such a way that they can understand the context and meaning. The third factor is *effectiveness* that is, ensuring the acceptance of messages and the willingness to act according to the demands of the messages. This factor is of the utmost importance because hearing a message and understanding it—though very necessary and important prerequisites,—do not necessarily assure acceptance of the message and the willingness to act according to the demands of the message. This goal—effectiveness—is better achieved through the reinforcement of

interpersonal channels and peer-group intervention which is amply provided for in the Local Radio Strategy structure.

Provision of Local Radio Stations

The second recommendation was against broadcasting educational and informational messages meant for rural communities from a central point in an urban setting, far removed from the rural environment. This recommendation drew strength from the advise of Schramm (1964: 123) that:

> An efficient use of mass media for economic and social development implies that they should be as local as possible. Their programs should originate no father than necessary from their audiences; the programs should be prepared by persons who understand the culture to which they are speaking, and means should be available for the audiences to report back to the media.

Based on this advice, the book recommended that local radio stations should be built at points where access to them would be easier for rural communities. Specifically, it recommended one local radio station for every local government area in the country. This was made in recognition of the need for station *availability*, *accessibility* of the station to the target audience and ease of *participation* in every aspect of the work of the station.

There were very vocal objections, not only to this recommendation, but in fact, to the very idea of a local radio system for the country. Among the objectors were the then Federal Ministers of Information and of Finance. First, they felt that the cost of providing so many local radio stations would be too high for the government. But the cost of building the stations that would have served more than 80% of the population would have been just a fraction of the cost of building a television station that served only about 10% of the population. As the Broadcasting Council of Scotland (1974: 7) has rightly affirmed:

It is our view that the needs of people living in remoter areas are very much greater than those with the multiple facilities of towns and cities available to them. The provision of adequate viewing and listening for such communities should be given high priority, coming before other more exciting, but in our opinion less essential, broadcasting development.

The second objection was that local radio stations would constitute agents for disintegration. This was as funny as it was untenable. Looking around the world then, we could not locate anywhere in which local radio created disintegration. Today, and with many African countries establishing local radio systems, there is no evidence of these stations causing disintegration. The strategy recommended is one which puts the local station under the advisory supervision of the state-own Regional Broadcasting Corporation. The more important argument against this objection was this: "if people do not articulate themselves and their place in the nation, it is doubtful that they will be in a position to play a constructive political role in nation-building." Political, as well as socio-economic policies and values must be the consequence of *understanding acceptance* and not the result of *reluctant obedience* to imposed regulations. Local radio offers a better chance of putting national policies and plans across to the people in the context in which such policies and plans can be better understood, thereby increasing the chance of acceptance.

Coordination and Cooperation

Any local radio station which has no machinery for interacting with its audiences as well as with other agencies dealing with the same audience especially on the same issues cannot function effectively. The book recommended very strongly that every local radio station builds into its system machinery for consultation, coordination and cooperation between the station and all government departments that have some responsibility towards rural development and also between it and other nongovernmental agencies with rural development objectives. Specifically mentioned were the Adult Education department of the

Ministry of Education, the Community Development unit of the Local Government, Health and Social Welfare Division, and Voluntary Agencies. The usual practice of each authority doing its own thing according to its own assumption and expectations without regards to its impact on others, has often left recipient groups unimpressed, uninformed and confused. The Local Radio station is well placed to create a venue and the environment for productive coordination and cooperation. It was pointed out that the task of community education and development involves the work of many departments and agencies, chief among which are those mentioned above. All these agencies and departments should, each according to the nature of its assigned duties, be involved at the policy and execution levels, in the planning, production and assessment of educational programs and development messages.

Closely associated with coordination and cooperation is organization of the station. The book made it clear that because the state government is responsible for rural development, it would make for smooth and fruitful development activities if local radio stations are placed under the advisory supervision of the state-owned Broadcasting Organization. To this end, it was argued that representatives of government departments should be part of Advisory Council on policy and management, and also on the Research and Evaluation Board; the station staff and representatives of members of the community should be in charge of Program Production and Utilization, and Audience Relations and Feedback committees. (See appendix ii).

To no one's surprise the book was ignored in Nigeria. The general apathy of the educated elite and the political authorities towards anything rural, was evident everywhere. The government through its Minister of Information called the book a stupid child's play that called for money to be thrown down the drain. Academic colleagues thought it was mundane for an academic to spend time and energy writing on the "irrelevant" issue of rural community plight. Broadcasting authorities laughed at the idea of spending precious broadcast minutes on issues

of rural development. The rural people, they said, only need to be told what to do, and they will do it.

International Pressure

Sixteen years after, the very ideas contained in the book reverberated during the International Conference on Deregulation of Broadcasting in Africa held in Abuja from April 22nd to 26th, 1996. One of the recommendations of that International Conference was that "government should put in place policies to enable the effective existence of public, private and community ownership of broadcast media for raising the creative socio-political awareness of the African people." (NBC, 1997).

In a paper presented at the conference,(Moemeka, 1996) we said, inter alia:

> "No broadcasting organization can truly claim to be effectively reflecting the community it serves, unless it properly knows that community and appreciates its problems, aspirations and expectations. Properly knowing a community involves (a) entering into the unique socio-cultural contexts that obtain in the community as a whole, and (b) involving the different categories of citizens actively in its activities. These two factors are imperative for correctly reflecting the community in programming. This is particularly important with regard to marginalized populations. The first unwritten law of Development Communication is "know your audience". Involving rural and urban poor citizens in broadcasting activities, to be meaningful and effective, must b e predicated on substantial general and specific knowledge of their environment and socio-cultural realities. Such engagement also needs to be organized and coordinated, either on the basis of location (citizens groups and broadcast personnel discussing and finding solutions to the different problems of the same locality), or on the basis of specific problems (the discussion and solution attempts focusing on each problem affecting, not only one locality, but a group of localities). Either way, the people should be as involved in program activities (selection, planning, production, presentation and evaluation) as broadcast personnel should be involved in community activities (group meetings, social activities, games, etc). Such interactive relationship helps build up confidence in broadcasting as a social institution and increases knowledge and a sense of self-worth in the

people. In addition, as already recommended (Moemeka, 1975) when a people are introduced to the technology, techniques and mechanics of broadcasting, they tend to develop not only media literacy and the propensity to use the media effectively, but also critical awareness of program contents, and how such contents relate to them in particular and to society in general.

"In the task of improving the quality of life of the rural and urban-poor populations, these factors of interaction and knowledge acquisition are extremely important because they act as bulwarks against vacuous recommendations (often made from socially detached, luxuriously comfortable air-conditioned offices), and popular resistance from within the marginalized populations. Information is not only knowledge; it is also power. The more there are rural and urban poor who are well-informed, the more there would be those who can understand the potentials of broadcasting and the more those who can demand the utilization of broadcasting facilities to meet their authentic development needs". (Moemeka, 1996, pp.149-150).

In 2001 the African Charter on Broadcasting adopted the following resolution which called for the right of all segments of society to broadcast airwaves: *The legal framework for broadcasting should include a clear statement of the principles underpinning broadcast regulation, including promoting respect for freedom of expression, diversity, and the free flow of information and ideas, as well as a three-tier system of broadcasting – public service, commercial and community.* And in October 2002, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights called on all African States to ensure that: *There shall be an equitable allocation of frequencies between private broadcast uses, both commercial and community, and that Community broadcasting shall be encouraged given its potential to broaden access by poor and rural communities to the airwaves.* These explicit calls for deregulation were aimed at democratizing the airwaves, and at redirecting, if not lessening, the administrative and financial burden of broadcasting on government.

What many specialists feared then about deregulation has now happened. Uncoordinated deregulation invariably creates abundance of broadcast facilities—but for cities and towns. And it is easy to see why. Those who establish

broadcasting stations have a right to expect good returns for their investment. The only stations that have the potential of yielding good financial returns are those in cities and towns. These are all commercial stations concerned primarily with making profits rather than enhancing rural and urban poor development. Although increases in stations may bring broadcasting physically nearer to the rural population and the urban poor, these underprivileged populations still remain very largely uninvolved in, and without any input into, the content of programs and without any control on the direction of station policies.

Having been relieved of much of the financial burdens of central and regional broadcasting, socio-cultural pressure was put on the government to redirect its efforts to the provision of broadcast facilities for the rural and urban poor. As recommended earlier (Local Radio, 1981), the local stations established should coordinate their activities with the nearest and/or appropriate city based stations, whether public or private, and with organizations and institutions that have rural development agenda, for the benefit of the communities which they serve. In their cooperation in and coordination of activities, both the local/community and urban/city stations as well as other institutions and the voluntary organizations, should act on the basis of two tenets of the Democratic Participant Media theory (McQuail, 1994): p. 131

(a)   that citizens have right to be served by media according to their own determination of need; and
(b)   that media should exist primarily for their audiences and not for media organizations, media professionals, the government or the clients of the media.

A bold attempt at coaxing Nigeria into the Community Radio Broadcasting mood was made in 2004 by Panos Institute of West Africa, the Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC-Africa) and the Institute for Media and Society (IMS). They organized, in Enugu, (May 26-28) a seminar on Building Community Radio Broadcasting in Nigeria, for participants drawn from civil society, broadcasters, state legislators, policy makers, the

academia, international development and donor organizations. The seminar, after deliberating on the necessity for Nigeria to have a Community Radio system, and making some recommendations remarked: *We note that Nigeria was party to the adoption of the African Charter on Broadcasting (a document which recognizes, defines and advocates community radio by the African Union). It is ironical; therefore, that Nigeria is among only three (3) countries in West Africa where Community Radio is neither recognized nor encouraged. Thus it is imperative, that for Nigeria to be seen as a responsible member of the international community, she should domesticate the provisions of the Charter in her policy, legislative and regulatory instruments. (community Radio Seminar, 2004, p.2)*

And this was at a time when Mali had 120 community radio stations, Senegal 44, Burkina Faso 27, Niger Republic 24, Republic of Benin 22, and Ghana 8 (Ajijola, 2006). Not included above are Mozambique which has 25 community radio stations and South Africa which has 92 (Quarmyne, 2006).

Change of Heart

The Enugu Seminar would appear to have moved the Nigerian Government to action, for in 2006, it set up a committee to draft a Community Radio Policy for the country. In its first statement, the Committee remarked that in its bid to foster sustainable development in all its ramifications, Government has recognized that progressive societies leverage on the capabilities of Community Radio to harness the available human resources by creating conducive regulatory environment for emergence of a community broadcasting sector. This statement spoke eloquently well in line with the committee's terms of reference which included –

■ to work out a clear policy framework for the emergence of community radio in Nigeria in line with the African Charter on Broadcasting;

■ to look into how a viable community radio sector can fit appropriately into national mass communication policy;

- to recommend the proper and appropriate regulatory mechanism for the community radio sector in line with international good practices;
- to specifically look into the positive roles government should play regarding the sustainability of the community radio sector in view of its location as an agency in the national development effort;
- to do the entire above and any other thing the committee might consider necessary towards the realization of this vision taking into consideration Nigeria's plurality and her peculiar sociological configuration. (Drafting Committee Report, p. 31)

The Drafting Committee plans to discuss in detail such issues as Access, Participation and Ownership, Licensing, Programming (Content and Language), Governance and Management, Technical Arrangements, Sustainability and Funding, Research and Capacity Building, and Monitoring and Evaluation. This is planning big, and while it shows how seriously the Drafting Committee has taken its work, it also raised some cause for concern. If the committee's primary concern is directed at how to contain Community Radio rather than how to safeguard it, then we would soon be back at the starting point. It is a fact that government's fear of the enlightenment of the rural majority is very much alive; but it should not be forgotten that such an enlightened majority has the potential and intellectual capacity to add substantially to national development.

In the conclusion to their report, (p.31) the Community Radio Policy Drafting Committee underscores clearly the essential nature of Community Radio in the development of the nation –

1.   Community Radio will service as a spring board for the emergency and development of other forms of community based communications in the country and beyond;
2.   The push to strengthen and liberalize the broadcasting sector in the country for participatory, transparent, open and accountable governance,

nation building for sustainable development, and consolidation of democracy, justifies the need for the establishment of Community Radio;

3. Considering the fact that access to mainstream media has been more or less the exclusive preserve of the powerful groups in the society, the establishment of Community Radio shall guarantee popular participation in the communication process which will entrench lasting democracy.

The Way Forward

Two fundamental questions come to mind when thinking of the way to move forward. First, what type of Community Radio is most appropriate for rural community development? Second, what administrative and operational policy and legislative safeguard will provide an enhancing atmosphere to enable such a Community Radio system function efficiently and effectively? Based on the urgent need to involve the 70-80% of Nigerians who live in the rural communities and in urban conurbations in the task of national development, the most appropriate and urgently needed Community Radio is Rural and Urban Poor Community Radio stations, without prejudice to urban-rich and city stations. "*For the strength of local (community) radio lies in the way it can relate to aspects of local life for, at its best, local radio is the community talking to itself.*" (BBC, 1976). The nation has waited for more than forty years for the fruits of socio-economic development to trickle down to these rural and conurbation areas without success. As long as they remain in their abject poverty, true national development will continue to elude the country. So it is time to reverse the journey. Community Radio promises to provide the socio-cultural and economic environment in which nationalism can be enkindled, enlightenment and faith in government raised, the benefits of self-help understood and accepted, education for certitude, not just for certificates, is encouraged and appreciated.

Beginning the task of establishing Community Radio Broadcasting with a grandiose plan, can very easily create problems of taking decisions, problems of control and problems of funding. Unnecessarily elaborate plans and structures

easily overwhelm and then lead to discouragement. What is most important for authentic community radio for rural development are policy and legislative safeguards for community access and participation for the underprivileged majority. This means creating airwave access, ensuring availability of radio stations, and the guarantee of responsible self-management, not just for universities and urban/city communities, but primarily for marginalized and impoverished rural communities and the urban-poor. Such policy and legislative safeguards should include guarantee for funding and against turning the stations away from public service to commercial broadcasting.

Community Radio Broadcasting for rural development should operate on the basis of Public Service Broadcasting. In a country like Nigeria with a very large poor rural and urban-poor majority, public service broadcasting has a key responsibility to a public composed of so many individuals with broad similarities and wide ranging differences. "It will provide services that celebrate social diversity but also facilitate social cohesion," (Wessberg, 2004: 35-38). The handicapped majority is as important as the privileged minority "in determining the overall quality of shared social life." (Wessberg, 2004: 35-38. Community radio broadcasting based on Public Service system exists to help bring the local communities into the mainstream of the nation's task of national development. Therefore, each station should be entitled to an annual subvention underwritten, not by the government of the day, but by the National or State Assembly. The stations should be non-commercial and non-profit. They should be exempt from financial obligations (which the rural and urban poor cannot afford) just as public transportation for the poor is. In simple language, they should operate under the banner of "public service." *In situating the future of the very idea of public service media.... it is imperative to note that PSBs are the last best hope for socially purposeful media action in the public interest*, (Raboy, 2003: 41-55).

One of the consistent objections to Community (Local) Radio Broadcasting has been the cost of financing the project. As argued then (1981), it is argued again now that Nigeria can, if she wants, comfortably finance this sector

of its broadcasting system. The cost is far less than objectors have imagined. It is a fraction of what is being spent now on national television and radio for urban and educated elite who constitute only about 20% of the population. If Burkina Faso can afford 27 community radio stations, Niger Republic 24 and Senegal 44, Nigeria can certainly afford to have, at least, one Community Rural Radio station in each of the rural Local Government areas of the country. For the rural communities without access, those who cannot read and write, those with little or no resources, micropower radio is a powerful weapon for development. This much is needed *now* to set in motion, in a practical way, the nation's commitment to Community Radio Broadcasting. Examples from Canada and from Colombia (Moemeka, 1981) and from Australia (Jakubowicz, 1989) show that community rural radio stations of 2 or 3 KW strength and staffed by trained and supervised volunteers can function efficiently and effectively, provided there is relevantly appropriate legislative and financial safeguards.

Along the lines upheld by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (p.4), any regulatory authority that exercises powers in the area of community broadcast regulation should be independent and adequately protected against interference, particularly of a political or economic nature; the appointment process for members of such a regulatory body should be open and transparent, involve the participation of the community, and should not be controlled by any particular political party; such a body should be formally accountable to the community through a multi-party committee composed of the Director of the Radio station, members of the Local Government Council and members of the Community. Here, it is appropriate to recall Greg Ruggiero's (1998: 1) observation that "communication which should be at the heart of a vibrant democracy, has been in the grip of an oppressive and contradictory system of mass control." The country should strongly guard against such a control in dealing with community radio, bearing in mind that nowhere (today) has such a control been more evident than in the rural community struggle for access to the airwaves, and the corporate/government campaign to crush it.
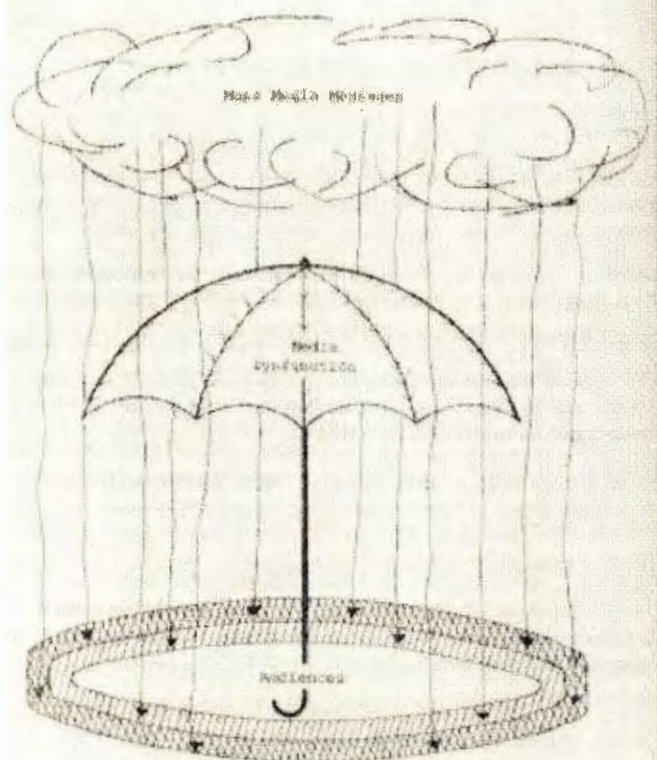
52

References

African Commission on Human and People's Rights (2002). Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, 32nd Session, Banjul, The Gambia, 17-23 October, p.3.

African Charter on Broadcasting (2001). General Regulatory Issues #1. UNESCO Conference, Windhoek, Namibia, May 3-5.

British Broadcasting Corporation (1976). "Local Radio" in BBC Handbook, London, p.202.

Broadcasting Council of Scotland (1974). Memorandum on the Future of Broadcasting, Glasgow, p.7.

Broadcasting Council of Scotland, (1974). Memorandum to the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting, Glasgow.

Community Radio Seminar (2004). Communique on the Seminar on building community radio broadcasting in Nigeria. Enugu, May, 26-28.

Terms of Reference of the Community Radio Policy Drafting Committee, p. 2.

Community Radio Policy (2005): Report of the Drafting Committee, p.31.

Deregulation of Broadcasting in Africa (1996). Recommendation No. 1, Nigerian Broadcasting Commission, p. 145.

Gandy, O. (2000). 'Race, Ethnicity and the Segmentation of Media Markets' in Curran, James and Gurevitch Michael (eds) Mass Media, 3rd Edition, Hodder Headline Group, London pp.46-49.

International Conference on Deregulation of Broadcasting in Africa (1997). Recommendation No. 1, p. 245. National Broadcasting Commission.

Jakubowizc, A. (1989) 'Speaking in Tongues: Multicultural Media and the Constitution of the Socially Homogenous Australian' in Wilson, H. (1989) Australian Communication and the Public Sphere, MacMillan Co. of Australia, South Melbourne, pp.105-127.

McAnany, E. (1973). Radio's Role in Development: Five Strategies of Use. Information Centre of Instruct5ional Technology: Washington, DC.

McPhee W.N., et al (1963). A theory of information social influence. In McPhee (ed) Formal theories of mass behavior. New York:Free Press, pp. 74-103.

McQuail, Denis (1994). Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction 3rd. Edition, SAGE Publications Ltd. London, California, New Delhi. Pp. 131-132.

Moemeka, A. (1996). 'Broadcast Regulation and Society: The Challenges of Access, Participation and Utilization for Ordinary Citizens' in Deregulation of Broadcasting in Africa, Nigerian Broadcasting Commission, pp. 140-155.

Moemeka, A. (1987). Rural Radio Broadcasting and Community Health Education in Nigeria: A Case-Study of Radio O-Y-O on-the-Move. Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State, Ibadan. Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York at Albany, U.S.A

Moemeka, A. (1981). Local Radio: Community Education for Development, Ahmadu Bello University Press Ltd. Zaria, Nigeria.

Moemeka, A. (1975). Adult Education: The Challenge of Change. Adult Education in Nigeria, vol.2, No.1, pp.66-72, Lagos.

Quarmyne, A. (1978). Quoted in Local Radio Community Education for Development, p.v.

Quarmyne, A. (2006). From Homa Bay to Ada: Lessons on Community Radio, Access and Participation. World Press Freedom Day Conference, Colombo, Sri Lanka, May, 1-2.

Raboy, Marc (2003) 'Rethinking Broadcasting Policy in the Global Media Environment' in Lowe & Hujanen (eds) Broadcasting and Convergence: New Articulations of the Public Service Remit, Nordicom, Guthenburg, pp. 41-55.

Rogers, E. (1971). Communication of Innovation: a Cross-Cultural Approach. New York Free Press: New York.

Rogers, E. & Solomon, D (1970). Radio Forums for Development. Department of Communication, Michigan State University: East Lansing.

Roy, et al (1969). The Impact of Communication on Development: An Investigation in Costa Rica and India. UNESCO: Paris.

Ruggiero, G (1998). Microradio Broadcasting: Aguascalientes of the Airwaves. Excerpt from a presentation given at the "Festival of Resistance" organized by the Zapatistas, Octrober.

Seay, M. (1974). Community Education: a Developing Concept. Pendell Publishing: Midland, Mich.

Schramm. W. (1964). Mass Media in National Development: The Role of Information in Developing Countries, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Schramm, W. (1964). P.123.

Tichnor, P.J, et al., (1973). Mass Communication Research: The evolution of a structural model. Journalism Quarterly, 50, 419-425.

Ugboajah, F. (1972). Mass Media Dysfunctions in Traditional-Urban Media Model: Stock-Taking for African Development. International Journal of Mass Communication Studies, Vol. xviii, 2.

UNESCO (1965). Radio Broadcasting Serves Rural Development. Paris.

Waniewicz, I. (1972). Broadcasting for Adult Education: A Guide-book to Worldwide Experience, UNESCO, Paris.

Wessberg, A. (2004). Quoted in Ngomba Teke (2007) Public Service Broadcasting and Multiculturalism, Media Development, Vol.LIV 2, pp. 35-38.

Appendices

i

Fig. 1 Mass Media Dysfunction*

* By courtesy of Frank O. Ugboajah, 'Traditional-Urban Media Model Guesstaking for African Development', International Journal of Mass Communication Studies, XXVII, 2, 1972.

The diagram shows clearly which segment of the society benefits from mass media (radio) information and which does not. The umbrella—standing for illiteracy, cultural gap, physical distance, poverty and other developmental constraints, which the media do not seem to take notice of—covers the largest portion of the diagram which represents the large rural population—the non-participatory audience—and so keeps it out of the mainstream of mass media information. This audience, at best, gets information from above, but has no opportunity and facility to respond, nor are events and activities within the environment of this audience considered worthy of mention in national media. The ruled portion of the diagram represents the pseudo-participatory audience which is made up of the sub-urban and squatter conurbations, most of whose members are barely able to read and/or write. Media information does reach this segment of national population but from a distance, and some of its activities and events are mentioned in the media, but on a very low level. The outer portion of the diagram represents the active participatory audience, which is made up of the educated, the rich and the urban population. This is, in developing societies, the centerpiece of media information. The overall impact of the umbrella is that the information-rich audiences get the attention, while the information-poor, on whom more information should be directed, get little or no attention. Although this dysfunction is generally more noticeable with regards to the Print Media, it is no less so for the Electronic Media. For getting information from above to which one cannot discuss with the sourse and for which one has no facilities for response is often more frustrating than not getting any information whatsoever. While information is important because it is the raw material for communication, it is NOT itself communication which is the gateway to understanding and behavior change, and consequently Social Change.

ii
Structure of Community Radio Strategy
For Education.

This structure demands that Community Radio benefit from relevant departments of the State Broadcasting Organization, especially from the Educational Broadcasting and Utilization departments. This is necessary for administrative and professional expertise. The Community (Local) Radio Advisory Council, with representatives from different groups in the community is responsible for advising on policy decisions and for guidance on programming (content, delivery and utilization). The Specialist Committee on Programming and Utilization with representatives from the Advisory Council and the Radio Station is the responsible organ for program materials and specification, production and presentation and also for Audience Relations and Feedback.