

Centre for Media and
Transitional Societies



From concept paper to Africa-wide research program

Several years ago, officials from Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) met at a crossroads (London's Paddington Station) to discuss how best to devote more attention to the role of traditional radio in Africa as an important information and communication technology, or ICT. From that discussion grew an effort to examine the nexus between radio and other, newer ICTs and how they might be impacting upon development in Africa. Later, UK-based media consultant Mary Myers produced a concept paper which laid out a strategy for a research program in the field.

THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE (IDRC) SUPPORTS RESEARCH IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO PROMOTE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

Centre for Media and Transitional Societies - Carleton University

In 2009, Carleton University's Centre for Media and Transitional Societies [www.cmts-cmst.org] was selected to establish and administer the Radio, Convergence and Development in Africa (RCDA) research program. The CMTS put together a project team, then conducted a brainstorming roundtable in Butare, Rwanda to seek advice from experts on the research program design. A public call for statements of intent by researchers drew in more than 150 submissions. Of those, 50 applicants were invited to submit a full proposal. In the end, 16 research projects were selected for funding by the RCDA program.



ALLAN THOMPSON

THE RCDA PROJECT DIRECTOR, ALLAN THOMPSON IS A PROFESSOR AT THE CARLETON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION AND DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR MEDIA AND TRANSITIONAL SOCIETIES. HE ALSO EDITED THE MEDIA AND THE RWANDA GENOCIDE. [ALLAN_THOMPSON@CARLETON.CA]



MARY MYERS

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JOSH GREENBERG

A PROFESSOR OF COMMUNICATION AT CARLETON UNIVERSITY, DR. JOSH GREENBERG SERVED AS ONE OF THE PROJECT MENTORS. HIS AREAS OF EXPERTISE INCLUDE COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND QUALITATIVE METHODS. [JOSHUA_GREENBERG@CARLETON.CA]



HEATHER GILBERDS

HEATHER GILBERDS IS THE RCDA RESEARCH ASSOCIATE AND A DOCTORAL STUDENT IN COMMUNICATION AT CARLETON UNIVERSITY. SHE IS IN THE SECOND YEAR OF HER PHD AND CONDUCTS RESEARCH IN THE AREA OF COMMUNITY MEDIA AS TOOLS FOR DEVELOPMENT. [HEATHERGILBERDS@GMAIL.COM]



RCDA grant recipients and team members at a 2010 mentoring workshop and retreat held in Kampala, Uganda.

Building a network and research capacity

Carleton University's Centre for Media and Transitional Societies (CMTS), in collaboration with Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), is administering a research program examining the impact of convergence between traditional radio and new information and communications technologies (ICTs) in sub-Saharan Africa. When it comes to media in Africa, radio remains the dominant mass medium but other information and communications technologies are growing exponentially and complementing traditional radio. The penetration and democratization of the means of communication that has accompanied this growth has had a substantial but as yet largely under-researched effect on radio content and radio interplay with audiences, voice, empowerment as well as social, economic and political development in Africa.

The focus of this project has been to support African researchers and research organizations to produce rigorous and analytical social science research findings on how the purposes and functions of traditional radio in Africa are influenced by new ICTs. The overall objective of the project is to build a body of research evidence on radio and its integration with various other communications technologies in order to understand the social, economic, political and policy issues that are relevant indicators and proxies for development in Africa. But a key project aim is also to establish and foster a network of African researchers in this field and to not only disseminate their research findings, but to promote further research in this area.



Brainstorming session sets the stage for the call for proposals

The RCDA team began its work by reaching out to the academic and research community in Africa, inviting more than 300 people to express their interest in attending a brainstorming session. More than 20 key experts took part in the session, held in September 2009 in Butare, Rwanda. Media development consultant Michelle Betz facilitated the event, which followed a modified 'open space' format, designed to encourage participants to put all ideas on the table. Themes identified at the roundtable informed the design of the research program and its call for proposals, which was held in two stages: a call for concept notes then a request for full proposals.

Review of proposals

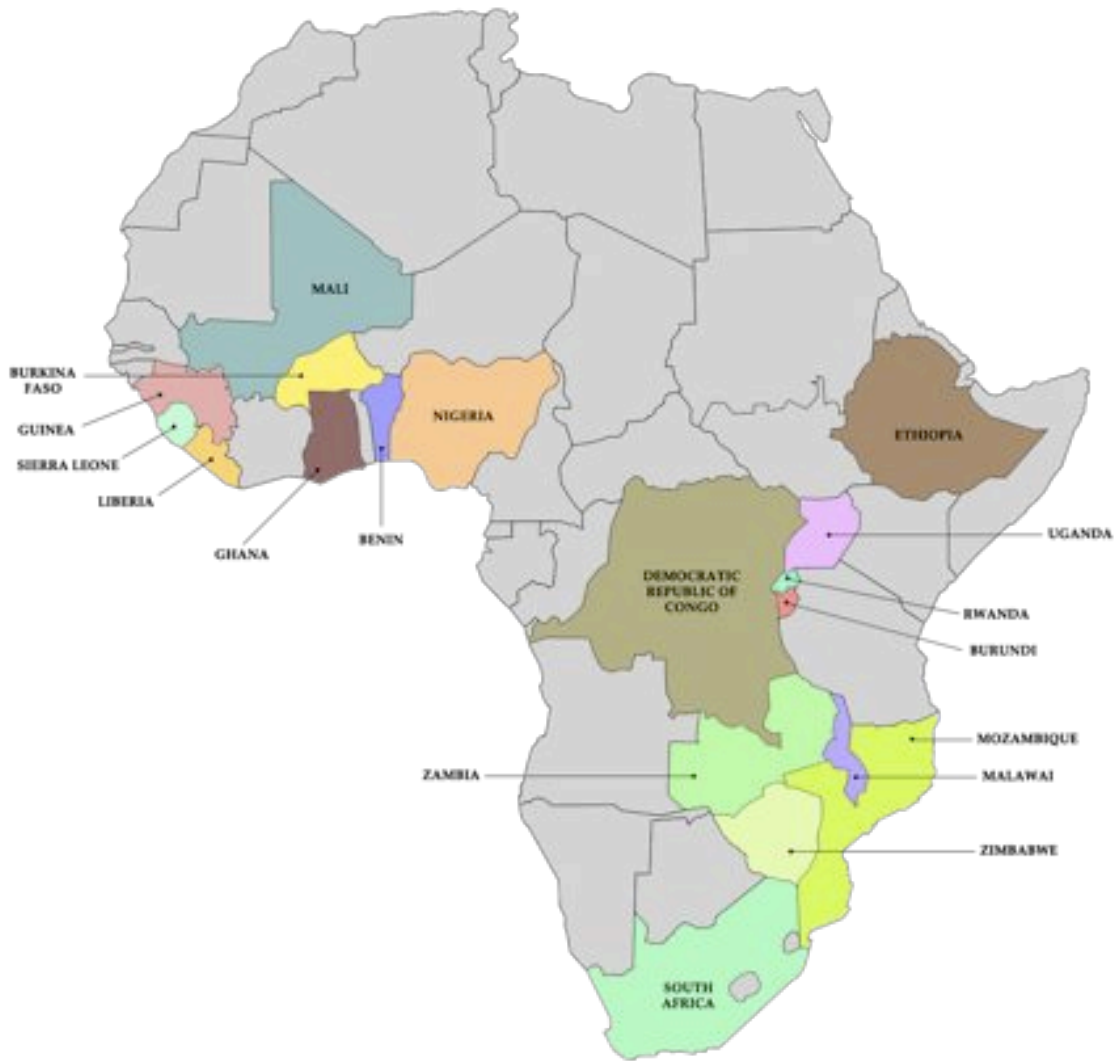
The review committee for the proposal call process included Mary Myers, Vipul Khosla (BBC World Service Trust), Chris Armstrong (Wits University, South Africa), Athanase Karayenga (media consultant), Martine Ngobo (AFRRI) and Chaitali Sinha, the project program officer at IDRC at the time. Allan Thompson, the project director, chaired the review process, assisted by research associate Heather Gilberts. Tragically, Martine Ngobo passed away just as research grants were being awarded.

Launching the research

In the summer of 2010, after successful grant recipients were selected, the RCDA team, including Allan Thompson, Heather Gilberts, Josh Greenberg and Mary Myers, traveled to three regions of sub-Saharan Africa to meet with grantees and conduct methodology workshops and in-person mentoring sessions. A series of three, two-day workshops was conducted in Accra, Ghana, in Kampala, Uganda and in Johannesburg, South Africa. The workshops themselves were a combination of both formal and informal exercises. One of the primary aspects that the team aimed to facilitate was horizontal knowledge-sharing among the participants. A

fundamental part of the mentoring design of the project is to ensure that traditional notions of expertise with regard to North-South partnerships are not replicated. For this reason, the mentoring process is one of facilitation. The design of mentoring interventions such as this one serves, in large part, to encourage grantees to share ideas with one another. In addition to ongoing mentoring by email, phone and Skype, another face-to-face consultation with all grant recipients was held in Kampala in December, 2010.





Research in 17 countries examined many different aspects of the impact of ICTs on conventional radio

The starting point for the research by 16 teams is the assumption that radio – especially when it is local, independent and participatory – can be a positive force for development. From there, the point is to ground-check the phenomenon of the convergence of traditional broadcast radio with newer ICTs – particularly mobile phones and the internet – and to ask ‘what does convergence mean on the ground?: Is it emerging as a force for development in Africa?’ For our various research teams this meant different things: for some it meant looking at whether rural African women equipped with mobiles are better able to participate in the development process, for others it entailed looking at diasporic populations and the extent to which convergence affects their engagement in the politics and development of their home countries; for still others it entailed asking questions about the quality of radio production of a developmental nature when new ICT tools are used and whether or not radio stations are able to tell better stories with enhanced interactivity. These are just a few of the themes covered by the 16 teams.



Researchers fanned out to 17 countries - from Burkina Faso to Zimbabwe - and covered many different technologies, including Freedom Fone, Frontline SMS, mobile phones, e-mail and Internet, digital editing and production and of course old-fashioned hertzian radio transmission.

From the findings of all these research projects several overall patterns emerge clearly: First, radio and other ICTs are indeed converging and merging at an ever-increasing rate, all over Africa – and beyond. Mobile phones, especially, are playing a critical role in the daily experiences of Africans today and can even play life-saving roles as, for instance Wallace Chuma found in his research when he looked at the xenophobic and election-related violence in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Our various teams found that most radio stations on the continent have embraced computers and digital editing to some degree and even the smallest rural stations in the poorest and more remote areas of, for example, Sierra Leone or the D.R. Congo, will now have talk-shows incorporating listener's phone calls on a regular basis.

Second, where radio stations have embraced new technologies there are signs that they are offering an enhanced service to their listeners that contributes directly to better outcomes in terms of health, livelihoods and other developmental challenges. For instance, in Northern Uganda, one of our teams found that by adding automatic SMS texting to radio campaigns about HIV/ AIDS prevention, more of the audience were prompted to come forward for counselling and testing than they did as a result of the radio campaign alone. In Ghana, Paschal Atengdem found that there was potential for better targeted agricultural advice for rural radio audiences with the addition of a technology called Freedom Fone.

However, the convergence process is happening slowly and is still subject to the well-documented digital divide. For instance, in Burkina Faso and Benin only 8 per cent of radio stations stream their audio content on the internet. We can contrast that with the vastly better equipped country of South Africa, but even here, as Last Moyo's team found, the old disparities governed by geography, income and gender still prevail and affect access to ICTs and disproportionately to access



to radio. The urban and commercial radio stations – normally the richer ones - are tending to embrace the internet and other convergent technologies much more than the poorer rural and community-type stations – which therefore reinforces the disparities of access for rural populations and minority language-users.

Clearly the potential for participatory radio programming is greatly enhanced by the spread of mobile phones. For instance, in Northern Ghana a third of the population sampled who had ever called in to a radio station claimed to have called in to ask a question or to seek new knowledge, which indicates the potential power of participatory radio for development. But, again, our research teams show that cost is still a great obstacle for many – especially for women and for rural people. In Northern Ghana one of our teams found that barriers to participation were much more profound than just access: women and girls with low educational levels were much less likely to call in to a radio station than men and boys of a similar income and educational level, even though they said they had the means to do so. This points to serious gendered self-confidence issues.

Another 'reality check' is that convergence will not necessarily be the magic wand which will increase audiences, because of significant problems related to standards of journalism. Looking at evidence from Nestor Nkurunziza's Great Lakes diaspora study, we can see that despite having relatively easy access to a range of radio stations from their home countries that have now become available via the web, Rwandans, Burundians and Congolese in Belgium and Canada still tend to turn to international broadcasters like RFI, BBC and VOA for news about their home region because these sources are deemed more reliable.

In Zimbabwe and South Africa Moyo's team also found that radio stations were unable to exploit the full potential of new media to enhance coverage of local news, not for want of the technological tools, but more often because they were understaffed and operated on shoe-string budgets. Furthermore, there is often a lack of institutional support within newsrooms for integration of new technologies in terms of newsgathering, such that innovative uses of new technologies by journalists are often limited to only a few isolated individuals.

Newer technologies such as mobile phones and Frontline SMS may be a tool for involving more women in participating in or benefiting from radio programmes of an educational or developmental nature. But – as was found in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone – there are very few radio programmes offering attractive or relevant programming to women in the first place. Thus, the solution is clearly not a technological one but a matter of old-fashioned gender-sensitive journalism training and incentives for broadcasters to address the information and educational needs of rural women and girls.

In conclusion, convergence between traditional radio broadcasting and new technologies is certainly a reality in Africa and, in many places its potentials are beginning to be realised. However, the benefits in terms of development gains are yet to be clearly and conclusively demonstrated.



MAJOR GRANTS

The RCDA awarded six major grants, ranging in value from \$50,000 to \$85,000, to researchers affiliated with established organizations.

ICTs connect diaspora to home country radio

Project title: Impact of the convergence of radio-internet-mobile on communication between home and diaspora populations from Burundi, Rwanda and the D.R. Congo.

Principal investigator: Nestor

Nkurunziza - nnkurunziza@sfcg.org

Co-investigator: Alfred Bulakali

Affiliation: Search for Common Ground

This large-sample study used a mix of methods including questionnaires, group discussions and document analysis among home and diaspora populations in



Nestor Nkurunziza

were surveyed in Kigali, Kinshasa, Bujumbura, Montreal and Brussels. The research looked at the degree to which local radios in the countries of origin are using web-streaming to reach their diaspora populations, and the influence of this; also the interaction between home-country radio stations and web-sites set up by the diaspora. The study also looked at mobile phone usage by migrants in decision-making about their home-countries and the news-seeking behaviour of migrants about their country of origin. The findings show strong use by migrants of streamed radio content and 90% of Congolese, Burundian and Rwandan migrants using the internet to seek information about their countries of origin. A third of Rwandan migrants expressed the willingness to support their home-country radio stations, which is encouraging in regards to the search for financial sustainability for radio stations in Africa. As for the use of convergent

Burundi, Rwanda, D.R. Congo, Canada and Belgium. A total of 1632 migrants and non-migrants

were surveyed

technologies for development, the picture is mixed and on the whole technologies are not playing a strong role in involving migrant populations in the development of their home countries. Indeed there is a proliferation of partisan and xenophobic content on the Internet aimed at migrants. Furthermore radio stations in the Great Lakes region are missing many opportunities to use internet and telephone more creatively to involve their diaspora.

Farmers identify gap in communication needs

Project title: Getting on the Same

Wavelength: Communicating Livelihoods

Information and Innovation in Rural Uganda

Principal investigator: David Musiime -

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Co-investigators: Alan Oniba Alana, Ed Pauker

Affiliation: BBC World Service Trust

This study explores intersections between the needs and information sources of farmers, the role of radio, and the promise of new ICTs in relation to livelihood programming in rural Uganda. Utilizing a mixed methodology of focus groups, interviews, and content analysis of radio programming, the project reports that there is a gap between the preferences of farmers when it comes to learning about livelihood issues and their current sources of information. It also



David Musiime

notes that commercial media have done a generally poor job covering livelihood issues -- this is due in part to commercial pressures, but also a lack of knowledge on the part of reporters and strained relations with policymakers and scientific experts. Finally, despite the proliferation of mobile phone use, the vast majority of farmers (women in particular) do not use new ICTs to locate or share livelihoods information. The study points to the need for a more coordinated effort on the part of policymakers, NGOs and media

organizations to produce information in a way that reflects the current needs and capacities of farmers. Yet it also demonstrates that the challenges facing farmers are vast and cannot be resolved by improved communication alone.

Farmers and media on different wavelength

Project title: Engaging Community Radio in Climate Change Adaptation Research and Advocacy in Ghana

Principal investigator: Blane Harvey -

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Co-investigator: Wilna Quarmyne

Affiliation: Institute for Development Studies - Ghana Community Radio Network

This project examines ways of enhancing cooperation between networks of community broadcasters, researchers, and vulnerable communities for the purposes



Blane Harvey

of improving climate change adaptation. Its main objective was to develop a participatory model that acknowledges the challenges facing each set of actors and which leverages their unique 'expertise' in a way that enhances their capacity to explore together the problem of climate change. The project raises valuable insights into how to improve climate change adaptation in vulnerable Ghanaian communities. This involves recognizing the scientific complexity of climate change, yet framing the issues in a way that confirms questions of politics, rights and duties. It also involves balancing the capacity of different actors to deal with and report on climate change in relation to other development challenges (e.g. land rights, HIV / AIDS, etc.). Finally, the report acknowledges the challenges and tensions of funding participatory action research projects and the need to maintain a long-term vision of capacity in relation to shorter and medium-term efforts to demonstrate impact.

Burkina, Benin provide a glimpse of ICT impact

Project title: Disparities in Access to Radio in West Africa: Case Studies of Benin and Burkina Faso.

Principal investigator: Pauline Bend

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Co-investigators: Jean-Baptiste Ilboudou, Alfred Oupubor

Affiliation: Panos West Africa

This is a mapping study of Benin and Burkina Faso, covering almost all the radio stations in each country: more than 100 radio stations in Burkina Faso and 62 in Benin. The study used detailed questionnaires and site visits to understand the extent to which radio

stations in these two countries are adopting new ICTs, who their audiences are, and how far they are reaching.

Disparities in access to radio as a function of gender, socio-economic status, language group

and geography were confirmed and ground-truthed. Commercial radio is leading the field in terms of access to new ICTs, with community radios lagging far behind. Despite that, all radio stations in Benin were found to have at least one computer and some owned up to 16. But the Internet does not seem to have impacted strongly on the way radios are broadcasting or the extent to which they are connecting with their audiences. Only 8% of stations in Burkina Faso stream their content on-line, and only 13% have entirely digital as opposed to analogue production studios - the majority are mixed (i.e. part analogue, part digital). In Benin, the use of the internet for programme streaming was slightly higher at 14% of stations and 62% of stations in Benin have an Internet connection.

Despite the fact that over 98% of stations have regular interactive programmes - mainly call-ins - participation of women in these programmes remains low and programmes aimed at women generally are surprisingly few.



Pauline Bend

Women listening to radio but radio not listening to them

Community Radio, Gender and ICTs in West Africa: How women are engaging with community radio through mobile phone technologies

Principal investigator: Frances Fortune

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Co-investigators: Cindy Chungong and Andrew Kessinger

Affiliation: Search for Common Ground

This research study focused on Frontline SMS and community radio in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia and asked: Do recent improvements in radio broadcast coverage and SMS technology increase women's access to information and provide them with a platform that adequately meets their needs? Would implementing an SMS mobilization program like Frontline SMS increase women's interaction with radio programming? Some 300 women surveyed in each of 6 sites in 3 countries:



Frances Fortune

i.e. at 2 radio stations in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone; Radio Mamou and Radio Kindia in Guinea; Radio Gbarnga and Radio Buchanan in Liberia; Radios Mile 91 and Kenema, Sierra Leone. The study found high rates of regular listening among women (average 80% of women surveyed listened regularly to radio). Also high levels of mobile phone access / ownership - around 60-70% of women either owned or had access to mobiles. Convergence is a reality, especially mobile phones being used to call-in to radios - about 25% of women across 3 countries had called in to a radio station at least once - overwhelmingly to 'share their opinions'. There is a strong correlation between education and higher social class and participation in radio programmes through calls or texts. Frontline SMS has the potential to improve listener

interaction but the project did not have enough time to prove this conclusively. Regardless of the innovation that information communication technologies bring, women have said they will interact more with their radio stations only once programming is more interesting. While certain obstacles of cost and access to mobile phones can certainly be lessened due to ICT solutions like Frontline SMS, the clear message is that technology is not a panacea in of itself, nor can it achieve significant improvements in audience participation without substantive changes to radio programming itself.

Mozambique, Mali and Uganda provide clues

An investigation into the impact of ICTs on the station sustainability of, content production for and listenership to rural and community radio broadcasters in Mozambique, Uganda and Mali

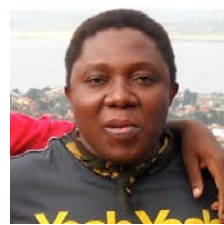
Principal investigator: Linje Manyozo

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Co-investigator: Londa Gorette

Affiliation: London School of Economics Makerere University

In an effort to understand the political economy of community radio and



Linje Manyozo

convergence this study conducted research in Mali, Uganda and Mozambique and asked producers and listeners how convergence was affecting content. Using survey questionnaires and key informant interviews at radio stations the research is asking important questions about the financial sustainability of community radio. The research is premised on the assumption that ICTs have changed the information and knowledge society models operative through rural and community media, in terms of ownership of, content production for, and listenership to the radio stations.

MID-SIZE GRANTS

The RCDA awarded six mid-size grants, ranging in value from \$25,000 to \$35,000, to researchers affiliated with established organizations.

Convergence shaped by socio-political context

Radio and Convergence in Southern Africa: Emerging Participatory Cultures and Practices

Principal investigator: Last Moyo
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Co-investigators: Wendy Willems, Sarah Chiumbu, Dina Ligaga, Dumisani Moyo

Affiliation: University of the Witwatersrand

This study looked at radio institutions in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia and South Africa and had three interrelated aims:

- To examine how selected public, private and community radio stations use the Internet and mobile phones to enhance audience participation in news and current affairs programming;
- To evaluate how these uses are promoting bottom-up and democratic participatory cultures



Last Moyo

- To discuss how participatory cultures on radio create a potential for civic engagement on development and governance issues. If an overall pattern can be said to

emerge, this project shows that the use of new ICTs is very much subject to institutional modeling where public participation in convergent radio is shaped by not only its structural, editorial and professional dictates, but also the broader socio-political contexts that serve as regimes of endorsement or disapproval of forms of public participation expected in and through radio. Thus, even with the advent of the so-called 'technologies of freedom' such as the Internet and mobile phones, radio largely remains a politically conservative medium merely dealing with the grammar of politics instead of creating

spaces for radical forms of civic engagement that change the status quo.

SMS enhanced impact of radio campaign to promote voluntary counselling and testing for HIV / AIDS

Role of Radio and ICTs on HIV/AIDs Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) - Seeking behaviour in Atanga Sub-County, Pader District, Northern Uganda.

Principal investigator: Henry Gidudu
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Co-investigator: Naomi Ayot
Affiliation: CAP-AIDS Uganda

This study used a before-and-after design, using a participatory radio campaign to encourage local people to go for voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) for HIV / AIDS at local clinics. The research was done in close cooperation with an NGO called CAP-AIDS, Radio Mega FM in Gulu and local health



Henry Gidudu

services. The radio campaign was supplemented with SMS reminders and encouragements to take up VCT services. The results show that there was a significant increase in uptake of VCT services attributed to the radio campaign. When SMS texting was added to the campaign there was a further marked increase in the numbers of listeners availing themselves of VCT services. In the three month period after the SMS was introduced there was a 50% increase among males going for VCT compared with the 'radio campaign only' period. Among women the introduction of SMS support to the radio campaign seemed to cause three times more women to come forward for VCT testing than the increase caused by radio only. This strongly suggests that when conventional radio is paired with a new ICT such as SMS texting (in this case Frontline SMS), the results can be very positive.

Mobile phones most used media during violent events

Radio and ICT use in the Zimbabwe elections in 2008 and xenophobic attacks in Cape Town, May-July 2008

Principal investigator: Wallace Chuma
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Co-investigator: Steve Kromberg

Affiliation: University of Cape Town

The aim of the project was to examine the role of radio and ICTs in the context of violent and life-threatening situations and, additionally, to explore ways in which selected local radio stations which covered the violent events appropriate new ICTs to enhance their work. The methodology concentrated on qualitative



Wallace Chuma

interviews in Zimbabwe and Cape Town, South Africa as well as archival and contemporary material. The findings show that mobile phones were by far the most used media in both countries during these violent events. Mobiles played a key role in keeping the victims and perpetrators informed. As regards radio, pirate stations were also important sources of information in Zimbabwe, but in South Africa it was found that local / community radio could be declining in influence. The study found that the majority of radio stations in both Zimbabwe and South Africa did not appropriate new media to the extent that they could have during these violent events in 2008.

Ghana project explores Freedom Fone application

Convergence of Radio and Freedom Fone to promote information dissemination to small-holder farmers in Ghana

Principal: Paschal B. Atengdem
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Affiliation: University of Ghana

Co-investigator: Ben Fiafor

This action research exercise installed the Freedom Fone technology at a radio

station in Ghana called Rite FM and looked at how this new technology affected the radio's output on agricultural



Paschal B Atengdem Fone enables radio listeners to 'listen again' to highlights of a radio programme via their mobile phone. Almost all those who used the Freedom Fone were pleased with it, so it was found that there was *potential* for better-targeted agricultural advice for rural radio audiences with the addition of Freedom Fone. However, there were a number of problems. Primarily the team felt there needed to be greater publicity given to the service that Freedom Fone provides. Secondly, the team found there were cost barriers to farmers taking advantage of it. Thirdly there were questions of cooperation between broadcasters, farmers and subject-matter specialists - particularly the Ministry of Agriculture - which needed to be resolved before Freedom Fone could be exploited fully.

SEED GRANTS

The RCDA awarded six seed grants valued at \$7500 to researchers in an early stage of their careers.

Few women using internet to access radio programs



Radio for Women's Development: Examining the Relationship Between Access and Impact

Principal investigator: Oreoluwa Somolu
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Oreoluwa Somolu **Affiliation:** Women's Technology Empowerment Centre

This project utilizes survey and focus group research to explore how radio and newer ICTs (mobile phones and social networking sites) are used by urban Nigerian women and their potential for enhancing development efforts. The study reports that there is a dearth of programming devoted to women's issues, and that women would like to see more programs that take up issues directly relevant to their lives. Nevertheless, despite this limitation radio remains dominant as a source of news, education and entertainment, and women regularly apply program content in their daily lives. The research also reports that while some women use mobile phones to engage with radio content, very few are using Internet-based platforms such as social networking sites to respond and contribute to their favourite programs. The findings are being used to develop recommendations for improving radio content in a way that speaks to the unique interests of women and of increasing their engagement with and contributions to program content.

Exploring radio trottoir: human being as ICT

Radio Trottoir and Political Discourse in Ethiopia

Principal investigator: Elizabeth Demissie - lizaeve@gmail.com
Affiliation: University of Addis Ababa

This project examines the role of 'sidewalk radio' in the Ethiopian public sphere. In particular, drawing on participant observation at sporting events, in cafes and pubs, and in cultural houses (*Azemari bet*), it examines how citizens share gossip, jokes, poems and other forms of "secret" communication as a way of discussing, debating and, frequently, mocking the political establishment in Ethiopia.



Elizabeth Demissie

The study also examines how new ICTs, such as mobile phones and bluetooth, are used in the transmission of radio trottoir. The findings raise important questions about how citizens communicate in repressive countries where traditional media such as radio is widely understood to be a tool of government propaganda.

Mobiles and radio content in Northern Ghana

Convergence of Radio and Mobile Telephony: Any impact on Rural Access, Trends and Development?

Principal investigator: Kennedy Kubuga
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Co-investigators: Atiapa Victor, Bugbila Agnes and Kubuga Karl
Affiliation: Bold Steps Foundation

This questionnaire-based research was a study in Tamale, Northern Ghana, looking at uses of mobile phones by radio listeners and whether mobiles are making a difference to contributions to radio



Kennedy Kubuga

content. In total, 554 questionnaires were analysed, 76 women in five focus groups were interviewed along with broadcasters from five radio stations. The research found that generally people are willing to contribute to radio content. For example 57% of the sample had called into a radio station and a third of these did so to ask a question. However, the population in this area of Northern Ghana - particularly rural people are limited in calling radio stations due to a number of factors. Women, especially, tend not to contribute to radio content. An important reason for this is low self-confidence among women, even compared with men of equal educational and socio-economic status. Another limiting factor is prohibitive mobile phone talk costs.

Pirate radio uses internet to reach Zimbabwe audience

'Pirate Radio' and the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe: A reception study of content from Voice of America's Studio 7 and SW Radio Africa in Zimbabwe

Principal investigator: Hayes

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Affiliation: University College, Falmouth

This study examines the consumption of content from two 'underground' radio stations: *Voice of America's Studio 7* and *Short Wave (SW) Radio Africa* which respectively broadcast from the US and the UK via shortwave and the Internet



into Zimbabwe and the wider diasporic audience. Using qualitative in-depth interviews with a sample of

audiences, the study specifically examines the reception of the radio stations in Zimbabwe's three major cities: Bulawayo, Gweru and Harare. The study draws on two critical theoretical and methodological frameworks, viz: Jürgen Habermas' *public sphere* theory, which helps to illuminate how the radio stations are shaping political discourse (and practices) in Zimbabwe. It also draws on *reception theory* which is concerned with the ways in which people interpret and make sense of media texts within their socio-cultural, political and historical circumstances. The study concludes that both *SW Radio Africa* and *Studio 7* have contributed to an enlarged arena for political debate within the Zimbabwean political culture. While the radio's multi-transmission strategies are widening content access and reformulating reception practices and contexts, from the audience's perspectives, it is clear that the traditional forms of radio consumption (through shortwave and medium wave) remain in force among both 'elite' and 'mass'. This is mainly

because of the unique impact of the oral nature of radio which intersects with the oral traditions of local culture. These findings thus broadly suggest that radio as a technology has inherent properties that predispose it to certain kinds of uses and interpretations that have to be taken into consideration when assessing the impact of pirate radio in Zimbabwe.

Socioeconomic variables show gap in mobile use

The Socio-Economic influences of local radio and GSM networks on the urban populations of Cotonou and Porto-Novo.

Principal investigator: Marcellin

Loubegnon

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Affiliation: Journalist, Benin

This research questioned a large sample in two cities in Benin about their radio listening and mobile phone use: covering 23,695 respondents in Cotonou and 2,905 in Porto-Novo. The results are a comprehensive picture, disaggregated by sex and socio-economic status. The findings show there is little difference in radio and mobile phone usage between urban men and women in the two cities - an interesting and perhaps surprising result. The



Marcellin Loubegnon

disparities become more apparent when looking at socio-economic variables, which was done by surveying members of different professions: government employees, artisans, merchants, motorbike taxi drivers and students. As one would expect, the higher the socio-economic status, the greater the use of mobiles and radio. The study also found a strong desire on the part of radio listeners for fewer political and entertainment programmes and more educative content.

Gender and access is at stake in rural Uganda

Research to Analyze the Levels of Radio and new ICT access, usage and consumption patterns among the rural women and girl youths in Uganda

Principal investigator: Olga Mugerwa Nakato

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This study focused on rural women and girls in Uganda and sought to analyze their levels of radio and new ICT access, usage and consumption patterns. There were six study areas centred around radio-based development projects or radio stations themselves: AFRRI in Kapchorwa, Mama FM, Radio Simba, Tiger FM Community Radio, Buruli FM and Nakaseke FM. Methods used were focus group discussions, group interviews, observation and individual



Olga Mugerwa

interviews. The research found many different problems with consistent and useful radio broadcasting in rural areas, including problems with signal quality, frequent station closures due to lack of generator fuel and technical problems. For women listeners, the familiar barriers to radio listening still prevail, namely cost of batteries, inconvenient scheduling times, lack of programmes in local languages and dialects, and women's own lack of time to devote to listening. Anecdotal evidence points to there having been an increase in access to mobile phones by rural women and girls over recent years but numbers of women texting or calling in to radio stations are still low compared with men (16% women on average). Even when women and girls have access to mobiles, airtime costs and power are still major barriers. So too are the difficulties experienced by would-be callers to radio stations due to technical and capacity problems.



RCDA participants presented at the 2011 International Association of Media and Communications Research (IAMCR) conference in Istanbul

Project results to be disseminated far and wide

The RCDA project team will look for every opportunity to disseminate the results of the research program. In the proposal call itself, applicants were encouraged to include in their submissions a proposed strategy for the dissemination of results. Indeed, some projects made dissemination a cornerstone of their work.

A number of grant recipients took part in an RCDA panel at the 2011 conference of the International Association of Media and Communications Research (IAMCR) held in Istanbul. In addition to the RCDA panel, several grant recipients made separate presentations.

All grant recipients were invited to present their findings during Joburg Radio Days, an annual conference hosted by the Wits Radio Academy at Wits University, in Johannesburg. This year's event - held July 27-29 - explored whether radio is a medium in the twilight of its life, or one that is able to reinvent itself for a converged environment.

RCDA grant recipients were also encouraged to submit a paper to be considered for publication in an upcoming guest-edited issue of *Nokoko*, a peer-reviewed, online journal published by the Institute of African Studies at Carleton University. *Nokoko* is an open-access journal promoting dialogue, discourse and debate on Pan-Africanism, Africa, and Africana.

Grant recipients continue to receive support from the RCDA team and project mentors in their efforts to seek out other opportunities to disseminate their research findings in academic fora, conferences and in academic journals. Rather than producing a conventional print publication, the RCDA has opted to produce a comprehensive online final report on all aspects of the project to be produced in the form of an interactive PDF, which will feature links to video testimonials, photo galleries, audio recordings and all relevant project documentation. Copies of each of the individual research reports will also be available on the website of the Centre for Media and Transitional Societies - www.cmts-cmst.org.



Wits Radio Academy
annual conference



Carleton University Institute of
African Studies journal



Centre for Media and
Transitional Societies

Radio, Convergence and Development in Africa - Principal Investigators



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Pauline Bend

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Wallace Chuma

Chuma is a Senior Lecturer in the Centre for Film and Media Studies, University of Cape Town



Elizabeth Demissie

Demissie is a student at the University of Addis Ababa, in Ethiopia



Frances Fortune

Fortune is the Africa director for Search for Common Ground in Freetown, Sierra Leone



Henry Gidudu

Gidudu is a social development worker and training facilitator associated with CAP-AIDS Uganda.



Blane Harvey

Harvey is a Research Officer at the Institute of Development Studies' Climate Change and Development Centre.



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Kubugua is with the Bold Steps Foundation in Tamale, Ghana and lectures at Tamale Polytechnic.



Marcellin Loubegnon

Loubegnon is a journalist in the regional center of research, production and formation in agriculture of Songhai, Benin



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Mabweazara is a lecturer in journalism at University College, Falmouth



Linje Manyozo

Manyozo coordinates the MSC Programme in Media, Communications and Development at the LSE



Last Moyo

Moyo is a faculty member in Media Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, in Johannesburg



Olga Mugerwa

Mugerwa is a researcher based in Kampala, Uganda.



David Musiime

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Oreoluwa Somolu

Somolu is the executive director of the Women's Technology Empowerment Centre in Lagos, Nigeria