

**The Place of Community Radio in Rural Development in  
Kenya: Case Study of Sauti FM in Rarieda, Siaya County.**

**Submitted By:**

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## DECLARATION

This research project paper is my original work and has not been presented for an academic award in any University.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my late parents Mzee Dishon Anduvate and Mama Erika Munagi - you raised us well.

To my dear wife Claire and loving daughters Munagi and Kasoha.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Rural communities in Kenya have largely been relegated to the periphery of the regular mainstream socio-economic and political development conversations. Their voices remain muted and their core political and socio-economic concerns largely excluded from the core resource planning and allocation. Radio offers a platform for remedying this situation as it is widely regarded as the ideal media for developmental communication (Butner, 2003), particularly for rural populations. Yet not just any type of radio may be ideal for this purpose. Community Radio is the model that is best suited for development communication for rural populations.

This study set out to examine the role of Community Radio in rural development in Kenya. Sauti FM, a community radio station located in Rarieda, Siaya County was selected for a case study with the purpose of demonstrating how the radio station has been harnessed for the socio-economic, cultural and political development of Rarieda; as well as the impacts of the radio's programming in its catchment area. This study was qualitative in orientation and data were gathered through focus group discussions, key informant interviews and direct observation in addition to consulting secondary data from various sources. The findings of this study are that Sauti FM is indeed being harnessed for the social, economic, cultural and political development of the inhabitants of Rarieda in such areas as mobilization of resources and collective action, preservation and promotion of progressive facets of local culture, civic education, behaviour modification, business and social networking, as well as promotion of fraternity and harmony in the community. The impact of Sauti FM is starting to be recorded in the stations catchment area. Radio is considered as the ideal mass communication media especially in developing nations (Butner, 2003). Community radio has grown (Mrutu; 2008) in spite of growth in other forms of mass media such as internet and mobile-based social media is an indication of the enduring versatility of radio. As can be seen from the case of Sauti FM in Rarieda, community radio is a key facilitator of rural development. Notwithstanding that, the number of community radio stations in Kenya remains relatively few. There is need to create a more conducive legal and policy framework to support the development of community radio in the country. Existing community radio stations on their part should develop effective sustainability systems to enable them thrive. Such would include better community participation and support, volunteerism, partnership with devolved government units, and creative fundraising initiatives.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background

In 1996, on the initiative of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on “Communication for Development” and went further to define what exactly the General assembly meant by communication for development. Article 6 of General Assembly Resolution 51/172 adopted the following formal definition of Communication for Development:

“... two-way communication systems that enable dialogue and that allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns and participate in the decisions that relate to their development”

While recognizing the central role of communication in the process of community development, this UN General Assembly resolution emphasizes the importance of a two-way communication process; essentially a dialogic undertaking that affords targeted communities unfettered opportunity to engage authorities or institutions whose actions impact the said communities in articulating their aspirations and then going further to participate in making decisions on initiatives that address their developmental issues. It is envisaged that the mode and means of communication would be appropriate to the prevailing cultural, economic, social, political and technological circumstances within the target community as to make the communication process possible, effective and efficient. This has to be so owing to the fact that whereas communication systems (both information and transport) have advanced rapidly over the recent decades, that has



been accompanied by an ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor in terms of accessibility to the available information communication technologies.

Mass communication systems have evolved in tandem with the socio-cultural, economic, political and most particularly exponential technological advances. From the rudimentary message runner, blowing of the horn or beating of the drum among most African communities to the radio waves, satellite, internet, mobile telephony and social media, the information communication landscape has without a doubt grown in leaps and bounds over the last one century. These developments have presented mankind with numerous communication systems and channels to choose from in the process of generating and exchanging information. From amongst these information communication systems, radio has been widely acknowledged as an ideal and one of the most popular media for communication particularly in less developed economies where literacy and geographic barriers are real challenges to exchange of information. Owing to its affordability, accessibility and flexibility, radio remains the most popular mass communication medium; in spite of the great explosion in the development of Information Communication Technologies in form of television, mobile telephony, internet, and social media as alluded to above. Because radio has immediacy, the messages it broadcasts can get to the farthest parts of a region at the same time as the events being reported on unfold. In these far flung rural areas, it is easy to say that radio would be the most important - and probably the only and most reliable - medium of communication available to the population.

The first public radio broadcasts are thought to have began in the 1910s. Over the succeeding decade, public radio broadcasting grew steadily. The 1920s decade recorded phenomenal growth in depth and breadth with commercial radio stations being established in the United States of America and the rest of the world. By the 1930s, a radio receiver was a common household item in many homes across the developed world. Since 1955 radio sets have outnumbered copies of

daily newspapers sold around the world. Radio receivers now number an estimated 350 million and newspapers under 300 million (UNESCO, 1959)

In Kenya, radio broadcasting started in 1927 with the East African Broadcasting Corporation (EABC) relaying British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) news to the colonies. The broadcasts targeted white settlers who received news from their home country and other parts of the world. In 1953, the first broadcast service was created for Africans. African Broadcasting Services (ABS) carried programmes in Swahili, Dholuo, Kikuyu, Kinandi, Kiluhya, Kikamba and Arabic. On gaining political independence from Britain in 1963, the Government of Kenya continued to run the broadcasting services directly as a public broadcaster first as the Voice of Kenya (VoK) and later as the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC). This public broadcaster was run initially as a department under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and later as a semi-autonomous parastatal organization still under the oversight of the same Ministry. That situation obtained for well over three decades.

It was not until the early 1990s when the agitation for expanded democratic space in Kenya reached a crescendo that the government loosened its iron grip on the control of the mass media. Gradually, albeit reluctantly, the government started to license private entities to set up radio and television broadcast stations. In due course, the information communication sector was liberalized and the Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK) established to oversee and regulate the industry in the country. In the broadcasting category, CCK has designated three main broadcasting types namely:

- i. Public Broadcasting services
- ii. Private/Commercial Broadcasting Service
- iii. Community Broadcasting services

The period following the opening up of the broadcasting airwaves in the late 1990s resulted in a rapid growth in the number of radio stations licensed to broadcast to the public. Whereas the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) remains the sole public broadcaster, the number of private commercial broadcasters has increased tremendously to cater for the various market segments; a significant proportion of which is the vernacular language broadcasts. The same cannot be said of the community broadcasting services. Due to the rapidly changing radio broadcasting landscape, the actual number of true community radio stations in Kenya is not clear. However according to the Kenya Community Media Network (KCOMMNET), there were at least 12 community radio stations operating in various locations in Kenya in the year 2013 (Personal communication with Mr. Njuki Githethwa of KCOMMNET on 28 March 2014). It is apparent therefore that for a country that has a population of about 40 million people comprising of at least 42 ethnic and language groups, 12 community radio stations are too few to cater for the needs of this diverse population. This Kenyan situation contrasts greatly with a number of countries in West Africa where community radio stations are aplenty. da Costa (2012) reveals that there were 159 community radio stations in Mali, with smaller countries (relative to Kenya) such as Liberia and Sierra Leone having 34 and 24 active community radio stations respectively. In a number of countries in the region, the growth of community radio stations has been actively supported by development partners such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) among others.

A different kind of contrast can also be observed in South Africa, where in 2007, 152 of the country's 191 radios were classified as community radio stations, with the rest evenly distributed between public and private (Girard 2007). The implication here is that a majority of the radio stations in this country are community radio stations, unlike Kenya where community radio

stations are much fewer than the public and private commercial radio stations. These community radio stations in South Africa were thought to reach an estimated 6.5 million of the country's citizens, with close to a quarter of all radio listeners tuning into a community radio station at least once a week (ibid)

The obtaining scenario in Kenya borne out of the recent and ongoing dynamics in the information communication sector is that commercial interests based in urban centres and thus catering for the urban populations have gained greater control of the radio broadcasting medium. The rural areas which carry a majority of the population of Kenya have inadvertently or otherwise been consigned to the periphery of this all-important information communication platform. And it is evident that this Kenyan situation is not an isolated phenomenon, but rather a pattern that is replicated in many parts of the so-called third world. As da Costa (2012) argues, the impact of community radio has been uneven and its record mixed owing to the fact that while it has mushroomed in some (areas), its presence in others has been thin or absent. Also, in some countries, the expansion of community radio has been hampered by non-existent, inconsistent or hostile legislation. It is perhaps out of recognizing the exclusion of the poor and the marginalized communities from the mainstream mass media and the appreciation of the potential of community media that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been at the forefront of supporting the development of community radio station movement in the less developed countries of the world. The aim of UNESCO's community radio program is to address crucial social issues at a community level, such as poverty and social exclusion, empower marginalized rural groups and catalyze democratic processes and development efforts (Tabing & UNESCO; 2002).

According to the Communications Commission of Kenya, the mandate and operations of community broadcasting services (including radio) are described under section 46 of the Kenya

Communications (Amendment) Act, 2009. Thus, community broadcasting services entail the following:

- Are not operated for profit or as part of a profit-making enterprise.
- Funding is mainly from membership fees, grants, donations.
- Are provided for community purposes.
- Represent a community interest.
- Encourage members of the community served to participate in the operations of the service and the selection and provision of programs.
- Are prohibited from carrying advertising, but may broadcast sponsorship announcements and limited adverts specifically relevant to the community.

Sauti FM, based in Rarieda, Siaya County is among the very few community radio stations in Kenya. Broadcasting mainly in the Dholuo language – the dominant language of the community in its catchment area - Sauti FM was established in 2010. The station is owned and managed by Sauti Ya Maendeleo Resource Centre; a community based organization. Sauti Ya Maendeleo is Kiswahili which literally translates as “Voice of Development”

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Poor infrastructure, transport and communication systems render it difficult to reach rural communities in far-flung areas of Kenya. Such amenities as paved roads, television, telephone, newspapers, radio and internet that are taken for granted by urban dwellers are often not readily accessible or available to the rural populations. As a consequence, rural communities have largely been relegated to the periphery of the regular socio-economic and political development

conversations. Their voices remain muted and their core political and socio-economic concerns largely excluded from the mainstream resource planning and allocation.

The magnitude of this exclusion is quite significant in Kenya where a majority of the citizens live in the rural areas of the country. According to the 2009 Kenya Population Census, about 68% of Kenyans reside in the rural areas (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Amid high rates of unemployment and prevalent abject poverty, this rural population finds itself on the periphery of the decision making process and therefore, their effective participation in the social, economic, political cultural and technological development of the country is severely constrained.

Mass communication offers a platform for remedying this situation. Nevertheless, only the appropriate form of mass media can achieve the desired results, and even so only when the chosen type of media are deployed in an effective manner. Radio, due to its unique characteristics, is widely regarded as the ideal medium for developmental communication particularly for rural populations. Even so, notwithstanding the availability of numerous radio broadcasting stations in the Kenya, most of the rural communities remain on the fringes of socio-economic and political discourse. The implication therefore, is that the dominant broadcasting stations do not effectively reach a majority of the rural populations or their radio broadcast models may not be catering fully for the unique needs of the rural communities as far as content and programming is concerned. The challenge then is to identify a radio broadcasting model that would work for the rural listening audience by affording them an opportunity to actively and effectively participate in both programme development and content generation process, thereby capturing the aspirations and concerns of the target audience.

### **1.3 Research Question**

Beginning from the 1950s, there have been rapid and tremendous technological advances resulting in the generation of new knowledge in all fields of study and human activity. As more and more information is generated, less and less of it seems to trickle down to most of the expected end users; a majority of whom are to be found in rural areas. There is an evident gap between the generation of developmental information and the effective dissemination of the same to the intended beneficiaries and or consumers of that information.

There is need, therefore to focus on a kind of communication model that would pay closer attention to aspirations and needs of the poor and marginalized sections of society. One such kind of model is the community radio. It is the proposition of this study that community radio could be the ideal communication platform that would be inclusive enough to attract and harness the participation of the rural population as to affect their social, economic, political, cultural and technological development. It is on the premise of this supposition that this study set out to answer the question; “What is the role of Community Radio in stimulating rural development in Kenya?” The supplementary research question is “How has Community Radio been harnessed as an effective tool for rural development in Kenya?”

### **1.4 Purpose of Study**

The broad aim of this study was to investigate and demonstrate the potential of community radio broadcasting as a catalyst for rural development in Kenya. In essence, this study examined whether the community radio broadcasting model provides a platform that is inclusive enough to fundamentally affect the economic, cultural, political and social development of the largely poor

rural populations. In the process of investigating the role played by community radio in the socio-economic development of rural Kenya, this study also sought to document how this type of radio has been harnessed for rural development while at the same time highlighting some of the key challenges that the community radio stations face and how these could be dealt with in order to help the community radio stations sustain and grow their operations.

## **1.5 Study Objectives**

The overall objective of this study was to examine the role of community radio broadcasting in rural development in Kenya and Sauti FM in Rarieda, Siaya County was identified for a case study. The specific objectives of the study were:

- i. Examine how Sauti FM - a community radio - is being harnessed for rural development in Rarieda, Siaya County
- ii. Document the social, economic and political impacts of Sauti FM's radio broadcasts on the community in its catchment area
- iii. Identify any challenges constraining the growth and sustainability of community radio broadcasting and suggest how these could be mitigated against

## **1.6 Significance of Study**

Radio, and particularly community radio offers a platform on which communities can and should be afforded the opportunity to discover and articulate their developmental needs and aspirations and go further to lobby for support while at the same time receiving useful and relevant information that is critical to their socio-economic, cultural, spiritual and political advancement.



As the common adage goes, ‘information is power’, how much more powerful can this information be, if it is gathered, packaged and transmitted in a language and format that is not only convenient to, but well understood by the recipient of the information. It is anticipated that the results of this study shall contribute towards a better understanding and appreciation of the role of community radio in the overall development of rural communities in Kenya, while at the same time stimulating the expansion and growth of community radio and other complementary forms of mass media in the country. Also, the findings of this study should inform the design and development of interventions aimed at informing and empowering the rural communities in Kenya, ultimately drawing them to the core of their own transformation socially, economically, culturally, politically and even technologically.

As stated earlier on in this paper, the number of community radio stations in Kenya is quite low when viewed against the country’s population and the ethnic and language diversity; and when compared with a number of other African countries, some of which have much smaller populations than Kenya and fewer ethnic groups and spoken languages. Any information that would add to a deeper understanding of the underlying factor(s) contributing to this situation would be helpful in informing stakeholders interested in the expansion of community media, particularly community radio on what kind of intervention could be appropriate for the development of rural communities in Kenya.

## **1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

This study focused on a single community radio station that is Sauti FM based in Rarieda, Siaya County. The unique circumstances obtaining in and specific to Rarieda and therefore impacting

on the operations of Sauti FM and its interactions and relationships with its audience would have a great bearing and influence on the findings and conclusions of this study.

### **1.8. Operationalization of Terms**

The concept of rural development in this study entails the improvement in household incomes and livelihoods as well as the enhancement of infrastructure in the rural areas as it relates to health facilities, educational institutions, transport and communication, water and sanitation, security, entertainment and recreational facilities. In addition to growth in infrastructure was the quality of services delivered or offered at these facilities for it is quite possible to have top notch physical facilities without matching service delivery. Further, the conceptualization of rural development encompasses the empowerment of rural communities to enable them effectively participate in political governance of their administrative units in addition to augmenting the community's cultural identity was of particular interest.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

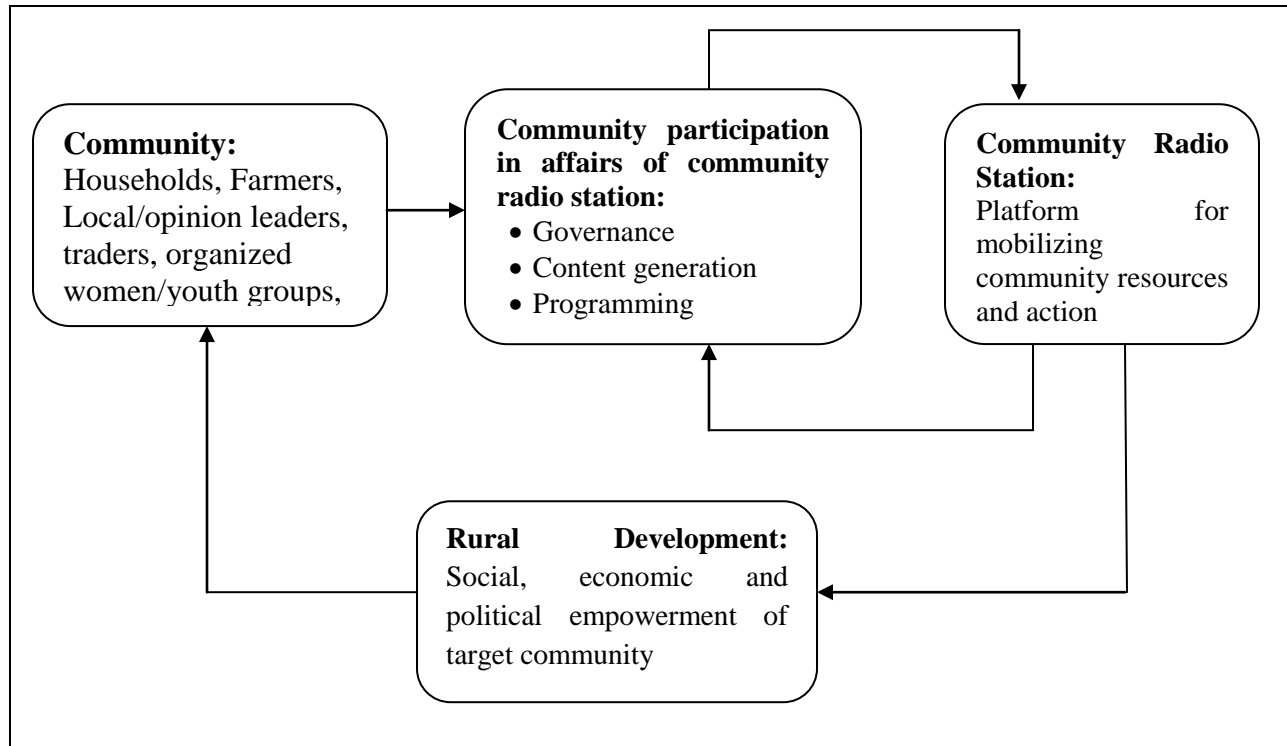
#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter looks at the conceptual as well as the theoretical frameworks that underpinned this study. Also, the chapter discusses relevant existing literature that speaks to the subject of development communication.

#### **2.2 Conceptual Framework**

This study conceptualized a radio broadcasting model that has a host community at the core of its operations in terms of ownership and governance, programming and the language of communication as well as community participation in editorial content orientation and generation. This set up would give the community a platform to directly affect and influence their own socio-economic and political empowerment while at the same time preserving and fostering their own cultural identify. Members of such a community would then be well placed to identify challenges they face within and without their midst and move on to debate and develop appropriate potential solutions to the said challenges for the ultimate improvement of their own socio-economic wellbeing.

*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework*



### 2.3 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical orientation of this study was mainly anchored in theories of development communication. The study and practice of development communication has over the years been driven by a number of schools of thought; among them the modernization theory, the authoritarian theory, the democratic-participant theory and the social responsibility theory.

The modernization theory posits that development in the underdeveloped countries can only be achieved through the dissemination and embracing of developmental models that brought success to the wealthy western world countries. This theory is grounded in the strong belief of the persuasive power of the mass media. In this school of thought, the role mass media is to

persuade the masses to change their attitudes and way of thinking in order to set the stage for economic development.

In the Authoritarian theory, the media is considered to be in service to the state and ought to subordinate itself to the state. The media should not undermine the state in any way by its reporting of events and happenings. In fact the media is expected to be on the forefront of supporting the interests of the state above everything else. In this scenario, the media is used by the political elite as an instrument of social and political control as information dissemination is tightly censored by the state and its agents.

The democratic-participant theory in contrast holds the position that mass media ought to support the participation of masses in the process of initiation; planning and execution of interventions impact their lives. As Baran and Davis (2012; 127) argue, “Media are to be used to stimulate and empower pluralistic groups” thereby supporting the growth of cultural pluralism at the grassroots level. Participation affords the masses the opportunity to get involved in the problem identification process as well as the fashioning of solutions to challenges facing them. Democratic participation theory calls for the development of “small” media that can effectively be controlled by members of grassroots groups.

The social responsibility theory that was first developed in the 1940s by Robert Maynard Hutchins, is yet another school of thought that examines the role of mass media in society. One key assertion of the social responsibility theory is that media professionals have certain obligations to their audience(s). These obligations include high standards of informativeness, truth, accuracy objectivity and balance. Discussing this theory, Baran and Davis (116) posit that media should be pluralistic and therefore reflect the diversity of the society, giving (equal) access to various points of view and rights to reply. Moreover, media should be self-regulating within the framework of the law and established institutions and should avoid whatever might lead to

crime, violence or civil disorder or give offense to minority groups within the society. The social responsibility theory challenges media practitioners and professionals to constantly develop creative and new ways of serving their communities. In essence, media should exist to serve the interest of the masses and those who own or control media houses should constantly be identifying new and better ways of using their media houses to highlight and address the present and ever-changing challenges that confront humanity. This way, the media would be contributing positively towards the socio-economic improvement of their audience(s).

## **2.4 Development Communication**

Wilkins (2008:1) defines development communication as a process of strategic intervention toward social change, initiated and engaged by organizations and communities. Wilkins goes on to emphasize that development itself encompasses participatory and intentional strategies designed to benefit the public good, whether in terms of material, political, or social needs. Wilkins however fails to give prominence to the role played by the communication component of the said strategic intervention process that should lead to desired social change. This aspect is aptly captured by The World Bank Group which defines Development Communication as “the integration of strategic communication in development projects (in order) to improve the chances of success of (the) development projects. It strives for behavior change not just information dissemination, education, or awareness-raising”. The Bank buttresses this definition by stating that:

Development communication involves creating mechanisms to broaden public access to information on reforms; strengthening clients' ability to listen to their constituencies and negotiate with stakeholders; empowering grassroots organizations to achieve a more

participatory process; and undertaking communications activities that are grounded in public opinion research<sup>1</sup>.

In effect, the World Bank is acknowledging the critical role of communication in the development process; and laying emphasis on the integration of communication in the course and process of conceptualization, planning, implementation and evaluation of development programmes. The Bank is convinced that besides informing the masses, effective communication fosters harmony that is essential in the success of development interventions. The Bank says:

Meaningful communication is about getting information out to particular audiences, listening to their feedback, and responding appropriately. Whether discussing a development project or broader economic reforms — from health, education or rural development to private sector development, financial reform or judicial reform — the idea is to build consensus through raising public understanding and generating well-informed dialogue among stakeholders<sup>2</sup>.

The position taken by the World Bank is strongly supported by the United Nation's Food and Agricultural Organization (2006) which asserts that "In communication for development, rural people are at the centre of any given development initiative and so communication is used in this sense for people's participation and community mobilization, decision making and action, confidence building for raising awareness, sharing knowledge and changing attitudes, behaviour and lifestyles". Communication is therefore acknowledged as a central cog in mobilizing communities for purposes of initiating, driving and sustaining desirable social change within society. Effective communication channels foster the participation of members of any given community in the entire process of improving their wellbeing. In so far as rural development is concerned, development communication provides a platform on which information and

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/>

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

knowledge related to the socio-economic, cultural and political development of a given rural area are conceived, exchanged and shared between the members of the community, information providers and other actors who are concerned about the wellbeing of the target community. At the same time, skills and other resources necessary for the desired developmental activities would be identified and mobilized and deployed as deemed appropriate by the members of the community and their supporters. The medium of communication maybe one or more of the following, i.e. person-to-person, radio, print, telephone, television, internet among others. Any of these approaches can be used as a stand-alone or in combination.

When carried out effectively, development communication motivates individuals within a community to abandon narrow self-interests and focus on the broader collective and community-focused goals. What this means is that when well harnessed and deployed, development communication enables individual members of a community to see and share a wider picture of their socio-economic reality and goes further to unite their aspirations and resolve to work together towards improving their collective wellbeing; which would ultimately translate into better individual living conditions and circumstances.

The concept of development communication gained great prominence in the 1960s with the emergence of new countries out of colonialism. Developed countries and multilateral development agencies such as the World Bank and the United Nations agencies were convinced by the proponents of the modernization theory which was dominant at the time; that the best way to “develop” the less developed countries of the world was through the replication of the economic development models that had brought economic development to the western world. Mass media was therefore seen as a critical tool in the dissemination of the western development models as well as a driver of change of the attitudes and mindsets of the populations in these less developed countries.



In the less developed world itself, the leadership was having a totally different take on the role of mass media in the newly independent countries. Whereas the western world and the multilateral development agencies viewed mass media as channels for development communication, in the less developed countries, the local political class, in appreciating the power of mass media, viewed it as a tool for advancing their political agenda. The ruling elite would move on to control the mass media through both legal and non-legal means. Draconian laws were used to license and regulate the mass media industry and in the process restricted the freedom of and space for both individual and communal expression. At their convenience and self promotion and gain, the ruling class would use the media to glorify their own and demonize those they perceived to be their opponents. In this context then, mass media was being used to the detriment of the greater and desirable public good. It is no wonder that rapid growth in the mass media industry – particularly radio – in the less developed country has happened in the recent past, following in the footsteps of greater democratization of global political and governance systems that set-off in the early 1990s going forward.

Progressively over the years, the understanding and application of development communication has evolved even as different schools of thought emerged to proffer varying standpoints and theories. The modernization paradigm for instance holds that the best way to achieve development in the underdeveloped countries was through diffusion and adoption of values, principles and models that brought success in the wealthier countries (Mefalopulos, 2008:44). From the modernization standpoint, the mass media has the role of persuading the masses to embrace the core values and practices of modernization in order to spur economic development. Proponents of the modernization school of thought place a lot of faith in the power of the mass media to influence people's attitudes and behaviour; resulting in changes towards desired action(s). While it is true that mass media influences and significantly impacts people's attitudes

and behavior, it cannot be said that mass media single-handedly causes people to change their attitudes and behaviour. There are many more factors – such as culture and interpersonal relationships - that are constantly at play at any given time in impacting people’s attitudes and behaviour. This would for instance explain the continued widespread practice of female genital mutilation amongst numerous ethnic communities in Kenya and other African countries in spite of concerted campaigns through mass media and other channels. It therefore demonstrates that it takes much more than mass media crusades to bring about transformational change.

In contrast to the standpoint taken by proponents of the modernization theory, the participatory paradigm seeks to move people to the core of the development discourse. This school of thought perceives people as active agents of socio-economic change and not mere submissive recipients of information. According to Mefalopulos (2008, 53) participatory approaches facilitate people’s involvement in the problem-analysis process; thereby empowering the poorest and the most disadvantaged sectors of society – often to be found in the rural areas and low income – and mostly informal - settlements in urban centres. By denying the masses the opportunity to voice their concerns and share their perceptions, promoters of socio-economic programmes not only miss a golden opportunity to enrich the milieu of the programme, but emasculate the very people they target to improve their livelihoods. Banan and Davis (2012, 127), discussing democratic-participatory theory, advocate for media support for cultural pluralism at grassroots level and call for the development of innovative “small” media that can be controlled by the members of the community. This “small” media perfectly fits the bill of a community radio station. Embracing and promoting such media would be stimulating and empowering these communities.

Inherent in the emphasis on communication in participatory development is the fact that it is difficult to figure out participation in absence of communication. As it were, communication is the purveyor of the participatory efforts of the actors in any given initiative or intervention. To

ignore communication in the process of development discourse is to dis-empower the poor, vulnerable and marginalized sections of the population. Mefalopulos (2008, 54) argues that “because genuine participation in development implies having the opportunity and power to take part in the decisions concerning one’s own well-being, participatory communication models need to take issues of power and empowerment into account” Mefalopulos goes on to quote the United Nations Development Programme Annual Report of 1993 that concurs with his assertion that “since participation requires increased influence and control, it also demands increased empowerment in economic, social and political terms”. Development communication in its ideal form offers the poor the opportunity to participate in, and control activities that impact their lives. This empowerment as conceived by Narayan (2002; 14) leads to “the expansion of assets and capabilities of the poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affected their lives”

Participatory approaches in development communication have been identified as critical to winning the fight against social exclusion that perpetuates debilitating cyclic poverty so rampant in the marginalized and vulnerable populations all over the world. Mefalopulos (2008, 55) amplifies this argument; thus:

Eliminating or significantly reducing social exclusion, through the use of dialogic (application) of communication, is a step toward a world without poverty. The deprivation deriving from feeling excluded from relevant decisions and from seeing limited available options can be successfully addressed through communication, since it is by communicating that individuals perceive and define their conditions and construct their reality in social networks

Giving individuals and communities a platform to express their expectations, fears, frustrations, as well as their perceived solutions to challenges they face restores their dignity thereby assuaging their feelings of exclusion and powerlessness. Participatory development

communication is such a platform where targeted communities are given considerable control over the governance and content programming of mass media institutions set up to empower the identified communities. Notwithstanding the foregoing assertion, the call for the participation of masses in development communication has not been smooth. Numerous constraints have had to be surmounted in order to afford the masses any form of meaningful participation in development communication initiatives particularly at grassroots level. As a matter of fact, many more constraints remain. The medium of communication is one such challenge. The rapid development of a multiplicity of mass media coupled with growth in research and intellectual enterprise has led to the generation of information on a massive and unprecedented scale. How to package this information and make it useful and accessible to the marginalized sections of the population in the rural areas and the informal settlements in the urban centres is a real challenge. Furthermore this information is most often in a language that is bound to be a barrier to a great number of the population. In fact, a 1999 survey concluded that about 86% of all internet web pages were in English (Mefalopoulos, 2008:62). Many potential users are unlikely to access this information due the constraints of language barrier and inaccessibility to the internet by the masses. Taking into account the widespread illiteracy (both literal and digital/technological) among the populations in less developed countries, this means that considerable sections of the masses have no access at all to useful and potentially life-transforming information.

Yet another school of thought holds that mass media practitioners should always be looking for new and better ways to serve their audience communities. This is the standpoint of the social responsibility theorists. According to this school of thought, media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to the society – to be met by setting high standards of informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance (Banan & Davis, 2012:116). The social responsibility theory posits that media should be pluralist and reflect the diversity of their society, giving access to

various points of view and right to reply. The thinking here is that mass media – whether private and commercial, public or community – exists because of and for the sake of the masses. Media owners should therefore first and foremost, deliberately seek and identify what the needs and aspirations of the targeted masses are and then device appropriate ways and means of serving the public good interests of the society even as they pursue their own private interests.

## **2.5 Rural Development**

The concept of rural development brings together two distinct terms namely rural and development. Seeking to define the first term – rural - inevitably invites one to contrast it with urban since the two are found at the opposite ends of the spectrum. Nonetheless, the categorization of a rural area varies from region to region and between periods of time. Thus, what may be classified as rural in Europe or the United States of America may not agree exactly with the same classification in Sub-Sahara Africa for instance. Conversely, what characterized an urban setting in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century may today not necessarily qualify so, largely due to progressive change in the parameters and other factors that are used in dichotomizing rural and urban areas. Whereas the defining characteristics of an urban setting include high population density with manufacturing, commerce and service provision as the distinct economic activities, rural areas on the other hand have relatively low population densities and the dominant economic activity is primary production i.e. agriculture, livestock rearing fisheries, and forestry.

Defining the second term – development - is much more complex due to its contentious and dynamic nature. The Macmillan English dictionary defines development as, “change, growth or improvement over a period of time”. Previously, development was equated with economic growth that would result in the progressive transformation of the economy and ultimately the

society. In the period following the end of the Second World War and the succeeding decades, the growth of civil society organizations caused the broadening of the development perspective beyond economic growth to encompass human development, democracy and governance, environmental conservation and natural resource management among other aspects. This standpoint views development as freeing people from obstacles that affect their ability to improve their own lives and communities. Development in essence therefore implies empowering communities to take control of their own lives, expressing their own aspirations and demands; and being at the centre of finding sustainable and as far as possible, home-grown solutions to their problems. The United Nations Development Programme uses a more comprehensive definition of development, thus; – “to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and to be able to participate in the life of the community.”. Here, development is seen in the light of quality of life, empowerment through acquisition of knowledge and skills, and active participation in the affairs of one’s community.

Rural development therefore is the sustained improvement in the living conditions and welfare of the populations that reside in rural areas. On its part, The World Bank (1975) defines rural development as:

A strategy aiming at the improvement of economic and social living conditions focusing on a specific group of poor people in a rural area. It assists the poorest group among the people living in rural areas to benefit from development.

Rural development interventions constantly seek to improve and ultimately transform the wellbeing of communities that reside in the rural areas in every aspect. Adisa (n.d, 7) discusses processes and programmes that would enhance and support sustainable rural development to include; a.) enhancement of governance at local, district and provincial levels, b.) development

of productive sectors – agriculture, non-agricultural industry, mining, tourism, natural resources environmental management etc, c.) development of institutions and their capacities in key areas such as education and training, health, research and extension, marketing, savings and credit etc, and d.) development of rural infrastructure in terms of roads, electricity, telecommunications, housing, water, sanitation and such others. In all these processes and programmes towards rural development, a key expectation and indeed overriding factor is the participation of the local communities, particularly the traditionally disadvantaged groups. This would include the women, youth/children, the elderly and the minorities.

The approach to, and perception of rural development has changed significantly over the years driven by the constant shifting of paradigms in the intellectual, social, economic, political and technological spheres among others. Whereas initially rural development was almost always equated to agricultural development, it was later observed that agricultural development was just one aspect of rural development and that a more comprehensive and holistic approach was necessary in order to encompass such aspects as human development and equity. As the clamour for greater democratic space gained currency globally, so did the need to be more inclusive and participatory in developmental interventions particularly targeting the marginalized sections of the society.

Governments – particularly in the less developed countries have had to move from predominantly centralized bureaucratic planning systems to the decentralized people-centred development planning and implementation systems. Kenya for instance adopted a new constitution in 2010 that ushered in two levels of governance - the central national government and 47 county governments. This new set up is expected to give greater impetus to rural development since the county governments are expected to spearhead the socio-economic development of their respective devolved units. Necessary statutory and policy frameworks have

been put in place to support the redistribution of the national resources in a manner that ensures no part or section of Kenya is left untouched by efforts to improve the citizen's welfare. To ensure this is realized, the 2010 constitution of Kenya prescribes that not less than 15% of all the national revenue shall be allocated to the 47 County governments. The constitution establishes a Commission on Revenue Allocation that shall determine how best to share the national income equitably between the national and the county governments and among the county governments. There is also the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) that channels varying amounts of money to each parliamentary constituency determined by an established combination of criteria. These funds are meant to finance the enhancement of the socio-economic infrastructure at the grassroots level in terms of education institutions, health centres, water and sanitation, local administration centres, rural access roads, recreational centres, mains electricity grid among others.

Approximately 75% of the world's impoverished people live in the rural areas (World Bank, 2001a). The importance of rural development therefore, cannot be overemphasized, particularly given that widespread poverty and lack of opportunity in the rural areas is a huge factor fueling massive rural-urban migration in the less developed countries. Development of rural areas would therefore serve to stem the migration of the rural population to the urban centres while at the same time attracting back some of the urban poor to the rural areas.

Community participation is critical to the success of any rural development effort since it breeds a sense of ownership thus giving the target community the power to literally chart and influence their development agenda. This inclusive approach serves to integrate the traditionally marginalized sections of the community i.e. the women, youth, disabled and the minorities etc into the development decision-making and implementation process; thereby bringing to the fore and thus catering for their special needs.



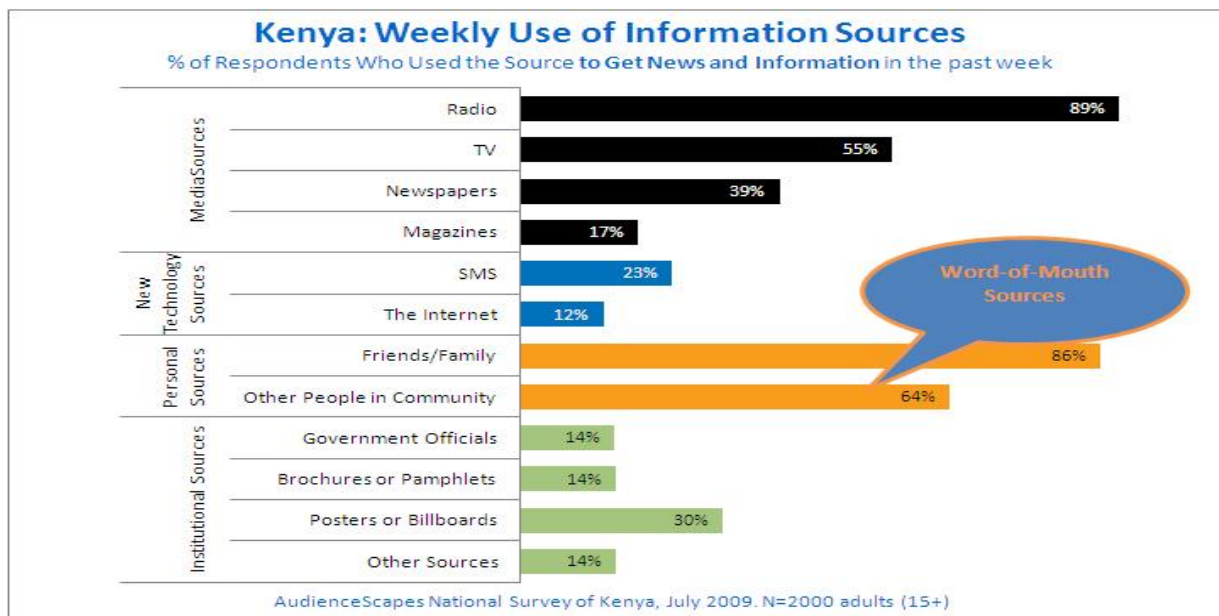
## 2.6 Radio

One of the most popular and widely accepted medium of communication is radio. It is not difficult to see the reason why radio stands out as the premier mass media. Ashley Butner, in a paper published in the Carolina Papers in International Development makes an observation that has a wide universal acceptance, that:

Radio has been cited over and over as the ideal medium for communication, especially in developing nations, because it transcends literacy and geographical barriers and its relative low cost in comparison to other technologies makes it most accessible to most people (Butner, 2003:12).

Radio commands the widest audience amongst the various types of mass media. According to a media usage survey by AudienceScapes (2009), 89 percent of Kenyan adults get news and information from the radio on at least a weekly basis. Radio is therefore an important tool in communicating critical information to the masses.

Figure 2: Weekly Usage of Information Sources in Kenya



Source: AudienceScapes: 2009

World over, the impact of radio on the lives of people – whether positive or negative - is well documented. In Rwanda for instance, radio was used negatively in fuelling ethnic animosity and hate at the height of the infamous genocide in 1994 that left close to a million ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus dead. Politicians all over the world understand the power of radio and would not hesitate to use it for their own selfish gain. In the same breath, radio has been used in many instances to foster peace and reconciliation and drive a socio-economic and political development agenda

The advent radio broadcasting and the widespread ownership of radio receivers over time dramatically changed the mass communication landscape. As Girard (2001) puts it, until the radio came on the scene, access to information was a preserve of the literate few of the society and who were invariably to be found in the urban centres where they had access to newspapers and other forms of the written word. Radio changed all that since one did not need to know how to read and write in order to access information on radio. Radio as a medium of communication grew rapidly in the 1920s and the succeeding decades saw it become entrenched as an enduring form of mass media. Demers (2002) notes the explosion of radio across the globe in the 1920s, where in 1921, there were 5 licensed radio stations in the United States of America, and five years later, there were 58. Elsewhere, Radio Argentina began broadcasting in 1920 and by 1926; there were numerous radio stations all over Latin America. On the African continent, the first radio station was established in 1924 in South Africa (Mytton, n.d.) and progressively over the succeeding decade in other regions of the continent; thus 1927 in Kenya, 1932 in Zimbabwe, 1935 in Congo and Ghana and 1936 in Nigeria. These stations were primarily set up to serve the interests of the white settlers and their colonial governments. As the agitation for political emancipation from colonization, radio programmes targeting the indigenous communities started to be aired albeit under tight control and regulation by the colonial administrations.

In the 1960s a majority of the countries in Africa gained political independence. In the succeeding three decades, governments maintained a tight control on media particularly radio broadcasting. The leading broadcasting houses across the continent were often owned and controlled by government. However this scenario began to change with the wind of democratization that swept across Africa and indeed the whole of the world starting in the late 1980s and intensifying into the 1990s. The fall of the Berlin wall in the early 1990s was a watershed in matters of democracy and governance across the world. Processes surrounding that event had ripple effects that were felt globally. Not long after the fall of the Berlin wall, the clamour for greater democratic space and personal freedoms gained urgency leading to the fall of numerous dictatorial regimes in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, central and South America. Of course the mass media was a key player in the whole process and that continues to be the case even now. Radio as the common man's mass medium of choice and compulsion is therefore an important tool and enabler of the democratization process anywhere in the world. Kenya's democratic development has been accompanied by a corresponding growth in the number of radio broadcasters such that whereas there was only one recognized radio broadcaster – the state-owned Kenya Broadcasting Corporation - in the early 1990s, there were 105 licensed radio broadcasters in Kenya in the year 2013 (Communication Commission of Kenya 2014). With expanded democratic space came the liberalization of the mass media including the airwaves. Mytton (n.d.) observes that before 1987 there were only five or six privately owned independent radio stations on the entire continent in Gambia, South Africa, Swaziland, and Liberia. By the turn of the century there were more than 450 independent radio stations in Africa.

A common characteristic of this proliferation of independent radio stations has been that they are mainly commercial FM stations based in the urban centres with entertainment as the main menu on offer. In Kenya for instance, the most popular FM radio stations are based in Nairobi, and

even though a number have progressively extended their reach to the rural areas, their business model is purely commercial and therefore profit driven and self-serving. The significance of this is that there little or no focus at all on developmental information in the broadcast content. In fact some FM radio stations are purely no-talk radio stations that play music only throughout their time on air. Under these circumstances, the task of disseminating developmental information is in essence left to the government through the public broadcaster which as it were would most often than not transmit generic information, without taking into account the specific needs of different categories of listeners as influenced by their special geographic, social, cultural, economic and even technological circumstances. In some instances such information may not be relevant at all to some of the communities receiving it since it may not address their unique circumstances that may be specific and so much different from other communities in the country. This scenario reinforces the case for a radio broadcasting model that puts the needs and the aspirations of a specific community at the core of its operations.

## **2.7 Community Radio**

“When radio fosters the participation of citizens and defends their interests; when it reflects the tastes of the majority and makes good humour and hope its main purpose; when it truly informs; . . . when everyone’s words fly without discrimination or censorship, that is community radio.” —

José Ignacio Lòpez Vigil in *Manual urgente para Radialistas Apasionados* (1997)<sup>3</sup>,

Tabing and UNESCO (2002) define community radio as a type of radio service that caters to the interests of a certain area, broadcasting content that is popular to a local audience but which may

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted on Comunica website, [www.comunica.org](http://www.comunica.org).

often be overlooked by commercial or mass-media broadcasters. It is a type of radio that is operated “in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community”. According to the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) community radio represents the democratization of communications as it enables members of a community to gain access to information, education and entertainment. Members of the community recognize themselves and identify with community radio, in addition to communicating among themselves. Typically, community radio operates on a not-for-profit basis with community ownership and control built into its structures. Community radio has variously been referred to by different names; thus rural radio, farm radio, pirate radio, alternative media among others. However, there are subtle differences between and among these forms of community radio. According to the World Association of Community Broadcasters (1998); “Community radio responds to the needs of the community it serves, contributing to its development within progressive perspectives in favour of social change. Community radio strives to democratize communication through community participation in different forms in accordance with each specific social context”.

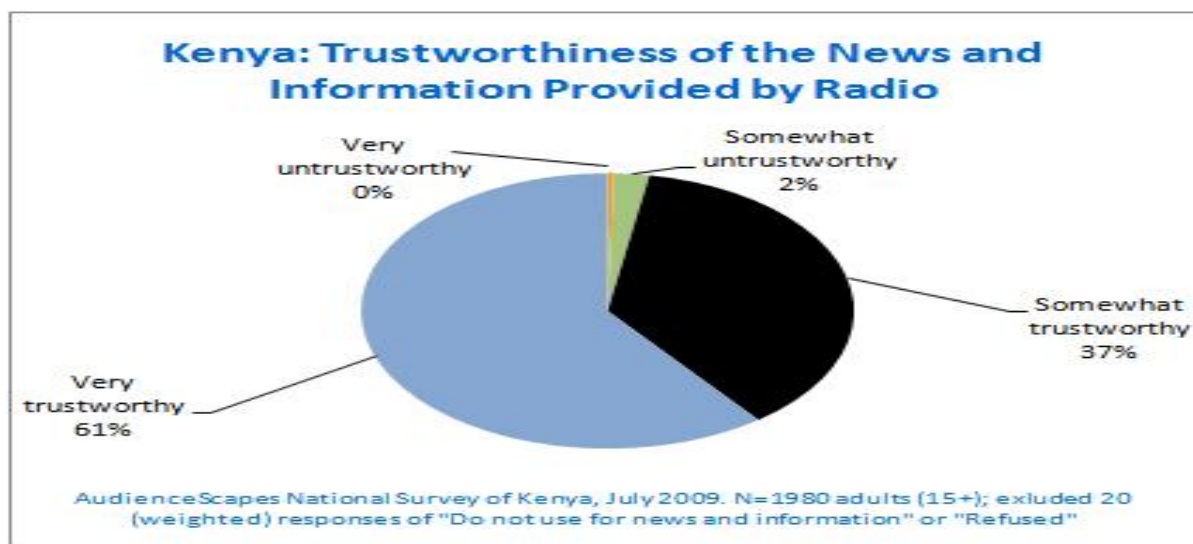
A study by Farm Radio International in 2008 under the auspices of the African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFFRI) revealed a number of telling facts about farm (community/rural) radio. Thus:

- i. Radio is the most effective means of reaching the rural communities
- ii. Farm radio is an effective social lubricant
- iii. Radio forums strengthen rural decision making structures
- iv. Radio programmes created by communities attract high listenership
- v. Farm and development radio content is more effective when generated with and alongside the local communities

- vi. Rural radio is a reliable agricultural extension tool
- vii. Effective radio programming provides farmers with strategies for generating more income
- viii. Sustained radio listenership is more effective than exposure to a specific campaign

These findings buttress the assertion that community radio when well harnessed and deployed can and should play multiple roles in not only cementing social harmony, but also driving transformational change within the communities that are reached by broadcasts from the radio station. There is evidence that a majority of the audience who listen to radio consider it a trustworthy source of information. A national survey by AudioScapes in July 2009 revealed that 61% of the respondents considered radio as a very trustworthy source of news and information. A further 37% responded that news and information from radio was somewhat trustworthy; meaning that they had a significant degree of confidence in the information they received through the radio. Cumulatively therefore, 98% of the respondents had a level of confidence in the trustworthiness of news and information they received through radio.

*Figure 3: Trustworthiness of information received from radio*



Source: AudienceScapes: 2009

It would therefore be a strong argument to assert that community radio stations have the potential to play a critical and important role in the socio-cultural, economic and political development of any given community particularly the marginalized rural communities. It is no wonder that politicians and those in positions of power have been clamouring for the control of radio airwaves knowing that the masses are likely to believe whatever shall be given them over radio. Whereas the politicians and whoever else has the right to seek and own radio frequencies, it would serve better and greater public good if communities were encouraged and as far as possible actively facilitated to own and manage a radio station that gives them voice on matters that are important and pertinent to their social, economic, political, cultural and technological development.

The advent and growth of community radio can be traced to Latin America in the mid 1940s. Driven by poverty and perceived social injustice, communities in this region turned to community radio as an instrument of political struggle in opposition to repressive governments. Radio Sutatenza, established in 1947 in Colombia, is considered as the first-ever developing world community radio station (Girard 2007). The miners' radios of Bolivia emerged two years later (1949) to press for better working conditions for tin miners, and were supported by the miners themselves, who pledged a portion of their monthly salaries towards the stations' running costs. According to Myers (2011), community radio has particularly thrived in Latin America, where it has a long history, is numerically significant, and where it has arguably fulfilled more of a public service function than state broadcasters. Myers identifies Colombia, Bolivia, Mexico, and Argentina as having particularly favourable pro-community broadcasting policies. Some estimates put the total number of community radio stations in Latin America at around 10,000, with Peru having the largest proportion and Ecuador, Bolivia, and Brazil in second, third, and fourth place. If unlicensed stations are also taken into account, the overall numbers are much

higher, with recent surveys by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, for example, showing there are more than 10,000 community radio stations still waiting for licenses in Brazil alone (Ibid). This situation only helps to magnify the great gap that exists and needs to be filled by community radio in Kenya where the number of community radio stations compares insignificantly to what is obtaining in Latin America.

Community radio developed out of the need to offer alternative sources of information dissemination for the benefit of marginalized sections of society that found themselves excluded from the content and formats offered by the larger mainstream broadcasting/media houses. This exclusion may be due to geographical considerations, language barrier or policy pursued by given broadcasting houses. In South Africa for instance, the apartheid policy of racial, cultural, political and socio-economic segregation promoted the supremacy of the “white” race including their culture and language. The needs of the non-white people in South Africa were given lower priority or ignored altogether. Such a scenario would be ideal for the growth of community radio to articulate the aspirations of the marginalized sections of the society as indeed happened in South Africa as apartheid came crashing down. Community radio as conceptualized above became the solution to this exclusion as the radio would broadcast to a particular audience in the local community’s language, all the while discussing the issues that were pertinent in and to that community.

From the foregoing discussion, it is easy to understand why community radio is widely considered as an important yet fundamental tool for community development. Besides overcoming the language barrier, community radio offers a platform for communities to debate and exchange ideas in the process of reacting to planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes. Citing Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2002), da Costa (2012) identifies the following as the principal functions of community radio: reflecting and



promoting local identity, character and culture by focusing principally on local content; creating a diversity of voices and opinions on the air through its openness and participation from all sectors; encouraging open dialogue and democratic process by providing an independent platform for interactive discussion about matters and decisions of importance to the community; promoting social change and development; promoting good governance and civil society by playing a community watchdog role that makes local authorities and politicians more conscious of their public responsibilities; sharing information and innovation; giving voice to the voiceless, especially to women and young people in some societies; and providing a social service as a replacement for the telephone. From the foregoing, it is apparent that the mandate of community radio is quite wide and thus a lot that is expected from this medium of mass communication.

Community radio therefore inspires and captures a community's dreams and aspirations. Against the rapid globalization of the world, community radio stands out as the bastion of preservation of a people's cultural identity. It is no wonder that community radio is increasingly gaining greater recognition and attention. In wider discussions on poverty reduction and international development there has been renewed emphasis on the need for open and accountable governance, satisfaction of basic needs, and strategies that are people-centred, community-driven and empowerment oriented. It is in these contexts - as an appropriate means of providing access to communication, particularly for poor rural communities and marginalized urban populations - that the role and potential of community broadcasting has gained a significant foothold in mainstream development thinking. As a result, community broadcasting has progressively been attracting programme support from multilateral agencies including United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization and Food and Agricultural Organization.

Africa's first community radio station was established at Homa Bay on the shores of Lake Victoria in May 1982, a joint initiative of UNESCO and the Kenyan Government (Githethwa, 2010). The station closed down in 1984 due to what was widely thought to be the intolerable political environment prevailing in the country at that time that was averse to the freedom of the mass media. Across the African continent, the democratization movements that resulted in greater political freedom and space afforded to the citizens had ripple effects beyond the political sphere. Greater freedom of the press was recorded in the decades beginning in the mid 1990s. One key beneficiary of this opening up of the press space has been the community radio.

At the second attempt to establish community broadcasting in Kenya, Radio Mangelete in Kibwezi is widely acknowledged as a pioneering purely community radio station in the country. Started and run by a women's group, this radio station set the pace for the establishment of community radio stations in the country when it went on air in early 2004. Since then, the number of community radio stations in Kenya has grown steadily to at least 12 such stations spread across the country. Community radio stations should not be confused with the burgeoning commercial vernacular radio stations that have become quite popular on the Kenyan radio broadcasting scene. The latter, though broadcasting in vernacular, are owned by private commercial entities whose motives are largely profit-making.

In appreciating the place of community radio in the cultural, economic, political and social development of society, the Communications Commission of Kenya in its Kenya Information and Communications (Broadcasting) Regulations, 2009 (Part III; article 13) envisages the mandate of community radio stations in the country thus:

- a) reflect the needs of the people in the community including cultural, religious, language and demographic needs;

- b) deal specifically with community issues which are not normally dealt with by other broadcasting services covering the same area; and
- c) be informational, educational and entertaining in nature; provide a distinct broadcasting service that highlights community issues.

The power of radio to speak to the masses irrespective of their literacy status and its amenability to a variety of production and presentation formats such as talk shows/call-ins, live broadcasts, serialization and redundancy; drama and poetry, coupled with the relatively low cost has contributed to the perpetual popularity of radio as the most pervasive medium of communication. Largely, community radio has grown due to the realization that in spite of the emergence of new and more sophisticated forms of mass media such as internet, mobile telephony, satellite communication among others, radio has retained its place at the top of the communications hierarchy. Taking advantage of this unique position of radio as a medium of mass communication, community radio expansion has found wide acceptance amongst the marginalized rural communities. Globally, there was tremendous growth in community radio listenership in the 1980s – 1990s. A survey by New York Times in 2000 revealed that listenership grew from 9.8 million in 1985 to 19.7 million in 1995 (Mrutu; 2008:7).

Rather than target a national (or even an international) audience that is not homogenous in most characteristics; and hence necessitating generic broadcast programming, community radio can afford to be more specific; addressing localized issues that capture the aspirations and concerns of the local targeted community. The social, economic and political benefits that accrue from rural communities readily accessing appropriate information are enormous. It goes without saying that such information would be more impactful if it was packaged and delivered in the first language that was spoken by the targeted audience. Given an opportunity to effectively participate in communication processes, marginalized communities are able to identify and

articulate what interventions would work best for them. In any case, they are best placed to understand dynamics surrounding issues that impinge on their culture, family relationships, food, health, education and whatever else that concerns them. Mrutu (2008:4) observes that in Tanzania, community radio has greatly helped in solving problems such as land conflicts among the Maasai herdsmen in Arusha region. It has made them change many aspects of their their lifestyles, including staying in permanent settlements, taking their daughters to school and empowering their women to brainstorm on ways of ending genital mutilation of girls.

In Nairobi's burgeoning informal settlements that are teeming with thousands of unemployed and idle young people, crime and substance abuse presents them with a false sense of purpose. A number of community radio stations have been established in these settlements with the express objective of addressing these challenges with a hope of finding viable and sustainable solutions collectively as a community that is affected by the whole situation no matter from which angle one was to look at it. Hence there is Koch FM broadcasting from Korogocho in Nairobi, speaking to the residents of this populous informal settlement and working with them to tackle socio-economic challenges facing them.

A study by Chapman, Blench, Kranjac-Berisavljevic & Zakariah (2003) in Northern Ghana found that participatory communication techniques support agricultural extension efforts especially when using local languages and rural radio to communicate directly with farmers and listeners' groups. The same approach can be replicated beyond agriculture and onto different cultural, social, economic and political spheres of society. In the same region of Ghana, Al-Hassan, Andani, & Abdul-Malik (2011), studying a local community radio station's role in livelihood improvement observed that "Simli Radio has been used to improve awareness and knowledge of solutions to community development problems within various sectors including culture, rural development, education, hygiene and sanitation, agriculture and local governance

among rural people living in the Dagbani speaking districts in particular” (p. 3). These two findings demonstrate that harnessing community radio for developmental purposes pays a handsome dividend to both the recipients and promoters of whatever intervention; with the former experiencing improved living conditions while the latter fulfilling their developmental objectives.

The growth of community radio has not been without challenge. One of the biggest constraints to the development of community radio is sustainable funding. By virtue of its form, the overriding objective of community radio is not to make money but to focus on matters that are pertinent to the promotion of the wellbeing of the target communities. This limits the fundraising potential for the community radio in a number of ways; key among them is the narrow audience which is less attractive to commercial interests that carry the lucrative advertising purse. The long-term effect of inadequate funding would be that community radio stations stagnate as they would be unable to keep up with the financially prosperous purely commercial competing radio stations. They would likely lag behind in terms of adopting new technological advancements as well as holding onto the best human resource capital due to the stations’ limited financial resources.

Another threat to the development of community radio is competing political interests. Politicians realize the power of radio and would do whatever they can to ensure that they control the airwaves and therefore by extension the masses. Attempts by politicians have been made – with a degree of success – to take over community radio stations with the aim of influencing the editorial content in favour of their political schemes. Where such takeovers have failed, underhand actions have been taken to undermine the growth and sustainability of the targeted community radio stations. Such actions have included having rival stations set up with intent to out-compete and drive given community radio stations under.

## 2.8 Challenges Facing Community Radio Growth

In spite of the great potential that exists for community radio to contribute to the all-round development of the marginalized communities, the establishment and growth of this type of radio, particularly in the less developed countries, has not been without numerous challenges. These challenges include financial constraints, a tough and uneven operating environment dominated by popular commercial radio stations, insufficient community ownership and or participation, political interference, low technical and managerial skills coupled with high staff turn-over. Sharma (2011) discusses these challenges in detail, thus:

- A high turnover of staff that causes a lack of journalistic and technical skills and thus a consistent demand for training. Training on offer in most countries does not address the specific needs of Community Radio.
- Community Radio derives its strength and popularity from community participation. In practice participation is harder than it seems, because it is labour intensive, requires the right attitude, skills and mobile equipment.
- Without proper management skills, as well as some knowledge of financial management and income generation, it is very hard for Community Radio to survive without donor funding, which will always, eventually, dry up.
- Community Radio is by definition relatively small and often situated in locations where basic services, like a constant supply of electricity, are lacking. Due to these conditions equipment suffers and needs to be vigorously maintained and/or regularly replaced.
- In many countries there is still a lack of a clear regulatory framework in which Community Radio operates.

All these challenges work against the effectiveness of the community radio stations in delivering quality programme production in terms of content, quality, consistency and community involvement. Failure to address these challenges effectively and progressively would ultimately be injurious to the growth and sustainability of any community radio station, given that continued support and patronage from the listeners is invariably tied to the station providing quality programming and generally fulfilling the expectations of its audience to a great degree. Sharma (ibid) rightfully points out that no community radio can survive without the participation (and support) of the people it targets to broadcast to, given the importance of this aspect, and she even puts forward a threshold of 70% of the community participating actively in the affairs of the community radio station for it to be successful.

The establishment and growth of any community radio station is invariably tied to the thinking and decisions taken at the conception of the station by its promoters. Whose idea was it to start a community radio station? How was the location of the station chosen? Who would fund its setting up? What would be the governance and management structure of the radio station? Answers to these questions would point out to the long-term sustainability of the community radio station, a process that largely depends on the host community's ownership of the initiative and support for the radio station. Jallof (2011 in da Costa 2012) is convinced that the way a community is organized around the community radio together with how the community is involved in the production of programmes and all other aspects of the general running of the radio station contribute to or detract from the radio's sustainability. da Costa (2012) discusses a study by D. Conrad in 2011 whose findings indicate that the prevalence of top-down approaches to establishing certain stations; a lack of sufficient community ownership and leadership and funding constraints are some of the challenges to sustainability of community radio stations in Africa.

A deeper understanding of the concept of sustainability for community radio stations is offered by Gumucio-Dagron (2001), who identifies three dimensions of sustainability which determine the ability of community radio stations to survive and grow. Thus:

- i. *Social sustainability* - referring to community ownership of the station and participation in production and airing of programmes at both decision-making and operational levels. According to this definition, only communities that have ‘appropriated’ or ‘owned’ a communication process can make it socially sustainable.
- ii. *Institutional sustainability* – indicating the ways the broadcasters function: station policies, democratic processes, management styles, internal relationships and practices, and partnerships with external agencies.
- iii. *Financial sustainability* - relating to the station’s model for generating revenue and how its funds are managed and accounted for. All three are inter-related and impact upon each other

Jallov (2007) while furthering the same argument on sustainability of community radio differs slightly on the three elements: ‘*social sustainability*’ entailing the ownership of institutions, processes and ideas, development of local content, language as well as local culture and relevance; ‘*organizational sustainability*’ identifying adequate legislation and policies, internal democracy, training and participation, appropriate and democratic structures, management and supervisory bodies, appropriate technologies, and belonging to relevant networks; and ‘*financial sustainability*’ which deals with the development of realistic budgets, identifying local, national and international funding opportunities and determining the desired funding mix.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Research design sets out the plan of action for a research project and in the process helps the researcher to develop their research question(s), methodologies and the implementation procedure that includes data collection and analysis for the effective conduct of the research project. There are three broad research designs namely; quantitative design, qualitative design and mixed methods design. The research design that a researcher finally settles on is influenced by the problem under investigation and the questions that the research is seeking to answer, as well as the resources available to the researcher in terms of finances, time and qualified personnel. Also the characteristics of the subject of study and the researcher's personal preferences play a critical role in the decision on the research design to be adopted. Whichever the design is eventually decided upon, it has to find roots in grounded theory, meaning that the research methodology must have the capacity to test and strengthen existing theories by the end of the research undertaking.

#### **3.2 Qualitative Case Study Approach**

This case study was qualitative in orientation. The choice of the qualitative orientation was informed by the subject matter under investigation and the preferred approach of case study. Electing to study the place of community radio in rural development in Kenya; with specific

focus on Sauti FM based in Siaya County made qualitative research an attractive option. This afforded the researcher the opportunity to study the variables in their natural settings; employing a combination of observation, interviews, and document reviews without manipulating the study variables. Another attraction to the qualitative research orientation for the researcher was the fact that no firm hypothesis was a prerequisite to this study, and therefore circumventing the intricacies of reducing the complex study phenomenon into a few interdependent or independent variables. Instead, an inductive mode of enquiry was deployed; seeking to unearth the reality as it exists in the eyes of the respondents, culminating in the comprehensive and truthful description of the role of Sauti FM in the socio-economic and cultural development of the community in Rarieda.

A case study emphasizes a detailed contextual analysis of events or conditions and their relationships. The case study approach to sociological enquiry is driven by the desire of the researcher to get a deeper first-hand understanding of a given phenomenon. Yin (2004) asserts that the case study method draws its strength from its ability to examine a “case” in depth within its “real-life” context. In electing to use the case study approach to examine the place of Sauti FM – a community radio station – in the social, economic, cultural and political development of the community residing in Rarieda; Siaya County, the researcher had reached a determination that gaining an in-depth understanding of the impact of the community radio station on its target community was just as important as understanding the context in which Sauti FM is set. Yin (2004) emphasizes this when he argues that when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly manifest, then a case study would be a good research approach.

Furthermore, the case study method is particularly appropriate in describing or explaining a phenomenon – in essence responding to “what” and “how or why” questions in respect of happenings around the phenomenon under study. Consequently, depending on the objective of

the research, the case study could be exploratory, explanatory or descriptive. Whereas descriptive and exploratory study cases seek to answer the “what” research questions, the explanatory case study responds to “how” and “why” questions. Tellis (1997) observes that whereas exploratory case studies are often considered as a prelude to social research, descriptive cases may require the development of a descriptive theory first before embarking on the study itself. On their part, explanatory case studies may be (and have been) used to undertake causal investigations.

This case study was both explanatory and exploratory as it sought not only to explain the role of Sauti FM radio station in the socio-economic, cultural and political development of its target audience; but also to explore the true potential of the community radio station to impact the community in a positive and far-reaching manner; and if indeed this potential has been harnessed in the case of Sauti FM. As it were, the study sought to respond to the questions of why the station is doing what it is doing and how it does it. At the same time, the study examined what the station has done in fulfilling its mandate to the community and what can and remains to be done for and by the community as a result of Sauti FM broadcast programmes.

Often, case studies are selective and focus on a limited number of issues that are fundamental to unraveling the workings of the phenomenon under study or the relationship between or among the variables being investigated. Tellis (1997) argues that even though case study research is not sampling research, care must be taken when selecting the cases in order to maximize what can be learned in the period of time available for the study. In selecting Sauti FM, this study focused on establishing a causal relationship between the establishment and operations of the community radio and the socio-economic, cultural and political development of the audience community that is targeted by the station’s broadcast programming and content.

One of the key overriding motivations for any research undertaking is the replicability of the findings of the study. The validity and reliability of the findings of the case study are critical considerations in deciding on the chosen methodology and the tools to employ. Can the inferences arrived at in the given study be replicated in similar circumstances anywhere-else in a different geographical and or time setting? Is it possible to use the findings of this particular study to explain observations in another similar case elsewhere in space and time? The answer to this question directly addresses the generalizability of the findings of the study. Generalizability in broader terms refers to the transferability of the findings of a particular study and thus supporting their external validity. Generalizability of the findings of any study is therefore an important consideration in the design and conduct of the study.

There are arguments as to whether it is possible to generalize single-case study qualitative research findings, chiefly on the premise that such findings lack statistical legitimacy. However, it is important to draw a distinction between statistical generalizability and analytical generalizability; with the former applying in a quantitative research orientation while the latter is appropriate in qualitative research. The study was guided by the concept of analytic generalization by which, according to Yin (1994) previously developed theory is used as a guide to compare empirical results of the case study. As it were, analytic generalization uses theory to make predictions and then confirms those predictions (Yin; 1994:13). It is the logic that lends the predictions arrived at that would be replicated elsewhere in space and time under similar circumstances that would be the test of the external validity of the study findings.

### **3.3 Study Location**

The subject of this case study – Sauti FM radio station is based at Asembo Bay, on the shores of Lake Victoria, some 56 kilometres to the west of Kisumu city. Administratively and politically, Asembo Bay is in Rarieda constituency of Siaya County. The County's elevation is between 1,140 and 1,400 metres above sea level and occupies the lower midland agro-ecological zone. Siaya receives between 800 and 2000mm of rainfall annually with mean temperatures ranging between 15° – 30° C

The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics estimates that Siaya County had a population of 885,762 in 2012, with an average density of 354.6 persons per square kilometre. Approximately 65.3% of this population is aged below 25 years; meaning that the County is habited largely by a young population. At the other end of the spectrum, the county had only 47,433 individuals aged 65 years and above. This represents a mere 5.4% of the County's population; and that is directly attributed to a low life expectancy at birth of 38.3 and 43.6 years for male and female population respectively.

According to the Siaya County Development Profile (KNBS, 2013), the County suffers numerous challenges that have negatively impacted the socio-economic development of the county. These challenges include i.) Poor infrastructure with a majority of the roads in the county being unpaved making movement of people and goods from one point to another cumbersome particularly during the wet season; ii.) Low electricity connectivity. About 70% of the county does not have access to electricity, thus hindering any growth of small enterprises such as welding works that would need electricity to thrive; iii.) In spite of Siaya fronting the vast Lake Victoria, as well as two important rivers (Nzoia and Yala) traversing the county, a majority of the populace (57%) do not have access to clean potable drinking water; with only 5.9% of the

households in the county having piped water; iv.) Food insecurity that leaves a majority of the population at great risk of famine. The food produced in the county can only feed the residents for nine months in a good season; implying that the county has to depend on food imported from the neighbouring regions. This challenge is attributed mainly to poor crop husbandry, low acreage under food crops, poor post-harvest handling of produce among others; v.) High prevalence of HIV/AIDS, which at 19.1%<sup>4</sup> - against a national average rate of 6.2% - puts Siaya among the five most affected Counties by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This is a major hindrance to socio-economic development as it has affected labour productivity, draining meagre household resources towards management of the infected members of the community, while leading to a high incidence of orphaned and vulnerable children in the County; vi.) High levels of poverty affecting about 47.5% of the population in the county, making them extremely vulnerable to many adverse situations such as inflation and natural calamities; vii.) Unemployment particularly among the youth who constitute a large proportion of the county's population. This not only contributes to a high dependency ratio, but also to numerous anti-social practices such as commercial sex work, petty crime, substance abuse among others; viii.) Gender inequality that favours the male members of the county despite the fact that the female population is more than that of the male in Siaya County. For instance, women provide 65% of the labour in agricultural production in the county, yet they own less than 1% of the land. These gender-based disparities are as a result of a patriarchal cultural orientation and structure that vests socio-economic and political power and control in the older male members of the local community.

The challenges discussed above are among many others that need to be tackled collectively by the county's residents in concert with both the national and county governments as well as all

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<sup>4</sup> Siaya County Development Profile 2013

stakeholders including interested development partners in order to improve the livelihoods and the overall wellbeing of the residents of Rarieda and Siaya County in general.

### **3.4 Sampling**

The sampling frame for the respondents in the focus group discussions consisted of regular listeners of Sauti FM. This was provided by the radio station, which has a data base of its regular listeners generated from numerous sources including listener clubs associated with the radio station as well as membership of common interest groups which have grown out of the listener clubs. The respondents to participate in the focus group discussions were then randomly picked from three clusters of older men, women and youth (18 - 35 years). For key informant interviews, a list of potential respondents was drawn beforehand and those listed interviewed either face to face or a questionnaire sent for them to fill and return.

### **3.5 Data Collection**

A good case study seldom relies on a single source of data. Rather multiple sources are employed so as to ensure that the data collected is sufficiently rich, contextual and corroborative as to address the research questions and support the analysis and findings of the study. Also, multiple sources of data help to address concerns about validity, reliability and generalizability of the study's findings. In this study, data was collected from multiple sources, thus; secondary sources in form of documents and findings of previous similar studies as well as information that was relevant to the subject and location of the study, fieldwork through interviews (key

informants, select listeners, and local opinion leaders), focus group discussions and direct observation.

### ***3.5.1 Key Informant Interviews***

Key informants are people who have firsthand information and knowledge of a particular topic or programme and may be approached to share this information or knowledge for purposes of study or intervention planning. In this study the key informants were people who are well versed with the goings on in Rarieda, Siaya County – long-term residents, community leaders, local professionals and government officers among others. Their knowledge and understanding of the local development scenario and dynamics provided insightful contributions to this study. In-depth interviews with these key informants yielded invaluable qualitative information about the socio-economic impact of Sauti FM on the community resident in Rarieda. Semi-structured questionnaires were designed and administered in face-to-face as well as via the internet with the identified key informant respondents. Six key informants were interviewed.

Select key informants were also identified from outside Rarieda in order to gain better understanding of the development of the community radio broadcasting model in Kenya. The Kenya Community Media Network (KCOMMNET), the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Community Media Support (CMS) were among the organizations which provided key information relating to the place and status of community radio broadcasting in Kenya. Also, two individuals who have been involved in the setting up and management of community radio stations in the East Africa region were interviewed.



### ***3.5.2 Focus Group Discussions***

A focus group discussion brings together an assemblage of individuals - usually six to eight - for a more or less open-ended discussion about an issue they have experience or knowledge about. Focus group discussions provide a subjective, yet deeper perception by the respondents on the matter under study thereby affording the researcher a better and broader understanding of the subject of study. The composition of each group should be as homogenous as possible in terms of age, gender, and vocation to ensure congruence of the discussions within the group. Group dynamics tend to become inhibited in mixed-gender or age focus groups and as a result, the discussions on particular topics may fail to explore the subject matter in greater depth and reveal more insightful information.

In this study on Sauti FM, three distinct groups were identified for focus group discussions. Thus, there was a group composed of older men, older women and the youth (18 - 35 years). The respondents who formed the focus group discussions were selected from a list of regular listeners of Sauti FM, most of who have formed into common interest groups. The older men's group consisted of six respondents, the older women had seven and the youth nine respondents. The segregation of the three groups was meant to provide an amiable atmosphere for members of each group to freely express themselves devoid of the cultural inhibitions that were likely to influence discussions had the three groups been lumped together. Also, by engaging each group separately, the researcher was able to discern unique attributes of each group's relationship with Sauti FM and their perceptions of the community radio's role in the social, cultural, economic and political development of their community.

A focus group discussion guide was drawn for use in moderating the discussions with the selected groups. The discussion guide sought to bring out each group's opinions on and insights into the role that Sauti FM played in their daily lives both as individuals and community of

Rarieda residents at large. Also, the focus group discussion guide helped to elicit the respondents' perception of the challenges faced by Sauti FM and how best they thought the identified challenges could be addressed in order to enhance and better harness the role and mandate of the radio station in service to their community.

### ***3.5.3 Direct Observation***

Direct observation as a tool of data collection entails the researcher observing the objects of study in a non-obtrusive non-participatory manner. Direct observation is a critical element of qualitative research in that it offers an opportunity for the researcher to capture the unexpected, unusual or unspoken pieces of information - things that respondents may not wish to reveal in interviews, or may have not been asked about, or may not have thought of mentioning. Such observation accentuates the researcher's contextual understanding of the subject matter under study while serving to cross-check information already gathered through other means and thus identifying possible differences between what really is happening against what respondents may have indicated as happening. The meaning and significance of the differences so identified would enrich the findings of the study.

Additionally, direct observation helps the researcher assess the quality of the relationship between the subject of study and the recipients of the intervention. Nuances observed in these interactions would point to the importance which the actors attach to the relationship and hence help the researcher to better understand and explain particular aspects of the study. In this particular study, it was important to observe how the audience/listeners of Sauti FM interacted with the radio station and its members of staff and vice versa.

### **3.5.4 Secondary Sources**

Secondary sources are documents containing information or recordings that were generated and used elsewhere or for a different purpose. The information would have to be of relevance to the study underway for it to be valuable. In this case, secondary sources may include published and or recorded information on the operations and effects of community radio in Rarieda - the geographical location served by Sauti FM or community radio stations in similar circumstances in different locations and time. The use of secondary data stems from the fact that some of that data, even though relevant and useful to the understanding of the phenomenon under study, may not be recreated at the time of the study because of the changed circumstances. Furthermore, the appropriate use of secondary saves time and other resources for the researcher. From a different perspective, secondary data form the basis of expanding knowledge on the given subject since it opens up opportunities for further research to address identified disputes and or gaps. The use of secondary data must be applied cautiously with the researcher being encouraged to question the reliability and validity of all secondary data that would be admitted in their study.

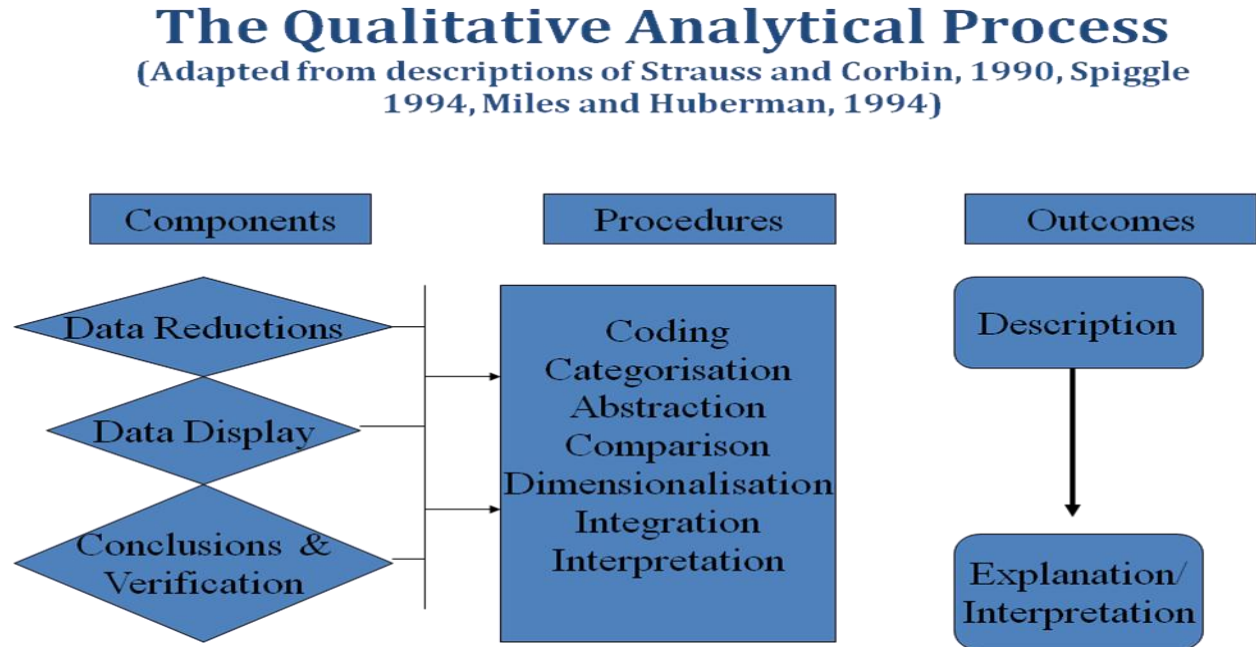
This study examined documents including the Siaya County Development Profile that contained information on a variety of subjects such as demography, socio-economic development, HIV/AIDS, the geography of Siaya County among others. The information from these sources was important for the contextual setting and understanding of the subject of this case study.

## **3.6 Data Analysis**

Data analysis seeks to make information collected from the field and other sources manageable and in the process making the identification of commonalities, contrasts and comparisons of the different pieces of information possible. The essence of data analysis is to identify relationships -

and the nature thereof - between and among the variables being investigated; setting the stage for interpretation of the identified relationships.

Figure 4: Qualitative Analysis Process



Marshall and Rossman (1990:111) argue that data analysis brings order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data; and that qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data. Yin (1994a, 1994b, 1997, and 1999) highlights four critical principles of social science data analysis. First, the analysis should attend to all the evidence, exhaustively covering all the key research questions. Second, the analysis should address, if possible, all major rival interpretations. Third, the analysis should address the most significant aspect(s) of the case study, which aspect(s) would have been defined at the start of the study. This would help in ensuring minimum deviation from the focal point of the study. Fourth, the researcher should use their own prior, expert knowledge on the case study in order to demonstrate their awareness of current thinking and discourse about the case study topic.

Efforts were made to avoid treating each source of data independently; in isolation of the all other sources. Rather, data were congregated with a view to understanding the broad scenario relating to the case study; with the research questions acting as the guiding beacons. Data collected were coded, categorised and compared in preparation for analysis and interpretation. The process of analysis was geared towards identifying patterns, commonalities and differences as well as relationships between and among various sets of information. Ultimately, that would explain the contribution (or otherwise) of Sauti FM to the socio-economic development of its listening audience/community. By and large, the analysis adopted the explanation building approach which examines the dependent variables and assigns causal attributes with a view to disapproving any plausible rival explanations. The objective was to analyze the case study data and proceed to build an explanation about the case. This procedure was preferred because it is quite appropriate to explanatory case studies, which approach this study adopted. Through explanation building, this study sought to identify a supposed set of causal links between the social, economic, cultural and political developments in Rarieda and the operations of Sauti FM, focusing on how and or why that happened.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4.0 DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This study set out with the following specific objectives:

- i. Examine how Sauti FM - a community radio - is being harnessed for rural development in Rarieda, Siaya County
- i. Document the social, economic and political impacts of Sauti FM's radio broadcasts on the community in its catchment area
- ii. Identify any challenges constraining the growth and sustainability of community radio broadcasting

After visiting Sauti FM radio's principal catchment area and talking to a cross-section of the target audience as well as interviewing a number of key informants in the community broadcasting arena, following here below are the findings as they relate to the stated objectives.

#### **4.2 Harnessing Sauti FM for Rural Development**

As Girard (2007) and Jordan (2006) argue, community radio should be part of the communication processes that contributes to social change facilitating inclusion, participation, and empowerment. This process should culminate in good governance and accountability, democratization, poverty reduction, achieving development goals, cultural diversity and peace

building in local communities. Sauti FM, like any other typical community radio station is driven by these ideals and works towards realizing the expectations that go with them. Through a variety of programming formats, Sauti FM is now favourably considered by its listeners as a platform for educating and empowering the people of Rarieda. To quote one respondent, who is a local businessman:

*“We have been in darkness for a long time, until this radio station came here. We have been educated by it and learnt a lot of things relating to agriculture, health, education and many others. The radio station has mobilized people here to form groups and start to spearhead their own development. We are truly being empowered”*

This simple yet powerful statement aptly captures the place of Sauti FM in the hearts of its listeners and the importance that the radio station holds for the people of Rarieda. The implications for the socio-cultural, economic and political development of the radio station’s catchment area are therefore quite enormous and far reaching if the transformational potential of Sauti FM is fully and effectively harnessed. As evidenced by the above statement by a listener of the radio station, the local population has started to appreciate the critical importance of Sauti FM in informing and educating them on a wide range of issues that directly affect their livelihoods and general welfare. That in itself is a good sign of the impact that the radio station has started to create on the lives of its listeners.

#### **4.2.1 Overcoming the Language Barrier**

People communicate best and most effectively in their first language. Taking this into consideration, community radio stations are expected to embrace and largely broadcast in a language that is spoken by a majority of those within its reach. This requirement assumes an even greater importance if a considerable size of the target audience is illiterate in so far as

secondary languages are concerned. Sauti FM was the first (and at the time of this study remained the only) radio station of any kind to set up base in Siaya County and therefore broadcasts primarily in the Dholuo language that is spoken by a majority of the residents of Rarieda and indeed the wider Siaya County. Prior to the establishment of this radio station at Asembo Bay in Rarieda in the year 2010, the local population - a majority of who speak the Dholuo language – only remotely interacted with several radio stations, some of whom broadcast in Dholuo. For instance, even though the national broadcaster the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) had been running vernacular language broadcasts that included Dholuo, these were never broadcast throughout the day, but had specific time allocations each day as the daily air time was shared among the different language audiences. Therefore, KBC's Western regional broadcasting station at Kisumu would broadcast to at least eight (Dholuo, Luhya, Kisii, Kalenjin, Teso, Kuria, Turkana, Suba) language audiences in a day, all sharing time on one frequency. On an average 16-hour day, this would translate into each language audience being allocated not more than 2 hours every day.

In the recent past, however, there has been a significant growth in the number of FM radio stations broadcasting in vernacular languages and Dholuo is not an exception. At the time of this study, there were not less than six stations broadcasting mainly in Dholuo language. For a population that is not highly educated, their first language becomes a critical channel of communication. Consequently, a radio station that uses that first language as a platform to engage the target audience is most likely to be highly regarded and listened to. Sauti FM fits this description without exception and it was quite apparent from the researcher's interaction with the various groups of listeners - and specifically all the respondents - that they appreciate and support the establishment of this radio station within their midst. According to the management of Sauti FM, the station broadcasts 80% of its airtime and content in the local Dholuo language,



15% in Kiswahili and the balance of 5% in English, both of which are official national languages.

One of the greatest attractions that was repeatedly cited by the different categories of listeners of Sauti FM is the use of the native language – Dholuo – as the language of delivering its broadcast messages.

*“For the older people who do not understand Kiswahili or English and therefore cannot access information via newspapers, national radio/television, internet and social media such as facebook, Radio Hundhwe (i.e. Sauti FM) is the station they are now able to listen to since it speaks their mother-tongue”*

This being the first language of almost all the listeners of Sauti FM means that the communication between the radio station and its audience is easy and pretty straight forward. The listeners need little or no interpretation at all of the content and messages broadcast by Sauti FM, thus making this radio station an important tool for communicating a wide range of information for whatever purpose – be it educational, developmental, informational, or entertainment. Quite interestingly, even the youthful listeners of the radio station vouched for the use of the local vernacular language as one of the factors that attracted them to Sauti FM. This is contrary to expectations that the youth would be attracted to the non-vernacular commercial FM stations that thrive on swanky up-market programming dominated by the latest music genres and social gossip. Whereas the youth indicated that they interacted with the other forms of mass communication namely newspapers, television, newspapers and social media, ultimately, they usually fell back to Sauti FM as their most favoured source on information. To use their own words:

*“Even though we have access the internet, the language and the content (on that platform) are very wide. We like our own (Sauti) FM station because of its language and content that is local and therefore relevant and easily understood”*

Implicit in this statement by the youthful listeners of Sauti FM is that even though they have access to information from diverse sources via various platforms, it is Sauti FM they value most not only because the radio station speaks to them in a language they understand best, but also the content is relevant to their circumstances. This view point is critical to the positioning of Sauti FM as a catalyst and driver of - among other things – attitude and behaviour change within the targeted community. Among the programmes that are popular with the youth on Sauti FM include “*Dok Pacho*” an evening wind-down programme as well as “*Chuo Suka*” – an interactive discussion programme that invites the audience to share their work/job-related experiences with their fellow listeners. In the process, a cross-section of the community is able to pick up vital information on work/business dynamics and that improve their respective engagements.

#### ***4.2.2 Close Identification with the Community***

The key difference between Sauti FM and these other stations broadcasting in Dholuo language is the orientation. All these stations are purely commercial entities, driven by the profiteering motive. Sauti FM on the other hand, being a community radio station, focuses on public good broadcasting. The other notable difference is the location of these stations. Whereas Sauti FM is based in a largely rural area, the other stations are based in either Kisumu or Nairobi cities, perhaps a testimony of where their heart really belongs. Wits Justice Project (2013) agrees with this argument when it states that an integral part of community radio’s appeal (.....) – both in terms of access and information-sharing – is how (the) community radio is designed to be rooted and located. Community radio can be said to “enjoy a unique intimacy with its owners and

audience... (and) gives listeners a sense of community and identity”. A respected member of the community in Rarieda who is a retired high school teacher was very categorical on his take on the importance of Sauti FM to the local community. He said:

*“It would be very disappointing if this radio station were to be removed from here. The station has created a class (read group) of people who never used to listen to radio. But now that we have Hundhwe (i.e. Sauti FM) broadcasting in their first language and right here within their vicinity, it has become very popular”*

The group of new radio listeners mentioned by the respondent happens to be women and the illiterate who may have felt excluded from the radio stations using either Kiswahili or English as their broadcast language. The setting up of Sauti FM within their locality coupled with its use of the local Dholuo language in its broadcasts has attracted this previously marginalized section of the community. By doing this, Sauti FM has been able to bring into the communication fold a sizeable proportion of the local population that was for a long time excluded by virtue of the language of communication used by the national and several other broadcasters. The local county government and other socio-economic development actors should take advantage of this development to communicate their agenda more widely to the population.

By setting up in the rural area, Sauti FM has been able to identify closely with the ebb and flow of the lives of the local population, thereby gradually becoming part and parcel of the daily lives of the people of Rarieda and the larger Siaya County. A quote that was often repeated by many respondents was:

*“The news stories and features aired by Sauti FM are very real to us since they are things that we are able to see or hear around us and therefore we easily identify with them and the radio station. This is unlike news and stories from far off areas”.*

This assertion by the listeners of Sauti FM is important in that they - i.e. the listeners - have confidence in the veracity and relevance of the information that they receive from the radio station. The radio station, and by extension any other party interested in communicating information aimed at achieving specific developmental objectives can and should take advantage of this apparent goodwill amongst the targeted listeners to push the appropriate agenda through Sauti FM. The listeners have grown to accept and embrace Sauti FM as their own radio, given that they know the radio personalities in person and they get to visit the radio station when they want to. For old women of Rarieda who previously did not have much interest in listening to radio, their interest has been kindled particularly because of the relevance of the broadcast content they receive from Sauti FM and also due to the strength of the broadcast signal that makes reception of the station's broadcasts very clear.

Sauti FM has helped many people in Rarieda demystify radio broadcasting in the sense that previously, there were those who never believed that the voices they heard on radio were of real people or if some of the news stories they heard on distant radio stations were true. That was until they interacted face to face with radio journalists from Sauti FM, many of whom are in fact their own kin or contemporaries.

*“Since Hundhwe (i.e. Sauti FM) started in our midst, we love talk shows because we can hear our own voices and those of our friends as we discuss many things on this radio concerning our community”*

When the listeners hear their voices and those of their close associates on radio, they are able to appreciate the power of radio as a medium, not only of communication, but as a platform on which they can voice their concerns in addition to sharing their views with a wider audience. This development is in keeping with the true meaning spirit of community radio as envisaged by UNESCO (Tabing & UNESCO; 2002). In this handbook on community radio, the authors

suggest that radio is demystified for the rural people by taking programme production to the rural areas and inviting the peasants, rural women and the unschooled people to participate in programme making. And by training these rural folk in the rudiments of broadcasting at neighborhood and village level production workshops, many forms of cultural programs and village activities may be adopted and accommodated in radio programming.

Another aspect of the demystification of radio is that the news that the listeners get from Sauti FM is so real that the listeners are able to easily identify with it, unlike national radio whose news are mainly of far removed areas or if any news close to their home were ever featured, they would be of incidents that would have happened long after they were reported on. To drive the point home, one respondent retorted:

*“When Radio X (a direct competitor) purports to bring me what they consider to be news from Rarieda at mid-day, Hundhwe (i.e. Sauti FM) would already have informed me of the very happening much earlier on in the day”*

The proximity of Sauti FM to its primary audience means that the station is able to report on local news and happenings in near real time. This timeliness of the news delivery contrasts sharply with the other radio stations which by virtue of their far removal from Rarieda would take longer to report on happenings in this area, if at all. An example was given of breaking news of a man who had raped and murdered his victim and then buried her in his house within Siaya County, not so far away from the location of the radio station. As this was being reported, a lot of the listeners trooped to the scene of the crime to see for themselves the bizarre happening. Such is the galvanizing power of (community) radio. The same story was carried on other radio stations and television screens several days later. Sauti FM has become a reliable source of relevant news and features that resonate well with the residents of Rarieda.

The economics of accessing information from other sources such as newspapers and television were also discussed, with the respondents acknowledging that it was cheaper for most of them to access information via radio than daily newspapers and television. At the time of this study, a daily newspaper cost Ksh. 60.00, the same cost of dry cells that would power a radio receiver for almost a week. Television sets on the other hand would require availability of electric power which is not readily accessible by most rural populations.

#### **4.2.3 A Cultural Mirror**

Sauti FM was commended for providing a podium for the residents of Rarieda to examine and evaluate their culture in view of the rapid and ever-changing lifestyles. The station has a late night show dubbed “cultural talk” which is quite popular. Cultural talk is an interactive programme on which the listeners call in or send short text messages offering their opinion on topical issues under discussion. The respondents had the following to say:

*“The cultural talk is very important to us and we look forward to it always. It does not matter that it is broadcast late at night. We all listen and even call in to make our contribution when the programme is on air”*

It is a demonstration of the importance that these listeners attach to their cultural development that they are very keen to listen to discussions concerning the changes occurring in their culture and the factors that pose threats to this very culture. The objective of the talk show is to rally the community to isolate these threats to the community’s moral fabric and seek collective solutions to the identified threats. The show tackles a wide range of issues that include highlighting some of the culturally repugnant practices that have crept into the community for instance at the fish landing beaches where commercial sex work has taken root. By giving prominence to long-held yet retrogressive cultural beliefs and practices, Sauti FM acts as a mirror through which the

listeners are able to examine where they stand culturally against a world that has become essentially a global village. In the process, the listeners appreciate the role that the radio station is playing in promoting the cultural development of their community.

Cultural beliefs that are deemed to have been overtaken by present day circumstances such as widow inheritance viewed against the background of incurable communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS are often the focus of interactive programmes broadcast by Sauti FM. The significance of this particular topic can be appreciated when juxtaposed against the quite high prevalence of HIV/AIDS infection amongst the residents of Siaya County – at 23.7% - compared to the national average prevalence rate of 6.0% (NASCO, 2014). Widow inheritance alongside a common practice at the fish landing beaches along Lake Victoria where female fishmongers (whether married or not) are compelled to offer their bodies to the fishermen in exchange for the fish catch, are some of the practices that are frequently cited as contributing significantly to the spread of HIV/AIDS pandemic around the lake region.

#### ***4.2.4 Community Mobilization***

Mobilization is a critical factor in development and it entails bringing together and deploying a whole lot of resources that include the human resource. In Rarieda, Sauti FM has become a critical catalyst for mobilizing the community for common action. Networks have been created of people who previously did not have acquaintance with one another, culminating in formation and formal registration of at least 13 common interest groups made up largely of people who had come together primarily as listeners of Sauti FM. Also, through the radio station, members of these groups have been able to mobilize resources to support any of their own in times of either bereavement or any other urgent need. In such circumstances, listeners have been able to raise

funds and/or offer other material support to the listener in need using the Sauti FM network. This is what the respondents had to say:

*“When one of us is hospitalized, bereaved, or in any kind of need such as school fees for a child, we quickly come together and give them whatever support we can pool for their benefit”.*

Here, the radio station is seen as playing the role of fostering fraternity and good neighbourliness amongst its listeners. In essence, the listeners are in a way being encouraged to be one another’s keeper. This enhances cohesion and harmony in the community making it possible for the people to generally present a united front when confronting communal issues. And it is not only in matters of emergency that Sauti FM has been used by members of the community, but also in matters relating to socio-economic development. In the words of one respondent;

*“Hundhwe (the local name for the radio station) has helped members of this community come together and initiate development programmes. Also, when I have a problem, I talk about it on radio and my friends come to my aid”*

It is apparent that Sauti FM has acted like a magnet that attracted different groups of people to come together and in the process, start income generating activities that have started to impact their livelihoods positively. This mobilization of rural populations for socio-economic action is happening at the time the national government has set up financial vehicles to disburse funds to support the economic empowerment of women and youth across the country. There is the Youth Enterprise Fund, the Women Enterprise Fund and the Uwezo Fund all of which have cheap credit that is designed to be disbursed to women and youth by leveraging on formation of common interest groups. These groups borne out of listening to Sauti FM could benefit right away from any of these Funds. The potential spin-off effect from the formation of common interest groups is enormous given that they share their experiences and success in mobilizing



resources to support one another during their regular interaction with the radio station and the entire audience.

Other instances where the radio station has played the mobilization role were cited as when a local public primary school was on the verge of being closed down due to wrangles between parents on the one side and the teachers and management of the school on the other. By highlighting the matter and bringing to the fore the underlying issues, Sauti FM was instrumental in bringing together the warring parties to discuss and find a common ground to resolve the conflict and move the school forward.

#### ***4.2.5 Civic Education***

One fundamental tenet of democracy is the unfettered enjoyment of certain basic human and civil rights by the masses individually and collectively as the case may be. Most of these rights have been enshrined in the national constitutions and laws of countries all over the world. However, due to a number of factors, a considerable proportion of the citizens of these countries may not be aware of their human and civil rights, and that such rights are inalienable. It becomes critical therefore for the masses to be educated and made aware of these rights and how best they should exercise their enjoyment without infringing on the rights of their fellow citizens and human beings in general.

The promulgation of a new constitution by Kenya in 2010 and the subsequent general elections in March 2013 were monumental events in the history of the country. The masses needed to be constantly informed about these happenings and the implications for all citizens and any other stakeholders. Sauti FM was evidently involved in this process. Respondents vouched for the radio station as having educated them particularly in the run up to the general elections in March 2013. According to a number of respondents:

*“Radio Hundhwe was very helpful during the last general elections (i.e. March, 2013). The station talked to those offering themselves for election at various levels such as Ward Representative, Member of Parliament, Senator, Woman Representative and Governor. This enlightened the listeners and informed their decisions on election day”*

Political representation is a critical component of democracy. Getting the right representative on the political arena is therefore important and the decision on who should be this representative must be well informed. The active participation of Sauti FM in civic education was vital given that the March 2013 general elections were the first to usher in a completely new political and governance dispensation in Kenya; with two levels of government i.e. the national government and county governments. All at once, Kenyan voters were expected to choose their leaders in six separate positions, namely: President, County Governor, Senator, Member of National Assembly, County Woman Member of the National Assembly and the Ward Member of the County Assembly. With a vibrant political landscape teeming with numerous political parties and politicians, the masses needed a platform to try and understand what each political party or grouping stood for and who was offering to do this or that. More importantly, as the new governance system settled in, the radio station has been informing its audience of the process and highlighting the challenges and “missteps” taken by the various institutions at the different levels. In this way the realities of the devolved system of governance has been appreciated better.

#### **4.2.6 Networking Platform**

Sauti FM has become a notice board of sorts for its listeners. If it is not the listeners informing one another about planned events and effectively sending out invitations to attend the said events, it would be information circulating about this one or the other listener having been bereaved or blessed with a baby. Or it could be that there is an upcoming wedding involving so

and so and that would they send their support to a given person and would they meet at a designated point to plan and go to the event together and much more. Many respondents revealed that even though they had never met physically with many of the people they communicated with on Sauti FM, they still considered them friends and valued them as such. This is what they had to say:

*“We have become such a close-knit network of listeners that most of us relate much like we were long-time friends when in fact some of us have not even met face to face. We only know one another through Hundhwe”*

Sauti FM has generated a socializing platform just as happens on social media networks such as facebook and twitter. Some have likened community radio to a common people’s facebook and it is easy to understand why this comparison is made especially in observing the networking and communication going back and forth on Sauti FM. Some of the respondents confessed that they felt they were losing a lot whenever they were away from home in an area that was not reached by the Sauti FM. Indeed, one lady respondent confessed thus:

*“I usually really miss my radio listener friends when I am away and always look forward to coming back to catch up”.*

The implication of this confession by the listener is that through Sauti FM, the community has created very strong bonds of fraternity and belonging amongst its members. This situation is an important factor in the success of particular rural development initiatives that require a high degree of harmony and unity in the community. But it is not only socializing that is going on at Sauti FM radio. A great many of the listeners have taken the platform afforded by Sauti FM to cleverly promote their commercial enterprises by adding unique words to their names as a way of identifying and branding their line of business or occupation; thus a caller would identify herself as Betty “Jaduka” implying Betty the shopkeeper. In due course, Betty “Jaduka”

becomes a household name within the listenership of the radio station and her business gets patronized by her fellow listeners thereby boosting her business. One lady, who is a dressmaker, confessed that her enterprise was on an upward trajectory as a result of the network and patronage support she has received from her fellow Sauti FM listeners. In her own words:

*“I go by the fun name ‘Fundi Tosha’ amongst my radio listening friends. The name means the ultimate dressmaker and because of the popularity of that name, a lot of people call me and place orders for different kinds of clothes they want me to make for them”*

‘Fundi Tosha’ has in essence become the dressmaker for the members of her listener club and many other listeners and their extended network of friends. Sauti FM has created an opportunity for its listeners engaged in complementary businesses or occupations have had opportunity to link up and cement transactions away from the airwaves after being brought into contact over the very airwaves of Sauti FM.

#### ***4.2.7 Crusading for a Moral Society***

Moral uprightness is a tenet that is highly coveted in all societies. It is, as it were, the fibre that holds the society firmly together. Observance and adherence to certain cultural and religious practices as collectively ascribed by the community is an integral part of a people’s way of life. Spiritual teachings as well as cultural ceremonies and rituals are among the ways of motivating members of a community to uphold morality within their community and Sauti FM has provided a platform for the religious leaders in Rarieda to engage their listeners by providing broadcast airtime. A local religious leader who has been given airtime to preach on the station every week was very upbeat about Sauti FM. He says:

*“Sauti FM has been very helpful in highlighting anti-social and immoral activities that may be going on in our neighbourhood. In the process, we religious leaders are given pointers on what to pray and teach about in our churches and other gatherings”*

This respondent acknowledges the role played by Sauti FM in bringing to light anti-social and immoral behaviour within the community and in the process triggering the necessary response from the religious organizations and other custodians of communal moral probity. Besides religious programmes, there are cultural discussion and talk shows that focus on moral values of the local community – establishing the long-held moral practices by the local community and their core functions; identifying the changes that have been brought about by modernity; and pointing out the threats posed to the social fabric if an effective balance is not established between maintenance of the core societal moral values and the inevitability of embracing modernity. In fact, one of the most followed programmes at Sauti FM is the cultural talk show that goes on air late at night until early in the morning. When the station attempted to get it off air, the listeners protested vigorously and petitioned for its reinstatement; an indication of the acceptability, appropriateness and popularity of the content carried on the said programme. On another front, the radio station has been active in spearheading a campaign against commercial sex work and other forms of anti-social behaviour such as substance abuse along the fish landing beaches in Rarieda and Siaya County in general.

#### ***4.2.8 Promotion of Local Talent***

Sauti FM has given talented local young people a platform to express their gifting. Budding musicians are invited to submit their work to the station in order to be given play time on air and thus get introduced to their potential market. A member of Sauti FM’s management Board says:

*“When an unknown young and budding local musician brings in their work and we play it on the radio station, there is usually a lot of excitement because the musician would be known to most of the listeners and that gives them a lot of recognition. In fact some have requested the radio station to consider setting up a recording studio”*

The radio station is not only giving prominence to upcoming artistes, but also encouraging those with similar talents to come out and exercise their gifting(s). Such young and budding talents may find it difficult to make their way to the cities and larger urban centres where there is a concentration of the production and marketing facilities. Also, local young people – either those who are studying journalism or those with an interest in broadcast journalism – have been given opportunities for internship or apprenticeship at Sauti FM; thereby expanding their knowledge and sharpening their skills in the field of mass communication. Further, young volunteers from within the catchment of Sauti FM have been engaged by the station to help in various areas such as outreach to the listeners through the sale of greeting cards, news gathering and correspondence and even working at the studios.

#### ***4.2.9 Dress Window to the External World***

The community being served by Sauti FM has come to consider the radio station as a dress window for the external world to get to know about it. Notwithstanding the irony that the external world would be excluded from the conversations on the radio due to language barrier, the listeners in Rarieda are convinced that the establishment of Sauti FM radio will draw attention towards the community, given the fundamental object of the radio station. The researcher was told:

*“You have visited us today, not because you know any of us. We believe it is this radio (i.e. Sauti FM) that has brought you to Rarieda. We are sure that this radio station will make our area known to the wider world”*

Indeed the respondents’ conviction is not misplaced because the station has been able to gain support from a number of both national and international organizations through a number of collaborations and or partnerships. These are borne out of the appreciation that the radio station has the potential to positively impact the socio-economic circumstances of the listening community. The researcher saw the contribution from The American Institutes for Research, which received funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and implemented a project known as Farmer Voice Radio in partnership with Sauti FM. This project supported equip the radio station’s studios and transmission facilities while at the same time training the station’s staff in production and packaging of relevant and near real-time agricultural programmes for radio listeners. Other organizations that have worked closely (some on a continuing basis) with Sauti FM include the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Community Media Support (CMS).

### **4.3 Social, Cultural, Economic and Political Impacts of Sauti FM**

The establishment of Sauti FM in Rarieda was deliberately premised on the belief that the community radio station would play an important role in positively impacting the social, cultural, economic and political circumstances of the local community. A realistic evaluation of the long-term impacts of the radio station against these factors would require a reasonable time lapse that would allow for the appropriate attribution of the observed changes to the intervention of the radio station’s broadcast programmes. This assertion lends credence to the findings of a global

assessment of the social impacts of community radio undertaken by AMARC in 2007. It found that time was a key factor when measuring community radio social impact. Thus the longer the period the more easily it is to measure the social impact of community radio. At the time of this study, Sauti FM had been in existence for about three years; a time that may be too short to be able to produce far-reaching and measurable impacts on identifiable aspects in the targeted community. This study therefore, was keen to identify evidence of foundations of change that would ultimately lead to long-lasting impacts. Analysis of the sentiments expressed by the respondents in this study reveals that even though these are still early days, the establishment of Sauti FM has led to a number of fundamental changes that bode well for the social, cultural, economic and political wellbeing of the listeners in Rarieda.

#### ***4.3.1 Cultural Repository***

On strength of using the vernacular language i.e. Dholuo, Sauti FM has become an attractive and reliable source of education, information and entertainment for the residents of Rarieda – both young and old. But the importance of the radio station goes beyond those three aspects. The use of the indigenous vernacular language is in itself a positive thing culturally since it goes a long way in promoting and expanding the use of the language particularly among the youth who may easily be drawn to secondary languages such as English and Kiswahili at the expense of their own mother tongue. In this context then, Sauti FM is playing the role of a guardian and cultural repository of the language and culture of the people of Rarieda. It is instructive to note that even the young respondents – in their early 20s - who were interviewed for this study were very proud of Sauti FM and its use of Dholuo language. A number of them insisted on speaking their mother tongue during the focus group discussions; an indication of their pride in their first language and the fact that it is the language of communication on Sauti FM. Talented young artistes have



found a partner in Sauti FM as the station gives them a platform to exhibit their talent by giving their music prominent airtime on the radio even as they promote the indigenous culture through their songs and presentations.

#### ***4.3.2 Drive towards Behavioural Change***

Sauti FM has deliberately developed programmes that focus on various themes that affect the daily lives of the listening audience. Educative programmes highlight issues of health, education, agriculture, environment and entrepreneurship among others. Health takes up a prominent place in conversation forums in Rarieda particularly in relation to the high incidences of HVI/AIDS and malaria in the area. Radio programmes highlighting cultural practices and lifestyles that may predispose the listeners to HIV infection are discussed regularly as are mitigating measures to combat the continued spread of the pandemic. Listeners are advised to take heed lest they become part of the unpleasant statistics surrounding HIV/AIDS in the region. Cultural practices such as widow “cleansing” – whereby a woman who has lost her husband to death; no matter the cause of the death; has to undergo a culturally prescribed cleansing process often through sexual liaison with a “*jater*” who may be her late husband’s clan mate or any other man for that matter – has been widely blamed for accelerating the spread of the HIV/AIDS infections among the communities that practice this tradition. Without this cleansing activity being undertaken, the widow’s social life practically comes to a standstill since no collective communal activity, ceremony of any sort or any major undertaking can be done for her and her children. In effect, the bereaved family stands isolated from the mainstream community activities and gatherings as long as the widow cleansing activity has not been undertaken. Such ostracization exerts a high emotional, social and economic price on the concerned widow and her children; a price she may not be able to pay in any other way other than submitting to the demands of the practice and her

people's culture. Such, as well as other adverse effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic are constantly discussed in order to keep them alive and current.

Another aspect of culture that has also been linked to the HIV/AIDS is the supposition that male circumcision (i.e. the surgical removal of the foreskin from the penis) significantly contributes to the reduction in risk of HIV infection. Culturally, the Luo community to which Sauti FM primarily broadcasts does not practice male circumcision. The findings by researchers that male circumcision significantly reduces the risk of HIV infection has been followed by campaigns to urge the male populations among the communities that do not traditionally practice this custom to consider undergoing voluntary circumcision. Sauti FM has provided a great platform on which the community can discuss this matter through information and education and in the process build consensus and gain wider acceptance amongst the members of the community.

#### ***4.3.3 Highlighting the Effects of HIV/AIDS***

Other issues that are a common menu on Sauti FM include; an increasing number of orphaned and highly vulnerable children occasioned by the death of their parents resulting from HIV/AIDS related health complications. One direct consequence of this has been a completely new phenomenon of children heading households as well as old grandparents taking up the tasks of fending for their ailing adult children and their grandchildren and the accompanying psychosocio trauma. Sauti FM regularly discusses all these issues with the community not only to call attention to the reality of the problem and the accompanying costs to the individuals and community collectively, but also to rally the community towards coming to terms with the situation and identifying ways and means of confronting the problem(s) for a sustainable long-lasting solution.

The Management of HIV/AIDS for both those infected and affected confers a heavy economic burden on resource poor families and indeed the society and the government of the land. This happens on two fronts where on the one hand, resources are spent on the infected persons to manage the ailment whereas on the other hand, the infected persons' economic productivity is compromised by their state of sickness. The totality of it all is that the affected families often themselves mired in a seemingly unending struggle to deal with the constant demand for resources to manage the sickness and cover up for lost income due to the non-productivity of the sick member(s) of the family. Ultimately, a cycle of poverty sets in or is exacerbated. By giving prominent airtime to these issues, Sauti FM has helped in maintaining a sustained campaign against the sustained spread of the killer pandemic that is HIV/AIDS and highlighting its far-reaching and long-lasting socio-economic impacts in Siaya County. This keeps the population's mind and sight on this scourge lest they forget and get decimated by it.

#### ***4.3.4 Gender Mainstreaming and Overcoming Retrogressive Cultural Practices***

People's cultures world-over are dynamic and alive to the ever-changing global environment. As it were, changes in cultural practices are constantly taking place albeit at varying speeds depending on whichever culture, whatever aspect of culture it is and the forces acting upon it. Mass media is one such force that has been known to trigger and drive dynamism in culture. Sauti FM is playing this role amongst the people of Rarieda in Siaya County. This is driven by the knowledge that radio is a powerful catalyst of change all over the world. A global assessment of the social impacts of community radio in 2007 by the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) found out that exclusion of women is a key social challenge that can be confronted by community radio. The assessment identifies gender (in)equality as a societal challenge that needs to be tackled if poverty reduction were to be achieved and points out that

gender stereotypes carried by traditional media were obstacles to women rights and empowerment. Community radio can effectively facilitate women's inclusion and the recognition and exercise of women's rights.

In collaboration with an international NGO – the American Institutes for Research, the radio station received support towards spearheading the highlighting of gender discrimination and disparities in agricultural production and marketing; with a view to mainstreaming women's active participation in all activities along the various agricultural value chains. As the AMARC (2007) assessment points out, "Community radio can be a key factor in fighting exclusion and marginalization through engendering community radio both in terms of content and access to radio management and technology use".

Traditionally, Luo culture did not confer ownership of land to women. The women were in effect denied unfettered access to this very basic factor of production. They could not therefore make any meaningful decisions on how the family land is utilized. Even though the women are allowed a small portion on which to develop a kitchen garden, the decision on how the rest of the land was utilized belongs to her husband and or sons. Conversely, once the decision has been made on how to utilize the family land, it usually would be the woman to spearhead work on the land by providing labour and most of the other support services such as feeding the workers. At the end of the season however, it is common to find that the woman would have little or no say at all in how the harvest from the family land is handled, thus, how much is reserved for family consumption and how much is sold out; and how the proceeds from the sales of the produce are utilized. Thus whereas the woman is a critical player in the process of food production, they are excluded from the key decisions that affect the whole enterprise and indeed their family.

What Sauti FM has done with the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation through the American Institutes for Research is to crusade for the inclusion of women as active participants

at all levels of the agricultural value chain. Thus, their opinion in decision making in relation to what crop to plant and the acreage of the land to devote to which crop, how much of the harvested crop should be retained for family use and the rest sold, when and where to sell the produce and how to utilize the proceeds from the sales.

The campaign to mainstream women's participation in the agricultural value chains has been done through establishment of gender panels made up of radio programme producers from the radio station, local agricultural extension officers, representatives of select local farmers' common interest groups that include women and any other interested stakeholders with a presence on the ground. The panelists discuss the role of women in agriculture as well as a wide range of issues that impact on women's active participation in the agricultural enterprise and how best to address the challenges identified in the panel discussions. The panel discussions are then broadcast on Sauti FM with the intention of generating an audience-wide debate which then informs the listeners while empowering the women farmers. The popularity and impact of the gender panels in agriculture radio programmes is such that Sauti FM has been compelled to extend the model to other programmes (e.g. public health) produced by the radio station.

Youths, like the women, face numerous challenges in their endeavour to fully participate in the agricultural enterprise. As in the case of women the youth do not have easy access to land- not until some is allocated to them when they get married. It is therefore difficult for them to make decisions on what kind and magnitude of agricultural activity to engage in without the certainty of available land. Furthermore, they may not be sure that they would have control over the proceeds of the produce harvested from their parents' land. This challenge and others have been taken up by Sauti FM and put on the table of discussion by the listening audience. As a result, young people have been motivated to identify farming systems that require very little space such as green houses and fishing ponds and go for such. Indeed a number of youth have come up and

organized themselves into self-help groups, mobilized resources and ventured into different agribusiness enterprises. All these actions are aimed at making agri-business attractive to the young and more fulfilling to the womenfolk in Rarieda. Ultimately, as these two sections of the community become more actively and effectively involved in all aspects of the agricultural industry, Siaya County shall move towards food sufficiency.

#### ***4.3.5 Environmental Conservation***

Environmental issues have, over the recent decades, become prominent universal themes of public discourse, research, policy and legal formulation. This demonstrates the critical importance that the entire world has assigned to matters ecological. The conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize to a renowned environmental conservationist and campaigner the late Prof. Wangari Maathai in the year 2004 served to demonstrate the importance attached to environmental issues and served to draw attention to the need to pursue environmental conservation as a guarantor of global peace. Years of unchecked degradation and unsustainable utilization of ecological resources by man have gradually resulted in fundamental changes in the ecological balance. The effects are now being felt in terms of global climate change; with unpredictable and sometimes extreme weather conditions such as severe flooding, extended drought, tornadoes and hurricanes obtaining in many parts of the world. The world can no longer ignore the need for environmental conservation; and this calls for action and participation at all levels, right from the grassroots.

According to the Siaya County Development Profile 2013 (KNBS, 2013) the ecological environment subsector in the County is characterized by increased land degradation due to human related activities such as excessive logging for fuel and building materials, destruction of river banks through sand harvesting, improper use of agro-chemicals, uncontrolled brick making and rock quarrying. Most tellingly, is the revelation that the community in Siaya has a poor

attitude towards environmental issues evidenced by poor farming and fishing methods, deplorable waste disposal practices and very limited practice of agro-forestry on the farms in the County. There are already identifiable effects of this in form of reduction in water levels; soil erosion and siltation of dams and water pans; and low agricultural productivity due to prolonged drought and poor farming methods as well as declining fishery production occasioned by poor fishing methods.

Sauti FM has been keen in disseminating education and information to the community on the need to diversify from heavy reliance on the lake fisheries and embrace arable farming, livestock rearing and even fish farming where the fish are bred in ponds. In response, a number of people have diversified from fishing into horticulture while a local community based organization has developed ways of utilizing the invasive water hyacinth for economic benefits that include manure. Of course such a shift of a livelihood base requires time and constant persuasion in order to change the community's long-held dependency on fishing industry. The platform provided by Sauti FM has been used to create a running debate around the issue in order to address fears, prejudices and challenges that may constrain the need to adapt to the changing social, economic and ecological circumstances. At the same time the radio station prompts discussion about the advantages to be gained from diversification of livelihood bases by the community.

#### ***4.3.6 Campaign for Freedom and Justice***

Democracy in its purest form espouses equity, fairness, freedom and justice as its key pillars. Conversely, corruption, which is an antithesis to fair-play and justice, brings about undue advantage to a few while disadvantaging many others. Yet corruption continues to be a major hindrance to equitable distribution of common national resources in Kenya. At all levels, the

corruption vice seems to be deeply rooted and permeates almost all spheres of life. At the grassroots, it is not uncommon for the citizens to induce the local administration with all sorts of payments in order to receive services they should in the first place be given free of any levies, a situation that has been groomed by the administration officials for selfish gain. Where justice needs to be dispensed, it is common for the aggrieved persons to lose out if their adversaries have the financial resources to subvert the course of justice. In situations where opportunities or resources have been set aside to benefit the needy and the least advantaged members of the society, it often is the able and the advantaged who end up benefitting from these opportunities and resources. This situation serves to dis-empower the least fortunate members of the society and continues to perpetuate and exacerbate their marginalization and vulnerability. One way of fighting this vice is by exposing it and bringing it out in the open in order to call attention to its existence and divulge its negative effects on the less privileged in the society in particular and the entire society in general.

Sauti FM is alive to the prevalence of corrupt practices in public and even private offices that are charged with rendering services to the community. The station has not shied away from exposing these malpractices and views it as a duty and responsibility to its audience. Corrupt practices in the allocation and disbursement of public resources such as educational bursaries for the needy children in Siaya, the misuse of funds from the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), under-hand dealings in the award and servicing of tenders in public and government institutions, nepotism and favouritism in allocation of jobs and other opportunities are just a representation of what Sauti FM regularly highlights in its news items and features. This is done at great risk to the personal security of the journalists and managers of the station, since those behind these corrupt practices inevitably are never happy at being exposed and often seek to retaliate. Many times, the journalists and station managers have been threatened both directly and indirectly and warned of



dire repercussions should they continue to crusade against certain dealings. Whereas this has slowed down the efforts by Sauti FM towards fighting corruption and impunity that goes with it, it has in no way deterred the station from its determination to play its part in the fight against corruption and its costly effects on social, economic and political advancement of the community in Rarieda and indeed Kenya as a whole. The management of the radio station told of instances where its journalists and editors have been offered bribes to induce them to drop certain stories and when they refused, they were threatened with physical harm.

#### **4.4 Challenges Constraining the Setting Up, Growth and Sustainability of Community Radio Broadcasting in Kenya**

Setting up a radio broadcasting station is an expensive undertaking. A study by Africa Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI) in 2008 estimates that it cost between US Dollars 10,000 – 15,000 to equip a small community radio station that would transmit to a radius of 50 miles. Thus, in addition to setting up the broadcast and transmission equipment, there is the acquiring of a broadcast licence, building a studio, employment of staff to gather, edit and produce programmes as well as publicity to announce the establishment of the radio station. All these require a considerable monetary investment. When one considers the business model that is community radio, where the overriding consideration is not the profit motive, then it becomes apparent that a high capital outlay in setting up an organization that is basically not expected to make profits is a disincentive right from the onset. It is no wonder that Kenya has only about 12 active community radio stations, which reflects unfavourably for a country that boasts of over 40 ethnic communities with a corresponding number of language groups. When one takes into consideration the ever-growing number of private commercial FM radio stations in the country,

this low number of community radio stations leads one to conclude that at the time of this study, there was low incentive in attracting and motivating investors into this type of radio station.

On another front, the legal and policy framework has not been entirely favourable to community radio, with quite a number of terms and conditions set by the regulatory authority seeming punitive to the establishment and running of a community radio. For instance community radio stations are restricted on the type of advertisements they can carry on their broadcasts, with only advertisements with social messages focusing on the target community being permitted. Advertisements meant to promote pure commercial interests of business entities are prohibited. As for the renewal of the operating licence, the community radio station's licence has a lower duration at 3 years in contrast to the commercial radio licence that lasts for 5 years.

da Costa (2012) suggests that community radio stations are not yet a sustainable feature of the African media and development landscape. This has a direct bearing on the growth and the long-term sustenance of community radio broadcasting on the continent.

#### ***4.4.1 Cost of Setting up a Community Radio Station***

Broadcast equipment and machinery constitute a significant component of the costs of setting up a community radio station. Good and powerful high quality equipment, even for a small community radio station serving a geographical reach of 50 miles in radius would cost a lot of money in the region of between US Dollars 10,000 to 15,000 as alluded to earlier in this study. For a budding community radio with limited financial resources, acquiring the kind of equipment that would get them started off on the right footing becomes a big challenge in. Many of the community radio stations choose to buy equipment of relatively lower quality and power ending up with a lower transmission quality and geographical reach. It would be great support to the

establishment and growth of community radio if the government were to waive customs duty on equipment that is meant for use by this category of radio stations.

Licensing fees and related conditionalities present another challenge for community radio stations. After much lobbying and representation by stakeholders, the government of Kenya through the communications industry regulator listened to the pleas of the stakeholders and reviewed downwards the application, licensing and annual operating fees to Kshs. 1,000.00, 15,000.00 and 15,000.00 respectively. This contrasts sharply with the same charges for the commercial radio stations which stand at Kshs. 10,000.00, 100,000.00 and 100,000.00 respectively. However, whereas the licence for the commercial radio broadcaster lasts for 5 years, that one for the community radio broadcaster lasts for only 3 years. A consideration should be made to extend the life of the community radio station licence so that it is in tandem – if not longer – with the other licences.

#### ***4.4.2 Weak Financial Base***

A weak financial base is one of the key challenges that community radio stations in Kenya have to grapple with. This challenge is partly borne out of the legal and policy framework under which this type of radio operates, but also out of the financing model where most of the community radio stations depended on donor funding especially at the beginning. The community radio broadcasting model is a not-for-profit type of radio meant to give the rural and other marginalized communities a voice and platform to influence their own cultural, social, economic and political development. Commercial advertisements are restricted on community radio stations such that the kinds of advertisements permitted are those with a social message that targets the host community. This restriction means that a certain revenue stream for the community radio stations is legally blocked. This leaves the community radio stations in a

difficult situation where they have to popularize their stations' programming menu with the expectation that social marketers would prefer them over the financially well-endowed commercial radio stations when it comes to advertising their products. A community radio station is expected to focus on issues that may not find space on radio airwaves run by private commercial radio stations. As it were, such issues are often not sensational and therefore may not command a prominent space on the commercial radio stations since they are considered a "hard sale". Sensational content captures the attention of a huge following of listeners. It is widely acknowledged that bad news travels faster and further than good news. This factor presents a big challenge to community radio stations, which is how to sell such "hard" news or content day in and day out and still retain a good number of listeners.

Constraints related to an unsustainable financial model have continued to dog Radio Mang'elele; a community radio station owned by a consortium of local women groups in Kibwezi, Makueni County. Radio Mang'elele was established in the year 2004 with full funding from donors. With the donor funds, the station set up a studio, transmission equipment, employed and trained staff and generally got everything running smoothly. However, as soon as the donor funding ceased, the station began to experience a number of challenges, most of them tied to finances. The station was not able to adequately and consistently remunerate the members of staff; most of who then left to join the many newly established private commercial FM radio stations broadcasting in the Kamba language. In addition, it became difficult to maintain some of the equipment such as transmitters resulting in the station going off-air frequently and severely reducing its transmission reach. Without a steady and reliable source of finance, many of the community radio stations are struggling with the same kind of issues as Radio Mang'elele.

#### ***4.4.3 Narrow Geographical Reach***

Community radio stations' geographical reach is limited as the radio is expected to be targeting a local audience close to its transmission location. This effectively limits the number of listeners the radio can attract. When one considers that community radio stations are restricted on the type of advertisements they can carry on their stations, it becomes easy to understand the magnitude of the challenge that community radio stations have to surmount. Yet the life and strength of any radio station lies in the number of dedicated loyal listeners; such that the higher the number of listeners, the more likely that the radio station will attract sponsorships and financial support for many of its radio programmes. This lack of a firm financial base predisposes community radio stations to financial instability; a weakness that makes it difficult for many community radio stations to attract and hold on to skilled members of staff; buy, install and maintain state-of-the-art broadcast and transmission equipment and machinery; gather, package and present news and features; and generally undertake whatever programmes that the station may deem critical to its mandate.

A common complaint from the respondents to this study at Sauti FM was the frequent electric power outages that caused the radio station to go off air every time there was an electric power failure. The station did not have ample resources to install a standby back-up electric power generation system and this was eroding the confidence that listeners, particularly the less committed have in the station. The consequence of course is that such listeners would seek out and patronize alternative radio stations.

#### ***4.4.4 Limited Community Participation in Radio Station Affairs***

“Community radio is not only seen as offering information and programming to engaged listeners – a further part of community radio's attraction is that community radio operates on a

collaborative model that actively encourages the community to participate in the operation and decision-making of the station” (Wits Justice Project,2013). This assertion captures succinctly the ideal relationship between a community radio station and its targeted audience. However, the situation in many cases may not conform to this ideal.

The history of community radio is of a community identifying the need to have a radio station that can articulate their concerns and advocating for the improvement in their social, economic, political and such other human developmental issues of importance to the local community. Ideally therefore, the community would own the radio station collectively and would do all that needs to be done to ensure that the station stays on air and delivers on its mandate. Experiences elsewhere show host communities getting closely involved in the activities of their community radio station in a number of ways; including volunteering their time and professional knowledge and skills to the station to augment the work done by staff at the station. Also, the community would actively be involved in fundraising activities to support the community radio’s programmes.

In the case of Sauti FM, as it is at almost all the other community radio stations in Kenya, community involvement in governance, management, content development is evidently detached. There are those in the host community who view the community radio station as a private entity and seem not to understand the concept of a community radio station. As far as they know, radio stations are owned by either the state or private entities. It could be that they may not have been deeply involved in conception of setting up the community radio station and therefore have not have not fully identified themselves with it as a tool that could be harnessed for the transformation of their socio-economic well-being. There is therefore only very little volunteerism and fundraising initiatives from the community that would be helpful to the community radio station in delivering on its mandate with minimum financial strain.

This apparent detachment of the community from the centre of the community radio stations in Kenya may be attributed to the process of setting up most of the stations, which was a top-down approach where the idea of the community radio may not have originated from the community first, but rather it was sold to them either by a benefactor or a member of the community. Whatever the case may be, it is important to court the active participation of the community in the affairs of all community radio stations, including Sauti FM. Perhaps the starting point in engaging the community with a view to gaining participation and support would be to engage a cross-section of community and opinion leaders from within the host community. However, it would be as important to involve the community at large and Sharma (2011) suggests group discussions with the various sections of the community such as farmers, fishermen, shop-owners, teachers, artisans and such other. Also, the traditionally marginalized groups like the women, youth and minorities should be included in any discussions since they constitute important segments of any society.

Community radio stations should also engage the community to ascertain their listening preferences while gauging the acceptability and relevance of the programmes produced and put out by the radio stations. In doing this the radio stations would be able to know issues that are popular with the listeners and what time(s) they are most likely to be listening to radio. This could be done through regular audience research that would then inform appropriate programming. Tavhiso (2009) asserts that community radio stations need to conduct community mapping and low cost participatory research in order to provide a unique and locally relevant service to listeners. Further to clarifying the needs of the local community, audience research would be a valuable tool for the community radio station to use in engaging its stakeholders such as advertisers and sponsors on the general performance of the station.

In addition to audience research, community radio stations are expected to regularly evaluate their programming to ascertain the efficacy and continued relevance of the programmes to the socio-economic, cultural and political dynamics within and without the target community. This would afford the community through its leaders as well as directly the opportunity to offer critiques, opinions and suggestions on desirable changes in programme formats, content, frequency, timings and generally how best the community could participate in the affairs of the community radio station. Sharma (2011) suggests that opinions and other forms of input from the community should be considered and implemented as far as possible in order to motivate the public to participate more and more.

#### ***4.4.5 Volunteerism***

Volunteerism as a form of community support to community radio stations is a veritable aspect of this type of radio. In fact, most community radio stations, particularly in developed countries are kept going by dedicated volunteers. As Tavhiso (2009) states, volunteerism takes various forms such as full-time, permanent workers, spending a couple of hours a week, or a month doing voluntary work for an organization, while others come in for a specific campaign, and then leave again. Volunteers are motivated by different reasons when offering their time without an expectation of direct compensation for their effort. Whereas some volunteers would be looking to gain some valuable practical work experience in preparation for paid employment, there are volunteers whose sole motivation is community service and view volunteerism as their way of contributing to the improvement of the welfare of the members of the community particularly the disadvantaged and needy. Whatever the case may be, volunteerism should be mutually beneficial to all the parties involved. All that is critical is for the members of the community to understand why the community radio station requires volunteers from the community to support its



operations. If need be, the members of the community should be sensitized on the reasons the community radio station may not pay for the services of the volunteers working for the station.

All said, there are a number of challenges that community radio stations experience in depending on volunteers. In the case of Sauti FM, the challenge is in attracting and retaining volunteers long enough as to be beneficial to the station. This is borne out of the fact that the station does not have the capacity to pay for the volunteered service(s) whereas the volunteers may come on board with expectations of some kind of compensation. This disparity in expectations ends up with the volunteer marking time as they look out for paying opportunities elsewhere whilst their performance at the community radio station remains lukewarm at the best. There is therefore a high turn-over of staff at the radio station as employees (both volunteers and employees on payroll) are easily lure away by better prospects and opportunities elsewhere.

Another challenge has to do with the professionalism of the volunteers. Many may not have the requisite knowledge and or skills for the tasks they are expected to undertake and that may compromise the quality of the community radio's programmes. To address this challenge, Sharma (2011) suggests that staff with the technical skills should facilitate and support the volunteers and other members of the community in producing programmes at community radio stations. Some scholars have suggested that community radio stations should develop a policy on volunteerism at their stations that would set out the criteria for engaging volunteers. Clear rights and responsibilities as well as a code of conduct and procedures need to be laid down for dealing with volunteers challenges. Over and above, volunteers should be treated well and their contribution recognized and acknowledged by the stations (List, 2002:83).

#### ***4.4.6 Political Interference***

As community radio stations seek ways and means of financially sustaining their programmes and operations, they are exposed to a number of potentially detrimental situations. The struggle to remain afloat has forced some community radio stations to look for all ways and means of sustaining their operations; some of which may bring into play competing and or conflicting interests. Knowing the power of broadcast media over the masses and desiring to control the content of a radio station in order to further their own personal political agenda, politicians would not shy away from seizing the opportunity afforded by the financial vulnerability prevailing at most community radio stations. Although not done openly, the political class is known to have control over a number of media houses (including radio stations) in Kenya through their proxies.

In the case of Sauti FM, a prominent local politician had supported the station at the time of its inception by sourcing for funds to buy them a set of radio transmission equipment. When the management of the radio station declined to bend to the politician's demands and whims, he repossessed the donated equipment thereby crippling the radio station's capacity to effectively transmit its broadcasts. And of course the management and staff of Sauti FM are constantly under threat from politicians particularly when they are on trail of a story that is likely to link the politicians to activities or malpractices that would call into questions their ethics and or integrity as public officers or leaders. This scenario clearly threatens to jeopardize the need for community radio stations to maintain their identity of purity and remaining true to the mandate of community broadcasting i.e. independence, community service, community participation, community ownership and not-for-profit.

#### ***4.4.7 Competition for Listeners and Resources***

At a different level, cut-throat competition for listenership, particularly from the commercial FM stations (a good number of them broadcasting in vernacular languages) threatens to drive community radio stations towards abandoning the pure not-for-profit business model to a pragmatic model that would assure them a slice of the lucrative advertising revenues. For instance, Sauti FM has to compete with Ramogi FM, Radio Nam Lolwe, Victoria FM, Gulf FM and Mayienga FM among other radio stations broadcasting in the Dholuo language and therefore targeting the same listening audience. All the mentioned radio stations are commercial in orientation and therefore profit-seeking. They will go to any lengths to attract and retain listeners as can be attested to by attractive give away tokens that go with extravagant road shows, which are organized to traverse the catchment areas to draw attention to given FM radio stations. To lock in their listeners and keep them from tuning into their rival stations, the more popular and financially capable radio stations run all kinds of promotional raffles such as enticing their audience into listening to a particular radio programme and sending a text message to a designated short code number, then stand to win huge rewards – sometimes running into thousands of Kenya shillings with the top reward in some instances being one million Kenya shillings. Such a scenario threatens to consign Sauti FM and other community radio stations to the periphery of the radio broadcasting landscape with the danger that the unique audience that the community radio is meant to cater for shall then remain excluded and marginalized from the mainstream development conversations.

#### ***4.4.8 Governance and Management of Community Radio Station***

Governance is among the challenges in the management of community radio stations. Community radio in its purest form envisages the participation of the host community not only in

the determination of the broadcast content, but also in the ownership and governance of the radio station. The ideal situation would be for the various interests within the community to be represented on the established governance organ(s) at the radio station. Thus; the men, women, youth and any other such categories in the community would find representation on the radio station's management board or committee. This, it seems, has not happened as it should at most of the community radio stations in Kenya for a variety of reasons. Some community radio stations are sponsored by religious organizations, in which case the management of such radio stations would be in the hands of persons or organs appointed directly by the designated authorities in the concerned religious organization. Where the community was not actively involved in the conception and establishment of the radio station, it was observed that the community's participation in governance matters would be by invitation from the sponsors of the radio station.

This is the situation that obtains at Sauti FM where a member of the community - who is a retired High School Teacher - sits on the radio station's management committee. Often, when this happens, there is an expectation of a monetary reward or compensation for those members of the community who may be invited to sit in governance over the community radio station. This may not always happen, considering the weak financial situation that many community radio stations find themselves in. This partially explains the reluctance of a majority of the sponsors of the community radio stations to liberally involve the members of the host community in the governance of the station – fearing, whether justifiable or not, that such involvement may be accompanied by financial demands on the radio station, a situation that the station may not be in a position to bear and sustain.

A different scenario obtains where members of the community through organized group(s) were the drivers of the conception and establishment of the community radio station. Radio

Mang'elete followed such a route since its establishment was initiated by an umbrella organization that brought together over 30 women's self-help groups from Kibwezi who were able to attract funding from external sources. Representatives of these women groups are duly involved in the management of the radio station. However, given the women's level of education, many of them lack the knowledge, skills and exposure that would contribute effectively to the growth and sustenance of the radio station. They require constant capacity building in order to help them discharge their mandate. The downside of this scenario is that the women, out of the fear of losing what they consider to belong to them are reluctant to cede the requisite leeway to the managers of the radio station to enable them run the affairs of the station professionally. Any perceived aggressive moves made by the management to try and implement certain interventions (such as prescribing a minimum level of education for members of the governance organ) are often viewed with suspicion and fear that they would lose their ownership of the radio station and are therefore resisted. Regrettably, this has in a way had the effect of stunting the growth of the radio station since the limited capacity of the "owners" of the station has worked to the disadvantage of the community radio station.

#### ***4.4.9 Rapid Technological Advancement***

Rapid advancement in information communication technology poses another challenge to community radio stations, given their weak financial position. The need to upgrade and or replace broadcast equipment in line with changing technology with a view to delivering better quality services demands that radio stations have to frequently invest both in modern equipment and retraining staff in the use and maintenance of the technology. Much as that is desirable, the weak financial base of many community radio stations means that they would lag behind in

adoption of the emerging technologies. The attendant consequences are poor quality broadcasts that drive the listeners into the arms of the competing radio stations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to present a synopsis of this research project. The chapter captures the high points of the study which are contained in the summary, conclusions and recommendations that follow here below.

#### **5.2 Summary**

The broad aim of this study was to investigate the potential of community radio broadcasting as a catalyst for rural development in Kenya. The study examined whether the community radio broadcasting model provided a platform which if well harnessed, had the capacity to fundamentally affect - in a positive way - the economic, cultural, political and social development of the largely poor rural populations. The study was guided by the research question; “What is the role of Community Radio in stimulating rural development in Kenya?” and the supplementary question, “How has Community Radio been harnessed as an effective tool for rural development in Kenya?”

The rationale of this study was motivated by the apparent neglect and marginalization of the rural areas from mainstream social, economic and political discussion and development. With most of the rural areas not easily accessible because of poor infrastructure, transport and communication systems, it is always difficult to reach rural communities in far-flung areas of

Kenya. Whatever amenities are taken for granted in the cities and urban areas such as paved roads, television, telephone, newspapers, radio and internet connectivity are often not readily available to the rural populations. Often, the rural areas only get to be in the limelight when an extra-ordinary incident or happening occurs in a given location, for instance when there is severe famine, outrageous criminal activity, a natural calamity such as drought, floods and so forth. That is the time when the government and media houses would hire helicopters and 4 wheel-drive vehicles to go and attend (and only attend) to the emergency situation, giving the unfortunate location uncalled for yet fleeting media prominence for as long as the subject of focus remains captivating, after which the situation reverts to “normal”. It is this “normal” that is seldom reported and discussed at the national level, leaving the rural populations without a voice and visibility on issues that concern them; and indeed should concern the nation as a whole.

It is the proposition of this study that mass communication if well harnessed and deployed can and should be able to act as a catalyst of rural development in Kenya and indeed anywhere else in the world. Radio, due to its unique characteristics, was identified as the most appropriate form of mass media that could be tapped for development communication in rural Kenya. However, while acknowledging that radio would be the appropriate mass medium for rural development, it was important to understand that there are different categories of radio, and that community radio is the type that was most ideal for development communication. Community radio was thus identified because it is a type of radio broadcasting model that has the host or target community as the focal point of its programming as opposed to the mainstream- and usually commercial private – radio stations that broadcast to a general and wider audience, with the profit-making as a key motive. The community radio model works well for the rural listening audience by affording them an opportunity to actively and effectively participate in both programme development and content generation process, thereby capturing the aspirations and concerns of



the target host audience. This effectively gives them the much needed voice and space to articulate issues they consider critical to their own holistic development.

In order to better understand how community radio broadcasting can be harnessed for rural development, this study elected to focus on the case of Sauti FM, a community radio station based on the shores of Lake Victoria at Asembo Bay in Rarieda District of Siaya County. The attraction for Sauti FM stemmed from the fact that at the time of the study, it was the only radio station of any kind in Siaya County, but most importantly, it is modeled as a community radio station. Through focus group discussions, key informant interviews, direct observation and studying secondary data sources, information was collected from respondents who mainly comprised of Sauti FM listeners, but included members of staff at the radio station as well as people who have closely followed and or worked with the community media initiatives in Kenya.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The enduring popularity of radio in spite of growth in other forms of mass media such as internet and mobile-based social media is an indication of the continuing versatility of radio as a medium of mass communication. This has been attributed to the unique characteristic of radio as having immediacy in the delivery of its content and that it cuts across many barriers including illiteracy, age and economic status. The case of Sauti FM in Rarieda demonstrates that community radio is indeed a critical catalyst and facilitator of rural development. Proceeding from the interpretation of the information gathered by this case study, the following conclusions capture the stand-out learning points.

### ***5.3.1 Harnessing Sauti FM for Rural Development***

As the first and the only radio station in Siaya County at the time of this study, Sauti FM occupies a unique position in the general development of the county. For the first time in the lives of most of the residents of Rarieda, a radio station they could identify with in terms of its accessibility and the language of communication was right there in their midst. The local population is now able to raise socio-economic, cultural and political developmental issues and engage one another as well as the government and other internal and external development partners on those very issues.

Sauti FM is generally acceptable across the age and gender divide as testified in the focus group discussions that engaged men, women and youth separately. The greatest attraction for the station is not only the language of delivery of its broadcasts, but also the location of the radio station within the community. By using the listeners' first language, the radio station has been able to firstly attract and command loyalty from the audience and secondly to contextualize its broadcast content to suit and respond to the circumstances and needs of the local population. This resonates well with its target audience which is often able to identify first-hand with the stories and or features presented by the radio station. This has given Sauti FM an enviable platform of positively influencing the holistic development of Rarieda and the wider Siaya County in a number of ways.

#### ***5.3.1.1 Community Mobilization***

Already, Sauti FM has been instrumental in the mobilization of the local community for a number of actions. The radio station has been able to awaken the local population into realizing the potential there is in pooling their efforts, ideas and resources for their own socio-economic advancement without having to wait for external support to get them going. It is a demonstration

that it is possible to harness resources available within the community and start the process of transforming the livelihoods of the members of that particular community.

It is not just the formation and formalization of local common interest groups that is significant, but the networking and support that the various businesspeople are providing to one another as they interact over the Sauti FM radio airwaves. This is a commendable outcome that is bound to strengthen the relationship between the radio station and its audience at one level and at another level amongst the listeners as they seek out one another. In the long run, the radio station could cement its role as both a catalyst and enabler of socio-economic transformation within the community, a position that should attract support from a cross-section of actors who are keen to undertake developmental interventions in rural communities.

#### ***5.3.1.2 A Campaign Tool***

Sauti FM has become an important tool in a number of campaigns that have included the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic – its causes, effects, mitigation and management. This role played by Sauti FM is critical when one considers that in the June 2014, the Kenya HIV/AIDS prevalence estimates by the National AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections Control Programme (NASCO) reveal that Siaya County has the second highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS infection in Kenya (NASCO 214). Sharing of real life experiences of the effects of HIV/AIDS by people from within the community serves to drive the reality home with a high degree of impact on desired behavioral change since those talking about their HIV/AIDS status and experiences are people living in the midst of the community and therefore the listeners can easily corroborate the experiences of those of their own as they share it on radio, unlike when a similar story is told on national radio by a person from afar off. What is noteworthy is that the message and the messenger carry the information in a language that the audience fully

understands and is able to identify with. The same goes for campaigns against malaria and other forms of diseases and lifestyles, habits or practices that require behavioural change amongst the members of the community in order to bring about a favourable situation.

Other campaigns have included the drive for the inclusion of women and youth in mainstream social, economic and political activities, the fight against retrogressive cultural practices such as widow inheritance (particularly in view of the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the Siaya), environmental conservation, anti-corruption, justice and freedom. All these campaigns are aimed at improving the general welfare of the community to which Sauti FM broadcasts and it fits in well with the primary mandate of a community radio station.

### ***5.3.1.3 Cultural Heritage vis-à-vis Change***

A people's culture determines and drives the way they conduct and live their lives; with almost all facets of the community structured around the long-held customs and traditions of the given people group. Even though culture is alive and dynamic and it is expected to respond to the influence and demands of the ever-changing lifestyles as well as from interaction with the wider global community of cultures as they come in contact with one another, it takes a long time to change some long-held cultural practices since they would be deeply engrained in the people's psyche. It would require concerted and conscious efforts to persuade a community to abandon a long-held cultural practice that is deemed retrogressive in the present day. Sauti FM has a "cultural talk" show that seeks to focus on aspects of culture that are good and therefore need preserving as well as aspects that have gradually been overtaken by time and circumstances and need to be abandoned altogether or at the very least be modified in line with the prevailing socio-cultural environment.

Thus whereas the radio station has been on the forefront of crusading against such cultural practices as widow inheritance in the face of highly communicable sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, it has become a platform for the preservation and promotion of the cultural identity of its listeners. The use of Dholuo as the language of communication, the promotion of works by local artistes, and the interactive discussions about the peoples' culture on the "cultural talk" radio show are some of the highlights of the radio station's role as a repository of its audience's culture. By putting such emotive issues on the airwaves for discussion, Sauti FM has demonstrated its courage and readiness to help the community of its listeners to identify ways and means of dealing with cultural matters in such a manner as to keep the community moving forward progressively.

#### ***5.3.1.4 Civic Education***

Political space and freedom of expression has expanded considerably in Kenya since the early 1990s. The mass media has been a key player in this development and Sauti FM is not an exception. The radio station, as testified to by the respondents to this study, played an important role during Kenya's historic elections in 2013 that were the first to be held under a radically new constitution promulgated in 2010. Sauti FM provided a platform for the electorate within its reach to understand the new constitutional dispensation; and when the time for campaigns for political office came, the station invited many of the local politicians seeking elective positions to the stations and interrogated them in relation to their programme for their constituents. That provided an opportunity for the electorate to interact with the candidates before they would go to the ballot. This is commendable and should raise and strengthen Sauti FM's place within and without its community as a paragon of public participation in democratic development.

### **5.3.2 Impact of Sauti FM**

At the time of this study, Sauti FM had been broadcasting for about 3 years, a length of time that may still be too short to really measure the true impact of the radio station's broadcast programmes. However, it is evident that the radio station's programmes are starting to create fundamental changes in the social, economic, cultural and political spheres of the local community to which the radio station broadcasts. The formation of economic interest groups, the networks and the fraternity and harmony they foster, the empowerment of the women, youth and other marginalized groups are just but a few of the stand-out outcomes of Sauti FM's broadcasting to the community in Rarieda.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

It has been demonstrated that community radio stations play a critical and important role in the socio-cultural, economic and political development of any given community particularly the marginalized rural communities. However, the number of community radio stations in Kenya is quite low in spite of rapid expansion in the radio broadcasting sector. This only means that the growth of this type of broadcast model is lagging behind the other models for a number of factors. These factors should be isolated and dealt with in order to make smooth the growth path for community radio broadcasting in Kenya. This study puts forth the following recommendations, which the researcher feels would strengthen the place and role of Sauti FM and other community radio stations in delivering on their mandate to their target communities.

#### ***5.4.1 Legal and Policy Framework***

The licensing and regulatory framework for the community radio stations envisages them as not-for-profit broadcasters. Their fundraising is somehow restricted for they are not allowed to carry commercial advertisements unless they directly address the welfare of the target community. Thus the restrictions prescribed by the regulatory authority serve to constrain the revenue base for the community radio stations such that where donations and grants are not forthcoming, a popular community radio station would struggle financially and cannot take full advantage of its wide listenership base to attract unlimited advertisements from commercial interests and thereby improve its financially situation significantly. Community radio stations should be given leeway to financially benefit from the popularity of their radio station by tapping into the huge advertising funds at the disposal of a cross-section of private and public organizations out to market their organizations as well as their products and services.

Licensing fees and related conditionalities present another challenge for community radio stations. After much lobbying and representation by stakeholders, the government of Kenya through the communications industry regulator listened to the pleas of the stakeholders and reviewed downwards the application, licensing and annual operating fees for community radio stations. However, whereas the licence for the commercial radio broadcaster lasts for 5 years, that one for the community radio broadcaster lasts for only 3 years. A consideration should be made to extend the life of the community radio station licence so that it is in tandem – if not longer – with the other licences.

#### ***5.4.2 Sustaining Community Radio Stations***

As Dunaway (2002:72) argues, issues of sustainability and more specifically, financial resources have far reaching effects on community radio the stations' ability and capability to fulfill their

functions. Growth and sustainability of community radio is therefore a matter of great concern to supporters of this model of radio. There are several approaches to growing and sustaining a community radio station. An appropriate mix of several of these approaches – depending on each station’s needs and circumstances - would serve any community radio station.

#### ***5.4.2.1 Community Subscription and Support***

The terms and conditions of the community radio licence differ markedly from that of the commercial radio stations in that the community radio station is restricted on the kind of advertisements that they can carry on their airwaves. The community radio stations are expected to broadcast sponsorship announcements and only restricted advertisements that relate to the community. The stations’ expected main sources of revenue include membership fees, donations and grants. A classic example of a radio station running almost entirely on listeners’ subscriptions is the KPFA located in Berkeley in California. KPFA is the pioneering community radio station in the United States of America and it is currently one of the country’s largest community radio stations. KPFA does not accept any advertising of whatever kind on its radio broadcasts yet its listeners and a few other sources fund its annual budget in excess of one million US Dollars (Thomas; 2001). In fact when KPFA was in dire need of a new home, the listeners and their traditional supporters were able to raise funds in excess of US Dollars 2.2 million towards the building of a new building owned by the radio station.

That level of commitment has not yet been achieved in case of community radio stations in Kenya. Despite the noted low subscription of membership by the community, attracting and bringing on board a considerable section of the community provides perhaps the most crucial and sustainable source of support for any community radio station. This is because once a sizeable proportion of the target audience community have been convinced of the importance of the radio



station to their community and have fully bought into the idea that the core support of the station should come from the local population, it would be a lot easier to build on that support by using these fully subscribed members to extol the benefits of the radio station to the masses and recruit into membership those yet to pledge their commitment to support the radio station by subscription.

#### ***5.4.2.2 Volunteerism***

Members of the community could and should be motivated into volunteering their time, knowledge and skills in support of the operations of the community radio stations. This approach would help the community radio stations to keep their wage bills low while ensuring that they have quality programming and services rendered to their listeners as the volunteers would be expected to be well versed in the areas in which they offer their services such as programme production, agricultural extension, agronomy, public health management, education, law, conflict resolution, entrepreneurship, and many more. Volunteerism from among the members of the target community would strengthen the relationship between the radio station and the community while at the same time reinforcing the claim of ownership of the radio station by the community by virtue of their mutual involvement.

#### ***5.4.2.3 Partnership with Devolved Government***

Casual mass media reports indicate that a number of counties are in the process of setting up radio stations at county level. Nairobi, Kakamega, Vihiga, Trans Nzoia are among those that have been mentioned. That is evidence that county governments consider radio as an important platform on which to engage their citizens. Community radio station should identify avenues of collaboration and partnership with the devolved governments at county level. Since the key

rationale behind the move towards devolution is to give greater focus and impetus to socio-economic development at the grassroots level, the county governments are much closer to the rural populations than the central national government could ever be. County governments, civil society actors and other stakeholders could regularly sponsor discussion panels and sessions on the local community radio stations focusing on a variety of perennial and emerging issues that confront and impact the lives of the local populations in one way or another.

#### ***5.4.2.4 Fundraising Initiatives***

A weak financial base was identified as one of the major weaknesses of Sauti FM as well as the rest of the community radio stations in Kenya. Community radio stations should explore the possibilities of fund-raising from the public by leveraging on the financial services offered by technological advances in the telecommunications industry. There are opportunities for revenue sharing with telecommunication firms on the short code SMS platform, mobile money transfer on services such as M-Pesa, and other such innovations that make it easier for listeners to support their favourite radio station or a particular programme on the station's broadcast menu. The task for the radio station would be to develop popular programmes that command wide listenership which would then make it easier to engage the listeners on given short code SMS numbers identified with the community radio station for the regular feedback and call-ins. This way, if the listenership is large and a considerable number of these listeners regularly use the short code SMS platform, the radio station shall be assured of a regular revenue stream that would be expected to expand as the listenership grows. On the other hand, a mobile money transfer facility (M-Pesa, Airtel money and any such other) could be set up for listeners and any other well-wisher to donate whatever amounts of money directly to the community radio station. Such a facility if well publicized would be able to attract a wide range of donations varying from

as low as fifty shillings to hundreds of thousands whether on a one-off or on regular basis depending on individual donor preference.

Other avenues available to community radio stations towards strengthening their financial base include themed fundraising campaigns such as community marathons and or walks, raffles and competitions in which winners are rewarded with tokens. The marathons and or walks could be developed into annual events that all stakeholders look forward to and would serve as an opportunity for the community radio station staff to interact with their listeners, sponsors, supporters and other stakeholders, all these in the spirit of appreciating the work that the community radio station is doing within the society. Patrons of community radio stations could study and borrow from the highly successful Rhino Charge – an annual fundraising event that was initiated by the Rhino Ark Charitable Trust in the 1989 to raise funds for the conservation of the Aberdare mountain and forest ecosystem with an ultimate mission of protecting the endangered rhino populations in the ecosystem. Monies raised from this event have grown exponentially from the initial Kenya Shillings 200,000.00 (Two Hundred Thousand Only) in 1989 to Kenya Shillings 102,919,334.00 (One Hundred and Two Million, Nine Hundred and Nineteen Thousand, Three Hundred and Thirty Four Only) in the year 2014<sup>5</sup>

The popularity of this annual event is such that participation is restricted to predetermined maximum entries depending on the venue of the event which changes every year. That makes the event very highly sought after by the enthusiasts out to raise funds for environmental conservation. On the sideline of the main event, there are commercial organizations that offer support services and amenities such as accommodation, catering, communications, entertainment and other fun activities. These organizations have to buy space for them to be part of the event thereby enhancing the fundraising effort.

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<sup>5</sup> ([www.rhinoark.org](http://www.rhinoark.org)).

Domesticating a fundraising initiative modeled on what the Rhino Ark Charitable Trust has done would go a long way in improving the financial base of community radio stations. While community radio stations may not restrict participation in their fundraising initiatives, it would be helpful for the radio stations to work at developing fundraising models that are exciting and fun to be part of and which enthusiastic individuals or groups will always look forward to be part of even as they out compete one another in raising funds for the radio station for a worthwhile cause of greater public good.

### ***5.4.3 Civic Education***

The position and standing of Sauti FM with its audience offers a platform of continuous engagement with the community in terms of educating them on the developments in the political and governance sphere. This is particularly pertinent given the promulgation of a new Constitution in Kenya in 2010 that radically changed the governance structures in the country. It has been demonstrated that Sauti FM has been active in educating its listeners on these matters. Rural communities need to understand the implications of these changes and what their role and stake is in order for them to participate effectively in the political and governance processes at the local and as far as possible at national level. Sauti FM should facilitate the conversation between the county government and its citizens as well as amongst the citizens themselves. This way, the community will feel part and parcel of the development process and they would then support and own whatever initiatives that come out of a process that they participated in. The radio station would play the role of both creating awareness about the need for community participation in the entire process of the development endeavour as well as keeping the members of the community abreast of the activities and their progress thereof towards what action plans that had been agreed upon.

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## **Appendices – Data Capture Instruments.**

### **Sauti FM Radio**

#### **Preamble**

This questionnaire seeks to collect information for academic research. Your participation in the study is requested and is voluntary. All the information received from you shall be treated with the necessary confidentiality.

#### **Background**

1. When was Radio Sauti established?
2. Who funded the Radio's establishment?
3. Who are the target audiences for the radio's broadcasts?
4. What is the geographical reach of Radio Sauti?
5. In which languages does Sauti broadcast?

#### **Governance and Management Structures**

6. What is the organizational structure of Radio Sauti?
7. What role – if any – does the community play in the governance of Radio Sauti?
8. How many staff does Radio Sauti employ? ..... Are they all on fulltime employment? ..... If no how many are not on fulltime? ..... What is the working arrangement with the non-fulltime members of staff?
9. What challenges – if any – does the station face in attracting and retaining key broadcasting and editorial personnel?

#### **Broadcasting Content**

10. What is Sauti's policy on the editorial content of its broadcasts?
11. How was the editorial policy arrived at?.

12. Are listeners and the community in general involved in determining what content is broadcast? ..... How does this happen? .....
13. Does the management of Radio Sauti consider it important for the listeners and the community at large in to participate in the determination of the radio station's editorial content? ..... Please explain
14. How does Radio Sauti get feedback from the audience on its broadcast products?  
How is such feedback used in editorial content planning?

### **Impact of Radio Sauti on Community**

15. Is there evidence to indicate Radio Sauti's impact on its audience in terms of:
- a) Enhanced economic activities
  - b) Participation in the local (and national) debates on political, social and economic matters as they affect the audience
  - c) Promotion of culture and arts
  - d) Empowerment of women and youth
  - e) Education
  - f) Health
  - g) Security
  - h) Disadvantaged members of the community (widows, orphans, landless)
  - i) Environmental awareness/conservation

### **Challenges**

16. What challenges or constraints does Radio Sauti have to deal with?
17. How can these challenges/constraints be overcome?

## Focus Group Discussion Guide

### Preamble

This discussion guide seeks to collect information for academic research. Your participation in the study is requested and is voluntary. All the information received from you shall be treated with the necessary confidentiality.

1. I believe most of you listen to radio; what are your opinions on radio as a source of development information? Please elaborate
2. I suppose you regularly listen to Sauti FM, what is it that attracts you to Sauti FM?
3. What are some of the programmes that you enjoy listening to on this radio station?
4. What role – in your opinion – does Sauti FM play in your community?
5. In what ways, if any, do you as listeners participate in determining what programme goes on air and the content in that/those programme(s)?
6. Apart from radio, what are your other sources of information on matters related to socio-economic development? How do they compare with the information you receive from radio particularly Sauti FM?
7. What are some of the changes/developments that have taken place in your community that can be attributed to information from Sauti FM's broadcasts?
8. Should the community be involved in the governance and management of the station? How should this happen?
9. How does the community support Sauti FM, if at all? Should such support be offered to the community radio in the first place?
10. What would you like to see happening with Radio Sauti that would improve the wellbeing of your community?
11. In your opinion, what are some of the challenges that are facing Sauti FM?
12. How have these challenges affected the operations of Sauti FM and in what way(s)?

13. What should be done to help community radio stations like Sauti FM to be more effective in their service to their targeted audience communities?
14. Prior to Sauti FM going on air what radio station(s) were you listening to? Do you still listen to them? If No, what are the reasons for that?
15. How important is Sauti FM to the socio-economic development of Rarieda?

## **Key Informant Interviews**

### **Preamble**

This questionnaire seeks to collect information for academic research. Your participation in the study is requested and is voluntary. All the information received from you shall be treated with the necessary confidentiality.

1. What do you know about Sauti FM in Rarieda, Siaya County?
2. What role – in your opinion - is the radio station playing in the socio-economic development of Rarieda?
3. What are some of the social, cultural, economic and political issues that have been/or are being tackled by Sauti FM broadcasts?
4. How is the local community involved in the programming and production at Sauti FM?
5. In what ways is Sauti FM contributing to the improvement of the livelihoods of the people living in Rarieda?
6. Are there examples of the changes/improvements that have taken place in Rarieda as a result of radio broadcast programmes by Sauti FM? Please discuss some of them
7. In your opinion, what challenges - if any – are constraining the growth and sustainability of community radio broadcasting in Kenya?
8. Is there any other information you may wish to share concerning Sauti FM?

## **Key Informant Interviews 2**

### **Preamble**

This questionnaire seeks to collect information for academic research. Your participation in the study is requested and is voluntary. All the information received from you shall be treated with the necessary confidentiality.

1. You are a primary stakeholder in the community radio broadcasting sector in Kenya. Please tell me about your involvement in this field?
2. How long have you been engaged with community radio broadcasting?
3. Having been involved in community radio broadcasting in Kenya, what are your insider's experiences with this model of information communication?
4. What are some of the key developments/milestones that you can cite as defining the growth of community radio broadcasting in Kenya?
5. In your opinion, what is the role of community radio in social, economic, cultural and political development, particularly of rural communities in Kenya?
6. How far have community radio stations played this role in this country?
7. Can you discuss some of the impacts that can be attributed to Community radio broadcasting in Kenya?
8. What has been the response from the communities targeted by the community radio stations?
9. What are some of the challenges that the community radio stations have to deal with during their set up and operations?

10. How have these challenges impacted on the objectives and operations of the community radio stations? What has been/is being done to address these challenges?
11. In your opinion, how best can community radio stations be harnessed for rural development in Kenya?



### **Direct Observation Check List**

1. Tune into the Sauti FM's radio frequency and listen in on their broadcast in order to get a feel of the station and gauge listener participation – either through telephone call-ins or short message texts (SMS)
2. Estimate the reach of the transmission of the radio station's broadcasts
3. Look out for any evidence on the ground or within the community of any one or more of the assertions made by the respondents
4. Listen out to any unsolicited comments - whether positive or negative – about Sauti FM from the general public
5. Observe the relationship between the radio station staff and the listeners and amongst the listeners themselves