

**Commercialized Media Environment and Sustainability of Community**

**Radio: Case Study of Mang'elete 89.1FM**

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**Reg. No.: K50/79294/2012**

**A Research Project Submitted to the School of Journalism and Mass  
Communication in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Communication Studies, at  
the University of Nairobi.**

**November 2014**

## DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been presented in and/ or to any other forum or audience, in any other university or examination body.

Signed.....

Date.....

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I confirm that the work presented in this dissertation was carried out by the above named candidate under my supervision.

Signature .....

Date.....

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Supervisor

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am immensely indebted to many people who made it possible to undertake this research. I May not enumerate all of them here, but I reserve special mention for the following:

Dr. Hezron Mogambi, my mentor and supervisor; my Masters degree programme course instructors: Dr. George Gathigi, Dr. Silas Oriaso, Dr. Samuel Kabuu, Dr. Samuel Siringi, Dr. Elias Mokuu, Dr. Haron Mwangi, Dr. Kiptiness; Esther Mulekye Venzi, research assistant (Data analyst); Samuel Mwendwa Matevu, Research assistant (Data analyst); Phillip Nzangi, my Research assistant; Redempta Nthia, the founder and the current Executive Director, Mang'elele Community radio project; Meshack Nyamai, the station Manager, Mang'elele Community Radio;.... And to GOD ALMIGHTY.

## **DEDICATION**

To Esther Mulekye Venzi, my wife;

To Lawrence Mwendwa Mailu, our son;

To my family;

To all communications professionals and students.

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## ABSTRACT

The liberalization of broadcasting airwaves in Kenya in 1990s saw proliferation of the private FM radio stations. These radio stations have commercialized the media environment with throat-cut competition, where even the programming must have commercial value, to attract the right audience in order to attract advertisers. The public, private and community radio stations are competing for the same or similar audience. As a result, this has created a challenge on the sustainability of the community radio projects in Kenya, which usually depend on donors to fund their operations.

This study was therefore aimed at exploring how sustainable is the community radio in such competitively commercialized media setting. The study also sought identify challenges and opportunities for the same in order to remain sustainable and viable, without losing focus of its development agenda to empower local community by remaining a participatory media tool for the community, by the community. The research drew lessons around sustainability of community radio by focusing on a case study on one of Community radios in Kenya, Mang'elele FM, in Nthongoni, Kibwezi, Makueni County. It adopted a mixed qualitative and quantitative research methods to collect information through questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion, one-on-one interviews and Document reviews, which were analyzed and presented as narrative, frequency distribution tables, graphs and charts from which inferences and conclusions were drawn, and research report compiled for presentation.

The study found that the sustainability of community radio is highly challenged by growing commercially oriented radio stations. Faced by poor leadership and management as well as low community participation, the community radio projects have been unable to withstand shocks of donor exit. Nevertheless, this study found that community radio stations such as Mang'elele Radio still enjoy consider considerable goodwill from local communities who identify with stations due to their proximity which brings about sense of local ownership. The study recommends that, together with these opportunities, the community radio stations can improve their chances of sustainability by using volunteer programmes involving the local community.

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMARC:	<i>Association Mondiale Des Radiodiffuseurs Communautaires (World</i>
AMREF:	The African Medical and Research Foundation <i>Association of Community Radio Broadcasters)</i>
CCK/ CAK:	Communications Commission of Kenya/ Communications Authority
CRAK:	Community Radio Association of Kenya
EACMP:	East African Community Media Project
ENA :	EcoNews Africa
KBC:	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
KCOMNET:	Kenya Community Media Network
MCIDP:	Mang'elele Community Integrated Development Project of Kenya
PSB:	Public Service Broadcasters
RMS:	Royal Media Services
SIDA:	Swedish International Development Cooperative Agency
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USSR:	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0: Introduction**

This chapter presents the historical context and justification for development and growth of community radio globally, in Africa and locally, in Kenya. It then establishes the challenge on community radio sustainability posed by growing commercial media in general and private radio in particular. This forms the basis for the problem statement in this research from where the general and specific objectives, justification and the significance of the study are derived.

### **1.1: Background**

World over, radio medium and especially in the third (developing) world is the most easily accessed, and affordable and portable medium, since it is a medium that does not require high literacy level of the audience, especially in the contemporary media environment where radio is regionalized, broadcasting in local dialects world over, as compared to other media outlets such television, which is more expensive, need a source of electricity to operate, or the print media which require higher literacy level whereby, consumers of such medium need to be able to read (Kanyegirire, A., 2002). More so, compared to other media such as Television, the production costs of radio programmes are relatively low, making it easy to manage.

Historically, in most of Europe, radio broadcasting began in the 1920s as an activity organized by the state. According to Mytton, G. (1999), Radio was run either as a public service more or less independently of the government or directly by the government as an

instrument of the State. Thus, in Britain, the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, Switzerland and a few others, broadcasting was legislated for as a public service provided for by a non-governmental agency, independent of political authority, but established by the State. In the communist countries, such as Russia (Former USSR), China, North Korea and also in France and some other European states, broadcasting was (and is) run as a department of the government. On the other hand, in the United States from the very beginning, radio, and later television also, was organized as a commercial profit-making enterprise.

Public Service Broadcasting (PSB), had therefore been established as the ideal application of the 'public sphere'. However, background of liberalization and privatization that started in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century lead to growth of private media operated as enterprises for commercial revenue, forcing PSB to compete for same revenue and audiences. PSB, and particularly the public radio could no longer meet its public service functions efficiently (Kanyegirire, A 2002). It is against this background that advocates of media reform put forth the need for non-commercial radio. This type of reform called for 'community radio', a viable non-profit and non-commercial media Radio Sutatenza, established in 1947 in Colombia is considered as the first ever developing world community radio station. A miners' radio in Bolivia would emerge two years later to press for better working conditions for miners, and was supported by miners themselves who pledged a portion of their monthly salaries towards station's running costs. This was first recorded use by sector of society of radio broadcasting to improve its socio-economic status. (Da Costa, P., 2012:138).

In Africa, the first community radio was set up in May 1982, in Homa bay Kenya, under partnership between the UNESCO and Government. However, the Homabay 1982 initiative was short lived, following lack of support from both UNESCO and Kenyan Government (Oriare et al, 2010:6). Then, Mang'elele applied for license in 1997, but had to wait until 2002 (Nyanjom,O., 2012: 20).UNESCO would aid in setting up other community radio stations, such as Radio Dzimwe (Malawi), Radio Katatura (Namibia) and Mazabuka community radio (Zambia). Since then, community radio has grown exponentially in several other Africa countries such as South Africa, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, among others (Da Costa, 2012).

### **1.1.1: Radio Broadcasting Medium in South Eastern Kenya**

South Eastern Kenya is a region mainly populated by Kamba language speakers occupying three counties of Kitui, Machakos and Makueni. The main towns and urban centres are more cosmopolitan, with members of other communities within and without Kenya who work mainly in those towns and urban centres. The region is served by different communication media, including Television, Radio, Print, Internet, as well as mobile phone communications. According to Nyanjom, O. (2012), Eastern Kenya has 44 licensed broadcasting frequencies.

Radio broadcasting service is perhaps the most popular and well elaborate media in the region, with both national radio stations broadcasting mainly in English and Swahili or mixture of the two languages, as well as regional radio stations, broadcasting in the local dialect, Kamba language.

These radio stations include KBC (English and Swahili services, with some channels broadcasting in Kamba Language) which is the public broadcaster, several private owned radio stations, broadcasting either in English, such as Radio Africa Group Ltd-owned Kiss 100FM / Classic FM, and NMG- owned Nation FM; or in Swahili, such as RMS-owned Citizen Radio, Standard Group – owned Radio Maisha, Radio Africa Group – owned Radio Jambo and Media Max Limited-owned Milele FM. There are also other faith based stations such as Radio Waumini FM (Catholic), Biblia Husema FM, Hope FM, among others.

Others are privately owned radio stations, broadcasting in Kamba language, which according to Nyanjom, O. (2012), include Musyi FM, Athiani FM, Mbaitu FM, County FM and Syokimau FM. It is also possible to get some other few vernacular stations from other community languages such as Kikuyu Meru and Kalenjin languages, due to the proximity of the region to Nairobi city, from where most of these vernacular private radio stations broadcast from. Mang’elele FM remains the only community radio station in the region.

### **1.1.2: About Mang’elele FM**

Mang’elele FM is a community radio station owned by 33 women groups who came together to form a larger group, Mang’elele Community Integrated Development Programme (MCIDP) (Oriale *et al*, (2010), locally called MBOSONI in 1985, an organization through they used as a vehicle to establish various community projects in Makeni. One of such projects was donor supported community Radio, Mang’elele FM



situated in Nthongoni, 14 Kilometres from Mtito Andei, 4 km from Chyulu hills, and 3 km from Tsavo west national park. The station whose 90% of its broadcasting is in Kamba language, and 10% in Swahili, for the benefit of nearby Maasai and Taita communities, went on air on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2004. (Githethwa N., (Ed), 2008:38)

## **1.2: Problem Statement**

Despite concerted facilitation and intervention efforts especially by Non-Governmental Organizations as well as international Intergovernmental supra bodies such as UNESCO prioritizing support for growth of community radio in Kenya, the sustainability, and therefore, the growth of community radio is still low.

In contrast, commercial radio stations in the country have grown in numbers, in reach (coverage), in popularity and thus, in audience share market, despite the fact that the first such commercial FM radio was established over 15 years after establishment of first community radio in Kenya. Also, driven by profits, commercial radio stations are not ideal for fostering community's social change and development agenda, as opposed to community radio stations, which are development oriented.

As by October 2012, Nyanjom, O. (2012) points out that Communications Authority of Kenya (formerly Communications Commission of Kenya) had issued 365 radio frequencies, of which 300 frequencies were said to be operational, in use by slightly over 100 radio stations. Of these, according to Maina, S.N. (2013) only 12 Community Radio stations have been granted frequencies by CAK (formerly CCK). This low community

radio growth rate and low market share, compared to growth, coverage and audience market of commercial radio stations, brings into question how competitive and sustainable the former has been, since they are both operating in the same media environment.

### **1.3: General Objective**

The general Objective of this study was to investigate how sustainable community radio is currently, in such competitively commercialized media setting.

### **1.4: Specific Objectives**

- a) To determine how commercialized media environment in Kenya has affected sustainability of community radio;
- b) To identify sustainability challenges and opportunities for community radio in commercialized media in Kenya;
- c) To document key community radio sustainability lessons arising from competitive commercialized media environment.

### **1.5: Research Questions**

- a) How has commercialized media environment in Kenya affected the sustainability of community radio?
- b) What are main sustainability challenges and opportunities for community radio?
- c) What sustainability lessons can be learnt on existing community radio models in Kenya?

## **1.6: Rationale and Justification**

The existing scholarly research work on community radio in Kenya has not delved deeply and in a dedicated manner, into the question of understanding effect the independent variable of commercialized media on dependent variable of sustainability of community radio, something that this research intended to address.

The outcomes of the research are practical sustainability strategies that community radio can adopt in order to adjust to the commercialized media arena without changing the original purpose as development and social change tool. Of interest in this research therefore, was to investigate the relationship between commercialization and sustainability of existing and potential community radios.

## **1.7: Scope and Limitations**

The research sought to draw lessons around sustainability of community radio by focusing on a case study on one community radio in Kenya, Mang'elele FM, in Nthongoni, Kibwezi, Makueni County. The study focused on investigating of how proliferation of commercial radio stations, especially those broadcasting in Kamba language has affected sustainability of Mang'elele Fm. The research took two months to complete. The sources of primary and secondary information included the management and the staff members of the Mang'elele FM, local community members, media law experts, advertisers, listeners, published research work and statistics from relevant media institutions.

## **1.8 Operational Definition of Terms and Phrases**

**Community:** This is a homogenous group of people with a common binding factor such as geographical location, language, religion, race, class, and opinions.

**Community radio:** This is a radio broadcasting service which is for, by and about the community, whose ownership and management is representative of the community, pursuing social development agenda and it operates as a non-profit entity.

**Public Broadcasting Service:** This is a non-commercial television or radio station devoted to quality public programming and are funded through public contributions, government allocations and grants from private industry.

**Private and commercial broadcasting service:** These are broadcasting media stations, usually privately owned and that are operated for profit or as part of a profit-making enterprise, generating their revenue from advertising or sponsorships

**Media environment:** This refers to conditions, including social, economical, geographical, political and cultural, in which media operate in.

**Sustainable media:** These media that have the potential for long-term maintenance of well being, which have ecological, economic, political and cultural dimensions.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.0: Introduction**

This chapter explores past scholarly inquiries and the knowledge developed into the relationship between the sustainability of community radio and commercialized media environment. I have pointed the challenge of defining community radio legally vis-à-vis the operational definition. More so, scholars have delved into what ‘sustainability’ of community radio means, to bring out a more holistic understanding, an understanding that takes sustainability beyond being a synonym to financial sustainability. In this chapter, I propose a hybrid approach to achieving sustainability of community radio. Theoretically, I based this research on Public sphere model, participatory communication model and the system theory of management.

### **2.1: Empirical Review**

#### **2.1.1: Legal versus operational definition: Community radio**

One challenge in addressing the community radio’s sustainability has been defining what a community radio is, theoretically and practically, and then, secondly understanding the concept of ‘sustainability’ of the community radio. Maina, S.N. (2013) has it that there is no clear definition of community radio since they are operationally placed in the same category as public and commercial or private radio, meaning that they all operate in the same environment despite having different legal definitions. This, she adds, means that Kenya’s community radio has not received much intellectual and critical research

attention and therefore, there is little information written specifically about Community Radio.

Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2002) term community radio as a form of non-profit radio broadcasting service owned and managed by a particular community, either through trust or through a foundation. He further adds that apart from the media tool relying on community's resources for sustainability, its programming is based on local audience access and participation, reflecting on the needs and interests the same community.

Banda, F. (2003) has it that according to the South African Broadcasting Act of 1999, community broadcasting service is not only fully controlled by a non-profit entity and carried on for non-profitable purposes, but also exists to serve a particular community, encouraging members of the community served or persons associated with promoting the interests of such community to participate in selection and provision of programmes to be broadcast and it funded by donations, grants, sponsorships, or membership fees. Put concisely, the African Charter on Broadcasting terms community radio as a "Broadcasting which is for, by and about community, whose ownership and management is representative of the community which purely pursues social development agenda and which is non-profit" (Da Costa, P., 2012:137).

From the above definitions, it is possible to derive four aspects of a community radio: It is community owned, it is defined by participation of the local community in programming and management, its agenda is development oriented and empowerment of

local community and more explicit; it exists as a 'not-for-profit' broadcasting service. Allen, K & Gagliardone, I. (2011) point out that there is a distinction between vernacular radio and community radio, where the former describe either community or commercial enterprises that broadcast in local ethnic community language, with commercial ones operating for profit, while promoting partisan agenda. In contrast, community radio strives to serve the public, with their broadcast that contain messages that are socially useful to the community.

### **2.1.2: Concept of sustainability**

Indeed, community radio is an ideal media tool for providing local communities with a platform through which they can experience social change, achieving community empowerment and development, fostering behaviour change, while alleviating poverty. According to Fraser & Restrepo - Estrada (2002), there is documented evidence pointing to the success that community radio has opened up space to air, debate and foster solutions around key issues of concern to the community. World over, community radio has become strategy of choice to address poverty at the grass root level since it can reach communities in a way that other forms of broadcasting or media cannot. It is the medium of the voiceless, and mouthpiece of the oppressed people.

Community radio is globally considered as an intervention of choice for deepening participation and community ownership, where beyond empowering communities, it can catalyze behaviour change and impact positively on wider development outcomes. Allen, K & Gagliardone, I. (2011) point out that community radio is often regarded as a reliable

and calming force during times of political instability, hence the growing scholarly interest into how it can remain sustainable media tool.

There is a misconception to always view community Radio's sustainability question as a question of financial stability of the station. Da Costa, P., (2012) views sustainability in a broader sense, proposing a more holistic and wider definition that, sustainability has three dimensions which 'determine the ability of community radio to survive and grow. The first dimension, according to Da Costa, is 'Institutional Sustainability', meaning the community ownership of the community radio. Unless the local community can fully participate in the management, decision making, partnership and policy formulation processes of the radio, then there is risk of perceiving such community radio as 'foreign'. Second dimension is what Da Costa refers to as 'social sustainability', which according to him refers to participation of local community in production and airing of programmes at both decision making and operational levels. In this, local community would own station more if they are involved in the decisions about what kind of issues to focus on as part of programming, and then local members being in actual production and airing of such programmes, as technicians, producers, reporters, among others.

Da Costa identifies financial sustainability, which he refers to as the model employed to ensure generation of revenue, how the funds are managed and accounted for. Jallof, B., (2007) adds a fourth dimension: Organizational sustainability, which includes capacity building programmes for staff and local community in regard to management and



operations of the community radio, existing legislations and policies, the technology being employed and existence of relevant networks.

### **2.1.3: Commercialized media environment**

Globally, Mytton, G (1999), in his handbook on Radio and Television research, states that Broadcasting in most countries is now being diversified. Countries in Europe, Asia and Africa that formerly had state or public service monopolies have permitted independent broadcasters. Many of these operate on a commercial basis, relying on the sale of advertising and the commercial sponsorship of programmes.

In Europe, non-commercial radio preceded, not followed, commercial broadcasting with commercial channels being created in 1990s. According to Dunaway (1998), most of these community broadcasting services were municipal- or party-funded, though in France and Norway, they drew funds from a national levy. These community stations received regular financial support from a municipality or an institution charged with serving the local population. This meant that stations rarely, if ever, tested audience loyalty by requesting donations over the air (Dunaway, D., 1998:93).

However, Dunaway, D. (1998) has it that by the 1990s community radio had become survivors in the hard battle for funds, victim of tax-cutting disaffection with the social democratic/welfare state. Thus, faced with the question of growing commercialized sustainability model, and with reducing donor support, for these community radio outlets in North America and Western Europe, an idea of a public community radio was

conceived, where, they started accepting advertisements, turning into competitors for the local state broadcasters and the audience-winning, profit-driver formats of commercial broadcasters (Dunaway(1998). As a result, today community radio is caught between two perspectives: open access, which fulfills the original aesthetic and moral imperative of community radio's founding generation; and audience-building, referring to size, character, and financial resources.

In Kenya, to illustrate how commercialized is media environment, a 2011 report titled '*Explosion in media changes: Audience and advertising trends in Kenya*' by IPSOS Synovate, has it that the media landscape in Kenya is currently dominated by vernacular private (commercial) radio stations powered by the fact that 81% of Kenyan population aged 15 years and above use vernacular language. This popularity is even higher in rural areas.

The report adds that this popularity and access of radio is increased by growth of technology where local community can access radio broadcasts even on mobile phones. Further, the report has it that proliferation of many (commercial) radio stations has led to fragmentation of audience, with listeners switching from one station to the other.

This means that commercial radios, motivated by profits would employ the best radio talent, programming, technology, et cetera, to increase market share to gain more advertising revenue, to the detriment of growth of community radio, which can't compete with the former, threatening its survival, especially where donor funds are drying up.

The rate of commercialization of media environment in Kenya is represented by statistics in the another IPSOS Synovate report (2014) which indicate that the advertising revenue in 2013 was Ksh94.5 billion, a 5% growth compared to advertising expenditure in 2012, which was Ksh90.4 billion. This indicates a steady positive growth, compared to Kshs 3.9 billion in 1999 and Kshs. 49.2 billion in 2010 (IPSOS Synovate report, 2011).The report states that most share of the indicated advertising went to radio at 47% followed by Television at 41% and print at 12%. Overall, advertising expenditure on radio was Ksh44.6 billion in 2013, a modest increase of 0.8% from statistics in 2012.The IPSOS Synovate (2011) report states that although steady economic growth from 2004 to 2007 contributed to growth of this revenue, majorly, the growth was due to fragmented audience, brought about by rapid proliferation of commercial radio stations within the same period.

Even though there are documented success stories of community radio still remaining operational, there are also many community radio stations which have failed to remain viable or sustainable, hence high attrition rate. For instance, the first community radio set up in Homa bay, Kenya could not survive without support of donors. Da costa (2012) has it that community radio stations in Africa, and more so, true in Kenya, are heavily dependent on donor funding for survival, operating in media environment where airwaves are dominated by more accessible and popular commercial radio stations.

This precarious *Modus Operandi* means that in case donor community pulls out its funding, the operations of community media are grounded, making it extremely difficult

for these radios to compete with profit oriented and well established commercial radio stations. These commercial radio stations are more oriented to profit making, rather than development agenda, hence, they are more ‘aggressive’ than community radio. According to Fraser & Restrepo - Estrada (2002), like community radio services, commercial radio are local, broadcasting in local dialect, targeting the same local audiences.

The environment, in which many community radio stations operate, is dominated by donors, with the airwaves dominated by more accessible and popular commercial radio stations. Together with lack of sufficient community ownership and leadership; funding constraints and distorted incentives, this has made their sustainability of community radio a huge challenge (Da Costa, P., 2012). This is made harder for community radio by existing legislation, since, according to the Kenya Information and Communications Act (2009, amended 2013) , community radio license is granted on condition of the community broadcasting service operates as not-for-profit community initiative with the intention of involving local community in its management and benefits (Nyanjom, O. (2012).

#### **2.1.4: African Case Review: Community radio in East Africa: An impact and sustainability assessment of three community radios within the EACMP (2007)**

This was a research by Birgitte Jallof on three community radio stations that participated in East Africa Community Media Project (EACMP) supported by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, SIDA, and coordinated by EcoNews Africa (ENA), a

Non-governmental Organization that was based in Nairobi, aimed at combating poverty in three selected communities in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

In this research, it was established that community radio stations targeted, including, Mang'elele FM,(Kenya) Kibaale-Kagadi FM, (Uganda) and Orkonerei Radio Services (Tanzania) had indicated high social sustainability and ownership. However, they remained weak in areas of institutional and financial sustainability (Da Costa, P., 2012).Among the important lessons from this research, as pointed out by Da Costa, was that community radios need to be more networked with other stations, to reduce their fragility and improve their sustainability.

Da Costa (2012) singled out the case of Mang'elele FM, in that it is in considerable difficulties because it is the only one of the three stations that separated itself from community based organization that originally hosted it, that is, EACMP. The other two, according to Githethwa (2010) have been able to overcome challenges brought about by collapse of EcoNews Africa in 2010, due to their strong institutional linkages and dynamic leadership. Allen, K & Gagliardone, I (2011), in their *Media Map Project* case studies in Kenya point out that community ownership is difficult to maintain in these community radio stations, which threatens their sustainability and quality. They add that these stations depend on the donor funding and that many find it difficult to remain sustainable, once the donors leave.

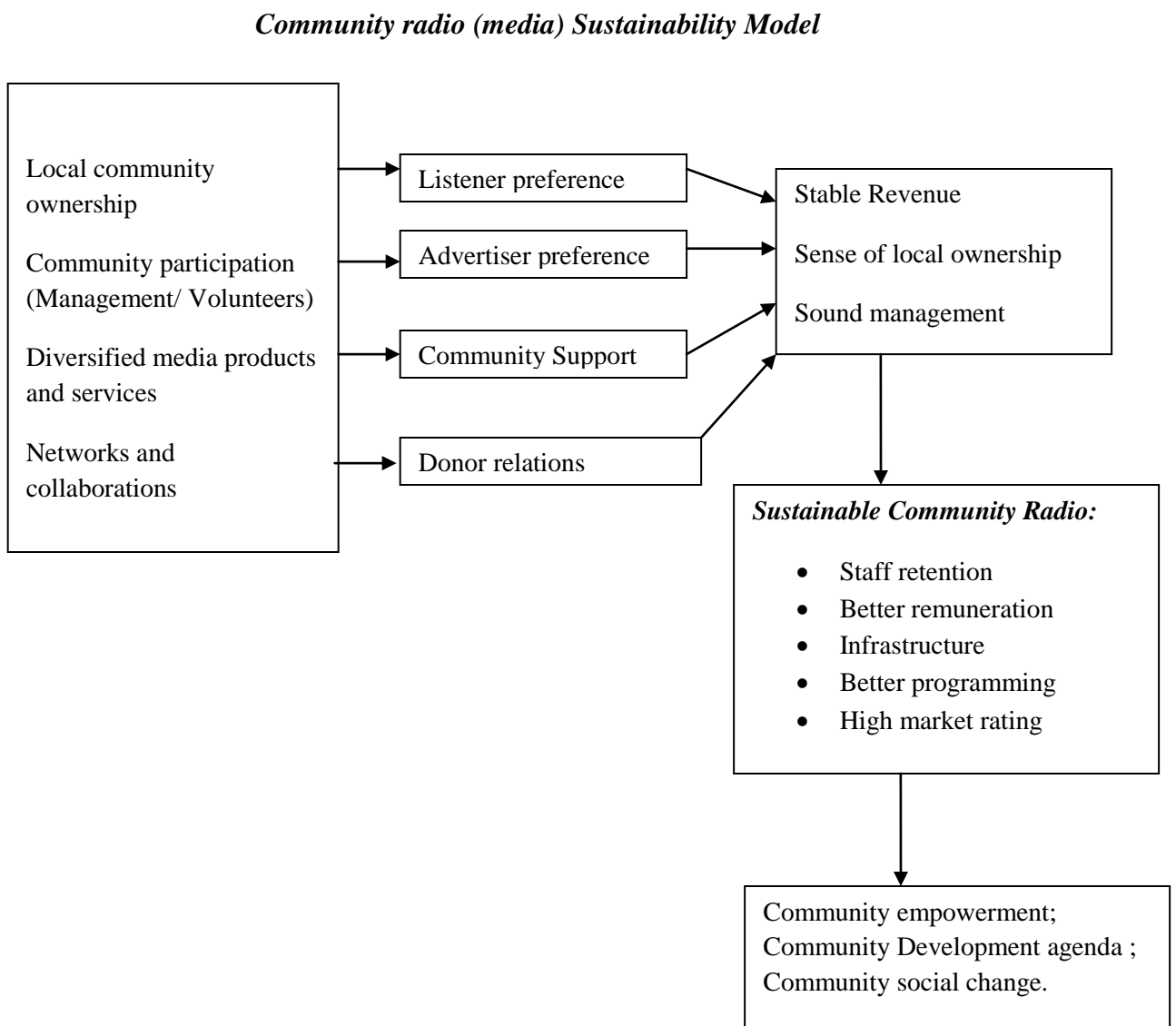
## **2.2: Research Gap**

A lot of research, as highlighted above, has been and continue to be undertaken on sustainability of community radio projects generally, and a lot of literature has so far been developed in the last decade. However, a closer scrutiny of these research projects would indicate that issue of sustainability has in most cases, been superficially handled as part of the larger research projects and more so, in general terms. Thus, very little insight exists in understanding specific independent variables that affect sustainability *per se*.

The commercialized environment is bound to be even more competitive as new technologies are being employed by commercial stations (and other media outlets) to get the market edge. This means that for the purposes of increasing sustainability of community radio, more research is needed to understand the impact of existing independent variables such as commercialized media environment, rapidly changing communication technologies, among others.

## 2.3: Conceptual framework

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework



Source: (Author)

## **2.4: Theoretical Framework**

This research is grounded theoretically in public sphere; participatory communication models and Systems Theory of management.

### **2.4.1: Public Sphere Model:**

The essence of Community radio is to provide a forum on which members of public can exchange ideas, discuss of common issues of concern, while creating an arena that mediates between state and society. This is what public sphere model of communication posits. Germany philosopher Jurgen Habermas (1962;1989), the proponent of this model defines 'public sphere' as a forum where private individuals can debate public affairs, criticize the authority of state and call on those in power to justify their positions before an informed and reasoning public, which is independent of government and partisan economic forces (Williams, K. 2003).

Public Sphere model is grounded on free flow of information and communication, where media institutions are essential to its effective working. Habermas justifies historical evolution of public sphere model, pointing out that growth of mass society in seventeenth and eighteenth century provided forum for liberal thought, where this freedom was manifested through growth of critical reflection in plays, novels and letters, and flowering of public discussions in outlets such as in universities, coffee houses as well as the emerging newly independent private newspapers (Curran 1991:83). These developments had by nineteenth century resulted to formation of a public sphere characterized by open



debate, critical scrutiny, full reportage, increased accessibility and independence of actors from crude economic interests as well as free from state control (Webster, 1995).

Habermas states that from nineteenth century onwards, growth of power of state, the emergence of corporate capitalism and transformation of media into commercial operations, now driven by desire for making profits by their owners, rather than acting as information providers for their readers, corrupted this public sphere (Williams, K. 2003). Williams explains that this Market-driven capitalism overrode the principle of public communication, where public opinion was being manipulated and manufactured for publicity, advertising, public relations and social engineering.

Webster (1995) states that in 20th century, mass media has developed into monopoly capitalistic organizations and therefore, their role as key disseminators of public information is diminished. As a result, these commercial media (including privately owned radio stations) have become arms of capital interest. Therefore, with public arena and opinion commoditized by commercial media, the public voice from community is lost, hence creating danger where community's social and development agenda is lost on profit oriented media channels.

One basic assumption in this model is that media solely, is a resource for information, an open forum for debate and discussion and a watchdog on behalf of the public. Therefore, based on this assumption, Kanyegirire, A. (2002) opines that there is need for a

movement in media that consciously resists powerful influences, such as commercial pressures, so as to enable it to fulfill its democratic responsibility to the public.

#### **2.4.2: Participatory Communication Model:**

Different development communication scholars have overtime attempted to develop a working communication model that effectively leads to sustainable development. Among such early models is Harold Lasswell's communication theory modeled along a linear communication approach, which was understood to mean transfer of information from source to receiver in a step-by-step change process (Tuftte M. & Mefalopulos, P. (2009).

According to Servaeas J. (ed) (2002) this model sees the communication process mainly as a message going from a sender to a receiver. Atypical example of such a strategy is situated in the area of family planning, where communication means like posters, pamphlets, radio, and television attempt to persuade the public to accept birth control methods. Similar strategies are used on campaigns regarding health and nutrition, agricultural projects and education.

In these early strategic communication approaches, there was no participatory element. Instead, Tuftte M. & Mefalopulos, P. (2009) state that the power of communication to enhance development was in crafting persuasive content and adequately targeting the audience. Such approaches, including Everret Rodger's diffusion theory, have been often seen as elitist, with a vertical or top-down orientation, and have a danger of creating a

dependence syndrome on recipients, endangering the sustainability of the project, once the benefactors such as donors of a community radio, pull out.

Servaes (2002) sees the participatory communication model as ideal, since it incorporates the concepts in the framework of multiplicity. This is a model that stresses on reciprocal collaboration throughout all levels of participation, with key focus on the local community. It is at the community level that the problems of living conditions are discussed, and interactions with other communities are elicited. The most developed form of participation is self-management. It stresses the importance of cultural identity of local communities and of democratization and participation at all levels—international, national, local and individual.

This principle implies the right to participate in the planning and production of media content. More important is that participation is made possible in the decision-making regarding the subjects treated in the messages and regarding the selection procedures. Nevertheless, participation does not imply that there is no longer a role for development specialists, benefactors (partners) planners, and institutional leaders. It only means that the viewpoint of the local groups of the public is considered before the resources for development projects (Servaes, J. (Ed): 2002).

This approach is crucial in understanding the social and institutional sustainability of community, that is, how the local community own the radio station, how it participates in its management, as well as content production processes. The successes and failures of

most development projects (such as a community radio) are often determined by two crucial factors: communication and people's involvement (Fraser C. & Restrepo-Estrada (1998)).

### **2.4.3: Systems Theory of Management**

Finally, the research is informed by Systems Theory of Management, as advanced by biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1951, who posits that:

“A living organism is not a conglomeration of separate elements but a definite system, possessing organization and wholeness. An organism is an open system which maintains a constant state while matter and energy which enter it keep changing (so-called dynamic equilibrium). The organism is influenced by, and influences, its environment and reaches a state of dynamic equilibrium in this environment. Such a description of a system adequately fits the typical business organization (Johnson, R.A., *et al*, 1964: 370-371).

Johnson, et al (1964) state that, the business organization is a man-made system, which has a dynamic interplay with its environment which includes its customers, competitors, labor organizations, suppliers, Government, and many other agencies.

“Furthermore, the business organization is a system of interrelated parts working in conjunction with each other in order to accomplish a number of goals, both those of the organization and those of individual participants. (Johnson, R.A., et al, 1964: 371).

As per this theory therefore, media organizations, whether private and commercial or non-profit making community radio stations, must constantly assess both internal and external environments, in which an institution is operating in, in order to adapt accordingly by adopting strategies that mitigate the threats identified, while seizing the opportunities identified in such internal or external environment.

Internal environment involves assessing the internal resources, management structures, talent management, use of technology, ownership, among others. External environmental would identify factors arising beyond control of the media organization (community radio) due to existing competition in the market (especially from commercial radio and other media organizations), legal and policy issues, entry of new competition in the same market, change of consumer tastes, and change of (media) technology, for instance, the new media technologies and digital broadcasting, among others.

These are some of factors whose impact this study aimed to identify, in order to recommend appropriate strategies which community radio can adopt to enhance their sustainability in competitive, highly commercialized media environment.

The internal environment was investigated qualitatively, while the external environment was interrogated quantitatively, and inferences drawn from information collected.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1: Research design**

This study adopted case study design. This is an in-depth investigation of an individual, group, institution or phenomenon, which is viewed as an example of a group of individuals, institutions or phenomena. It is best research design when a researcher intends to determine factors and relations among factors that have resulted in the behaviour under study (Mugenda, O. & Mugenda, A.,2003).

### **3.2: Research Population**

Mugenda, O. & Mugenda, A (2003) define population as an entire group of individuals, events or objects, having common observable characteristics. They identify two kinds of population:

Target population: This refers to the total set of subjects in a study where the research will be generalized. For this study, the target population include community radio stations that broadcast in vernacular and are members of Community Radio Association of Kenya, which, according to Nyanjom, O (2012) include: Mang'elele FM (Kibwezi, Makueni), Bulala FM (Budalang'i, Busia), Serian FM (Malaral, Samburu), Oltoilo le Maa (Suswa, Narok), Mugambo Jwetu (Tigania West, Meru), Kangema FM (Kangema, Murang'a) Wajir FM (Wajir) (Nyathom, O. 2012: 26)

Accessible population: This refers to the set of subjects from which the sample of the study is to be derived. Mang'elele FM was purposively identified as the case study.

### **3.3: Research Approach; Sampling and Sampling Techniques**

Qualitative method was employed to gather narrative data that required no numeral figures. It was adopted to collect information on how commercialized media environment has affected Mang'elele FM, (and by extension, other community radio stations) via in-depth interviews with board, management and staff of Mang'elele radio station, media legal experts, as well as local community members. In addition, relevant documents were reviewed as additional sources of qualitative data.

Purposive sampling technique was used to identify the persons for the above mentioned interviews. This is where cases were purposely identified because they hold the desired information for this study. Quantitative method was employed to gather numeral data from possible advertisers and listeners to understand their preferences between commercial and community radio. This was informed by the fact that media organizations strive to acquire as much listenership as possible, as a market product, which they in turn 'sell' to advertisers and sponsors for revenue generation, to sustain themselves, whether commercial or community radio.

Specifically, the quantitative survey targeted:

- a) Advertisers: Business organizations that have advertising power within the geographical region of the study area. These included: Supermarkets, Timber and hardware stores, Petrol stations, Cereals store, Boutiques, General shops, Cyber café, Grocery, Grains stores, Electronics shops and a music store. Of interest in this survey was to understand: what are the preferred radio stations to advertise

their businesses and why. Also, given a chance to make donation to support a radio station in Ukambani, which one would it have been, and why?

- b) Listeners Survey: They were be stratified into three clusters (Mtito Andei, Kibwezi and Makindu) as per sex and urban centres. Of interest was to understand which radio stations they listen, their favourite programmes (from which station(s) and why, favourite presenters (from which station(s)) and why. Also, given a chance to make donation to support a radio station in Ukambani, which one would it have been, and why?

This was important, since the quality of programming and talent skills in a radio station are related to its ability to sustain itself by gaining in listenership market share, which in turn attract advertisers (or sponsors, in case of community radio stations), a major source of revenue for these stations. A sample size of 45 possible advertisers was included in the advertisers' survey while 240 cases of listeners were sampled for the listeners' survey.

Cluster sampling technique was employed to identify samples for both advertisers' survey and listeners' survey. This is because it was not possible to get a sampling frame (for instance, it was not possible for example to know the total number of advertiser/ sponsor businesses within the study area. Thus, the urban centres were used as clusters. Three (3) identified urban centres (*source: Makueni county: First county integrated development plan: 2013-2017*) formed the clusters, therefore three (3) clusters, including: Kibwezi, Makindu, Mtito Andei. From each cluster, cases for both advertisers' and listeners' survey were selected via simple random sampling technique.



The following formula was used to calculate units per each cluster:

***Advertisers' survey sample:***

$1/3 \times 45 = 15$  units from Kibwezi town cluster

$1/3 \times 45 = 15$  units from Makindu town cluster

$1/3 \times 45 = 15$  units from MtitoAndei town cluster

Total: 45 units

***Listeners' survey sample:***

According to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2013 report , Makueni County (including Kibwezi) population in 2012 was projected to be 922,183 consisting of 449,036 males and 473,147 females, representing a male-female sex ratio of 100:105 (*Makueni County Integrated Development Plan, 2013:8*). Using this ratio (male: female = 100:105); and with a sample size of 240; therefore sample units for each of three clusters was calculated as follows:

$1/3 \times 240 = 80$  listeners in Kibwezi town cluster

a) Men :

$100/205 \times 80 = 39.02$ , thus 39 males;

b) Women:

$105/205 \times 80 = 40.97$ , thus 41 females

$1/3 \times 240 = 80$  listeners in Makindu town cluster

a) Men :

$100/205 \times 80 = 39.02$ , thus 39 males;

b) Women:

$$105/205 \times 80 = 40.97, \text{ thus } 41 \text{ females}$$

$1/3 \times 240 = 80$  listeners in Mtito Andei town cluster

a) Men :

$$100/205 \times 80 = 39.02, \text{ thus } 39 \text{ males};$$

b) Women:

$$105/205 \times 80 = 40.97, \text{ thus } 41 \text{ females}$$

Total: 240 units to be surveyed

### **3.4: Data Collection Instruments and Techniques**

Data collection methods included administered questionnaires, interviews, Focus Group Discussion, observation, and review of recorded data from documents. Questionnaires were administered to gather quantitative data, while interview schedules were used to gather qualitative data.

### **3.5: Data Instrument Pretesting**

The questionnaire and the interview schedules were tested in Makindu town before actual data collecting to ascertain their reliability. The results deduced from the pre-test were used to refine the questionnaire and interview schedules.

### **3.6: Data Analysis**

The qualitative and quantitative data collected was coded, analyzed and presented as frequency distribution tables, graphs, charts, and narrations, from which inferences, recommendations and conclusions were made.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **4.0: Introduction**

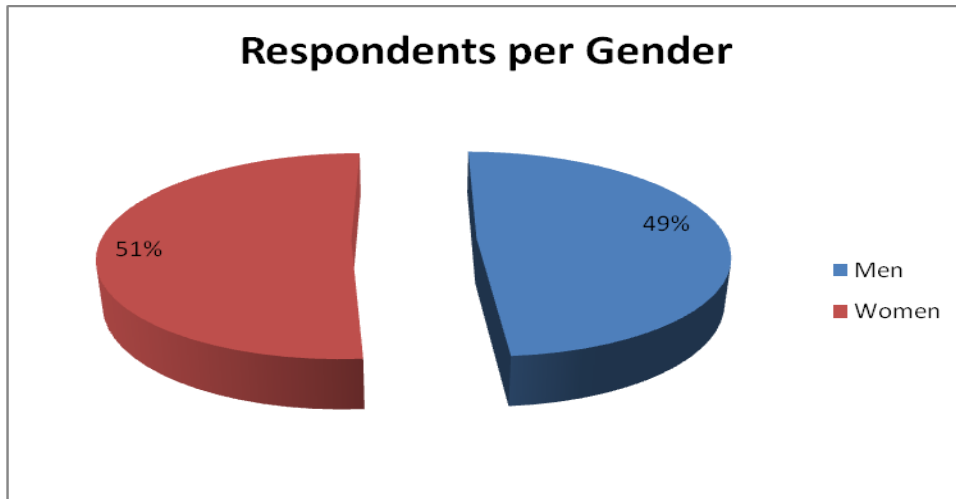
In this chapter analyzed data is presented using frequency distribution tables, histograms, pie charts, narrations and discussions for qualitative description and summarized according to common themes. The analysis is based on the study objectives and research questions.

### **4.1: Respondents' Response**

The study received 100% response from the targeted respondents, both in qualitative and quantitative data collection. Qualitatively, all the targeted face to face interviews involving the management and staff of Mang'elele community radio, a local community member and a legal expert were conducted. The interviews included a one-on-one sessions with a staff member, a local community member and a legal expert, while a Focus Group Discussion that brought together five participants, including the executive director, station Manager and three members of Board of Directors was also conducted.

Quantitatively, the response was also 100% in all clusters, both for Listeners and Advertisers survey. Demographically, for listeners' survey, in terms of gender, the research involved 117 men and 123 women, in a ratio of 1:1.05, as based on Makeni County population's projection (*Kenyan National Bureau of Statistics report, 2012*); translating to 48.75% of respondents being men, while women were 51.25% respectively:

**Figure 4. 1: Respondents per Gender**



*Source: author*

According to age, the frequency distribution table below indicates the spread respondents who were picked randomly in the three clusters, in a range of 10 in all clusters:

**Table 4.1: Respondents' analysis**

Cluster <i>Age/ Gender</i>	Makindu		Kibwezi		Mtito Andei		Totals	<i>Rate</i>
	<i>Male</i>	<i>female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male/ female</i>	<i>Male/ female</i>
<b>15-24</b>	12	20	6	6	14	11	69	<b>28.75%</b>
<b>25 -34</b>	9	12	10	15	10	11	67	<b>27.92%</b>
<b>35 – 44</b>	8	2	14	6	10	10	50	<b>20.83%</b>
<b>45 – 54</b>	5	6	2	8	3	6	30	<b>12.5%</b>
<b>Above 55</b>	5	1	7	6	2	3	24	<b>10%</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>240 Cases</b>	<b>100%</b>

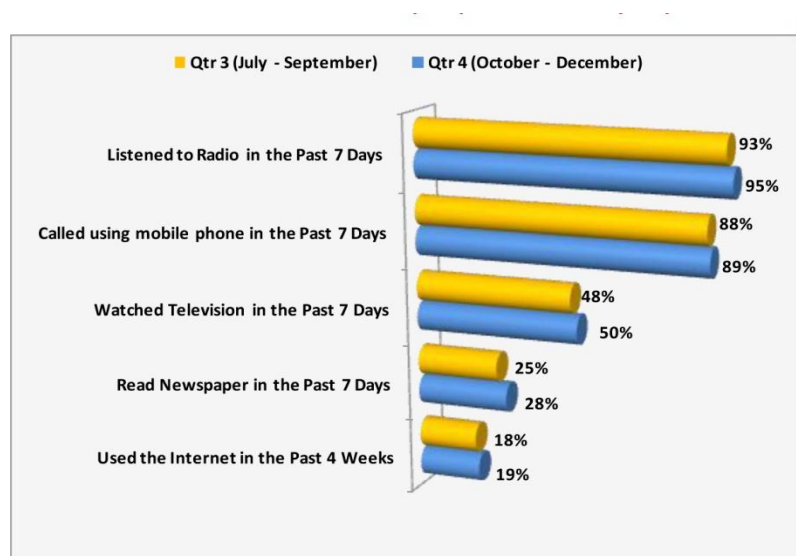
Advertisers' survey involved 15 cases per cluster (Mtito Andei, Kibwezi and Makindu clusters). The study received a 100% response from total targeted 45 advertiser-cases, which were randomly picked. These cases included petrol stations; a cereals stores; boutique; Supermarket; general stores shops; Cyber café; grocery; Electronics shop and a Music store.

## 4.2: Findings and Discussion

### 4.2.1: Effect of commercialized media environment on Community radio:

*Radio medium Popularity:* A report by Synovate on Media consumption habits in Kenya (2011) indicate that radio is the most accessed media.

**Figure 4.2: Media Consumption Habits in Kenya (2011)**

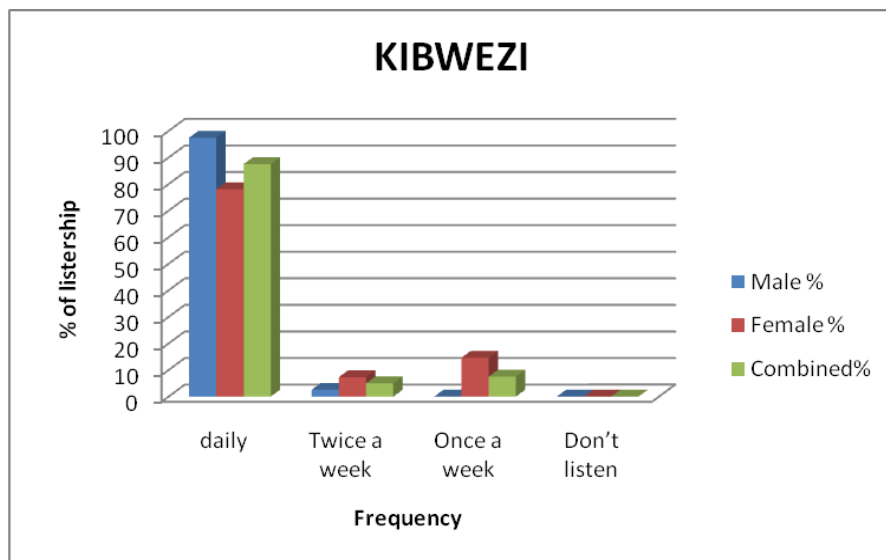


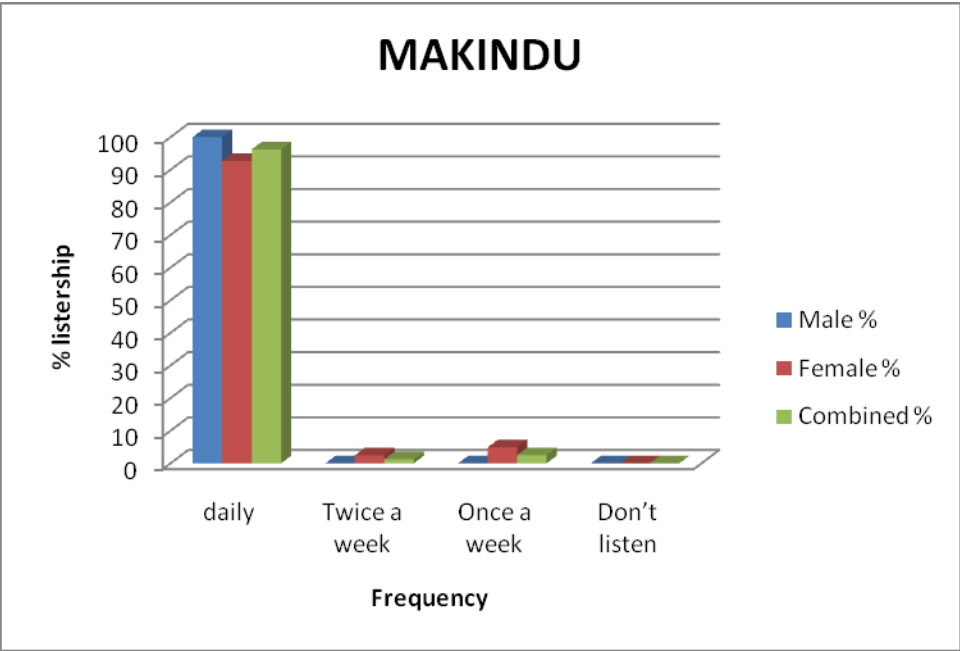
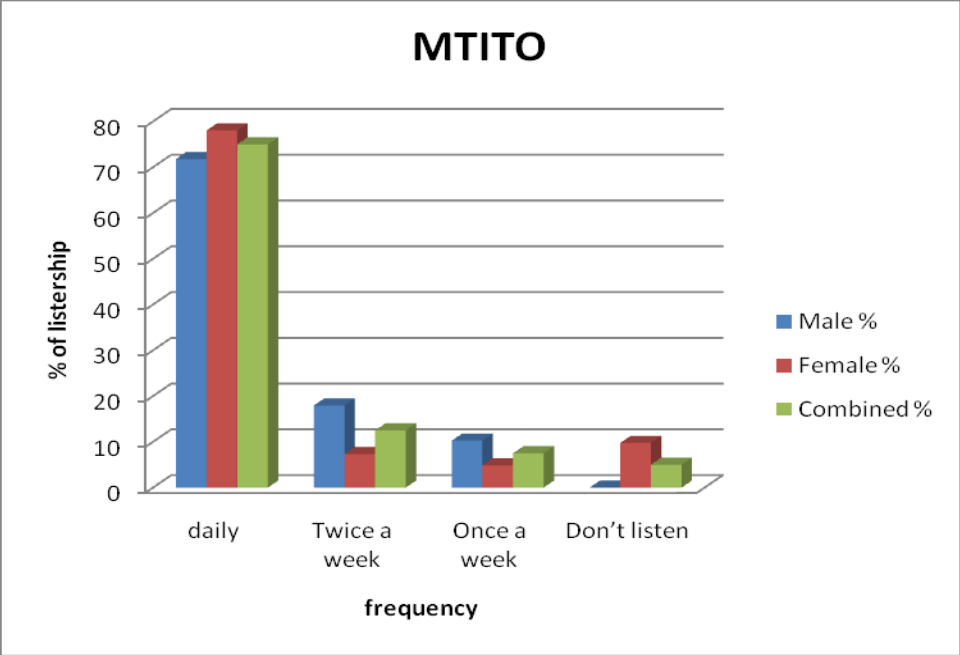
Source: Synovate report

This is confirmed by a Country Report by Open Society Foundations, titled: *Mapping Digital media-Kenya (2013)*, which indicates that 74 percent of Kenyans have access to the country's 120 radio stations, most of them FM stations owned by individuals and various organizations including the government. Television is the second most popular medium, accessed by 28 percent of the population, followed in distant third by Newspapers.

The popularity of radio as a medium was confirmed in this study where 236 cases out of possible 240 cases, translating to 98.33% of the sampled listeners' cases, responded to have access to radio. The research revealed that most of these respondents consume radio daily.

**Figure 4.3: Radio Consumption Kibwezi, Mtito and Makindu**

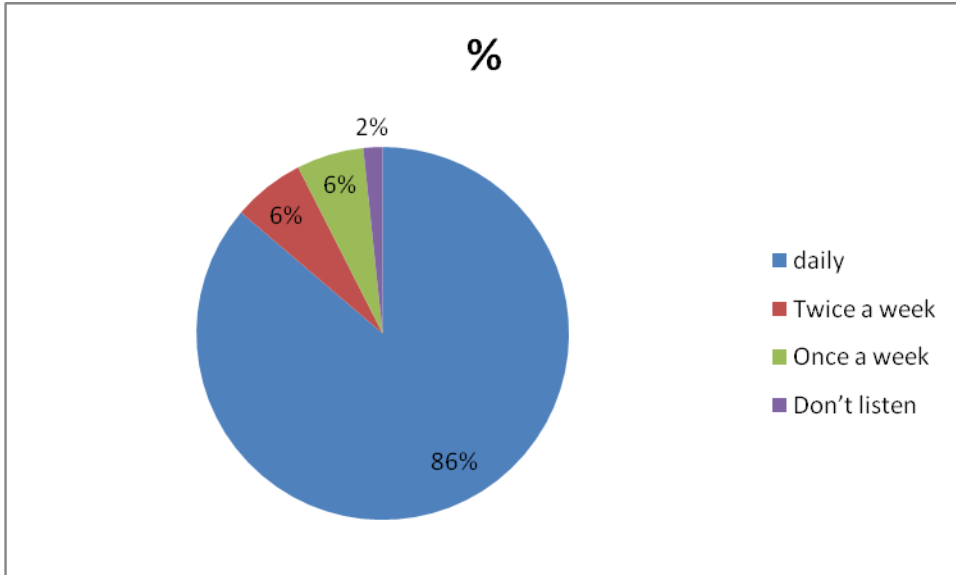




Source: (Author)



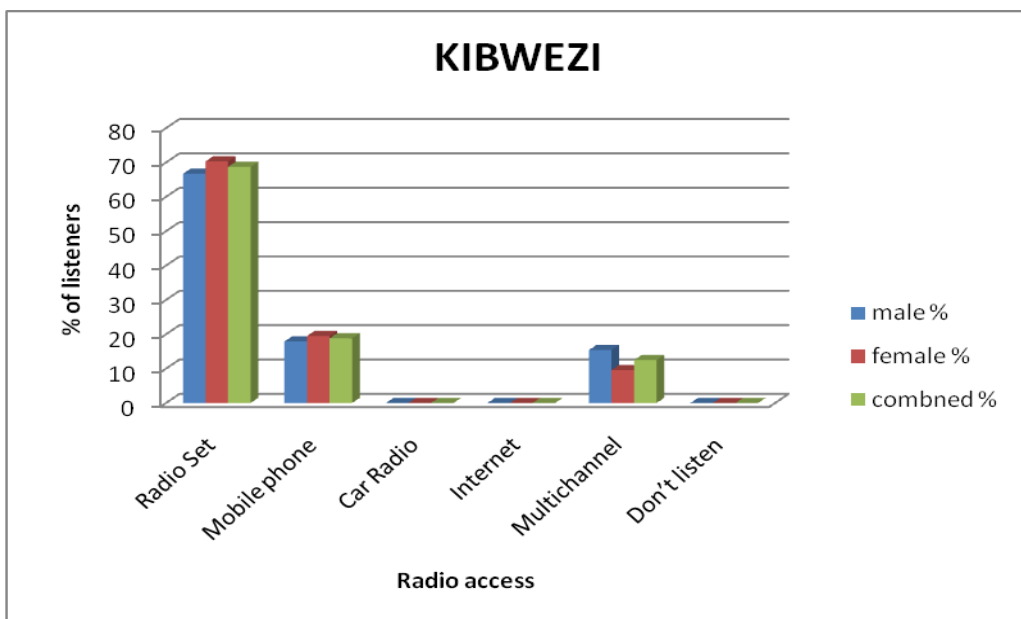
**Figure 4.4 Total frequency of listenership:**

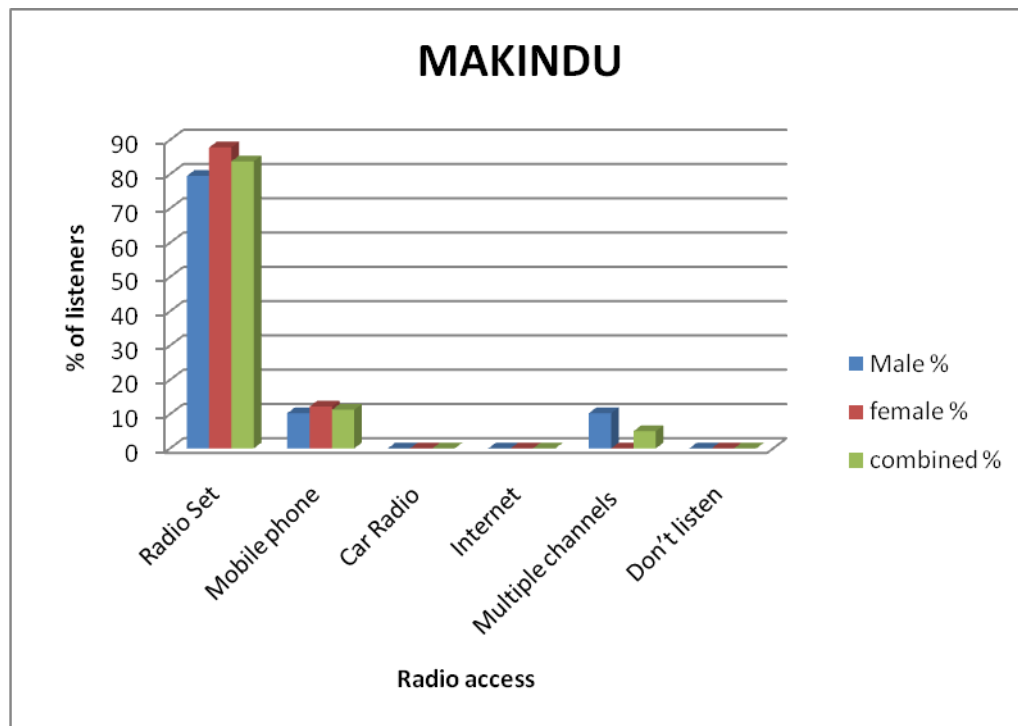
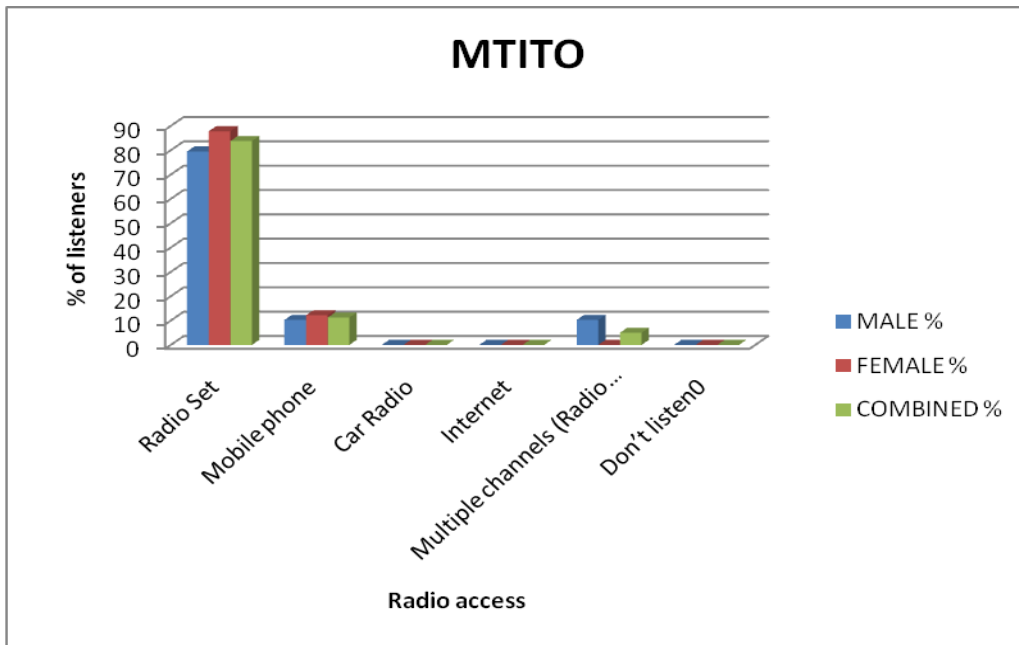


*Source: (Author)*

This radio access is mostly through radio set, even though few respondents indicated that they access it through mobile phone.

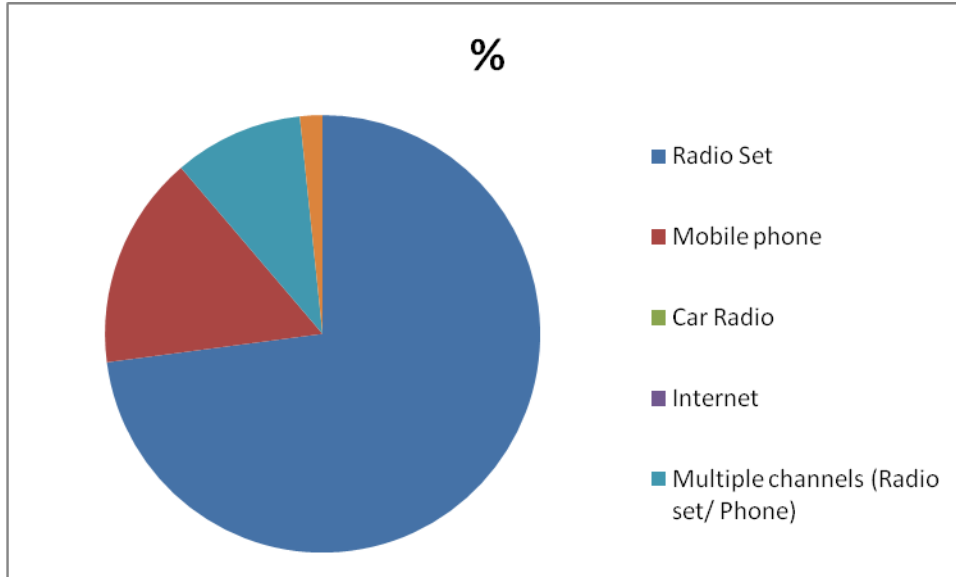
**Figure 4.5 Radio access**





Source: (Author)

**Figure 4.6: Total radio medium access:**



*Source: Author*

This indicates that for the community radio, it may not be a priority to invest on information technologies such as streaming on the internet, since the targeted population especially in most rural areas, receive radio broadcasts via radio sets. The community radio station should first identify the technologies accessible to its audience before employing such technologies, to avoid misapplication resources.

#### **4.2.2: Listener preference: Commercial radio stations versus Community radio station**

The study sought to understand the specific impact of commercial radio stations broadcasting in South Eastern Kenya, on Mang'elete FM as a community radio station, by investigating the listeners' preferences. The listeners were asked to state how often they listen to listed radio stations, and the findings were as follows:

**Table 4.2: Listening frequency: Makindu, Mtito Andei and Kibwezi clusters combined**

<b>Station</b>	<b>Through out</b>	<b>Once a day</b>	<b>Once a week</b>	<b>Don't Listen</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Musyi</b>	58.75	30.42	8.75	2.5
<b>Athiani</b>	6.67	19.17	12.5	61.67
<b>Mang'elete</b>	0	2.08	7.08	90.83
<b>Mbaitu</b>	1.67	0.83	4.58	92.92
<b>county</b>	0.83	1.67	7.92	89.58

Those who listen once a day or once a week, explained that they do so as a result of loyalty to certain programme (s). Commercial stations have the larger listenership, both in male and female listeners. The listenership of Mang'elete FM was found to be fairly high in Mtito Andei cluster, where 22.5% respondents indicated they listen to the station at once a day or week. However, this listenership reduces with distance; where it is barely listened to in the neighbouring Kibwezi and Makindu clusters. Most volunteers at Mang'elete radio come from Mtito Andei. This shows that there is co-relationship between the volunteer programme at the station and its listenership market. Volunteerism denotes local community participation not only in management, but also in production of programmes affects the station's listenership.

During a Focus Group Discussion with the Directors and Management of Mang'elete radio station, it was revealed that this poor listenership, compared to commercial stations, is due to the fact that Mang'elete radio barely broadcasts beyond a 50 Kilometre radius, even though it is licensed for a coverage of as much as 100 Kilometre radius, and that, it has capacity to broadcast beyond this coverage area. As explained during the focused group discussion, this is as result of dilapidated broadcasting equipment as a result years of neglect and lack of service. The station, which officially broadcasts for 16 hours a day, from 6.00am to 10.00pm, has no capacity to broadcast for long time due to frequent power outages, with no alternative power source back-up. The available generator that was acquired with support of donors broke down.

#### **4.2.3: Operational Sustainability - Programming: Mang'elete FM versus**

##### **Commercial radio stations**

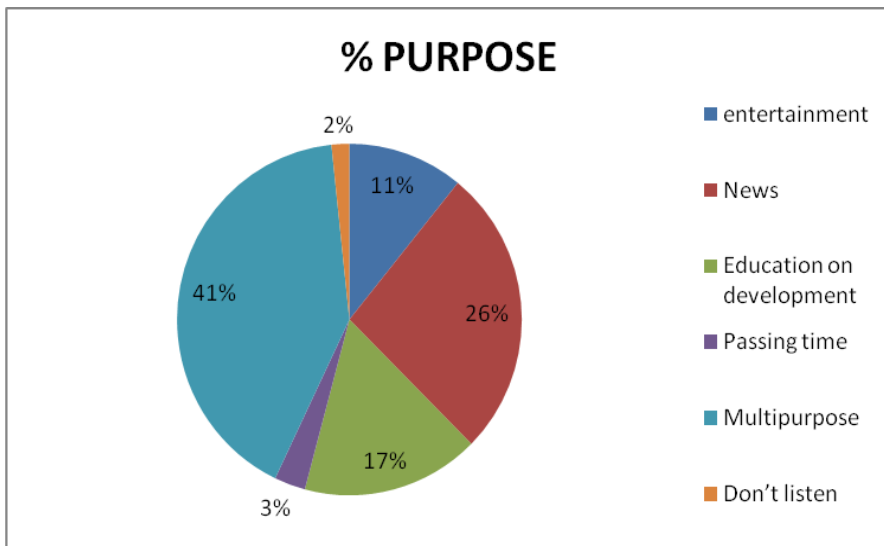
Maina S. N., (2013) states that every successful radio station, whether a public broadcaster, commercial or community radio, must appeal to the interests, tastes, and desires of its audience.

Mang'elete community radio was established out of an interest to fill a communication gap that had been identified by the local women groups in Nthongoni, to promote education in food security programmes, environmental conservation, among other initiatives that MCIDP (MBOSONI) women groups were involved in. Therefore, nearly all its initial programmes were development oriented, covering agriculture, health, HIV/AIDS, environmental conservation, human rights and governance, women

empowerment, children rights, water issues, as well as children programmes, produced in partnership with local schools. However, with drying revenue, the station has been unable to produce and air these programmes as it used to, a void that commercial radio stations have exploited to gain audience away from Mang’elele radio, even though they are profit oriented, rather than development oriented. These stations, with sound management and sound financial revenue, have been able to respond to listeners programming needs, tastes and desire in a way that Mang’elele radio station has been unable to.

This study sought to understand these listeners’ programming preferences. It was found out that, 26.67% of listeners were interested in News, 10.83% in Entertainment and while 16.67% listened developmental programmes. However, majority of listeners (41.25%) preferred a ‘cocktail’ content programming that included news, entertainment, and developmental programmes, among others.

**Figure 4.7 Listeners programming interest**



*Source: (Author)*

Part of the reasons why commercial radio stations are able to command high listenership where Mang'elete should, was described during an interview with one of the staff members, Theophilus Mutua\*<sup>1</sup> (Not real name) who described Mang'elete station's programming that:

“Mang'elete radio station's management depends fully on volunteers with little training in programming and radio production. These are the persons who are not expensive to pay. With no capacity even to produce radio programmes in the field as it used to be 5 years ago, since we have no reliable equipment such as recorders, and with no ability to produce quality, informative and localized news programmes, Mang'elete FM cannot compete for audience with commercial stations. Each time there is a change of management, a new programming structure is abruptly put in place, up to the point that currently, there exists no definite programming schedule.”

According to him, the station's programming system is disoriented, not helped by leadership crises that have affected the management of station. More so, the station's programming has been compromised by conflict of interest from the local community (MCIDP) who have been influencing to their own people (relatives) to be employed at the station.

#### **4.2.4: Financial Sustainability: Balancing Donor funding against local community involvement:**

Conrad, D (2011) studied six community radio stations in East Africa by Conrad (2011) found that a community radio station ownership model would be unsustainable if the said station was purely created and sustained through external donations. The challenge in this case is strike the balance so that any donor facilitation is based on the foundation that the local community is capable of maintaining its sustainability, in case the donor support comes to an end.

The existing literature on sustainability of community media projects that are built on donor funding indicate that those projects become challenged once the donors cease their support. However, properly managed, donor relations, which go hand in hand with building the local capacity to maintain the support from within the community, then the community project will have capacity remain sustainable.

Initially, Mang'elele community radio project had sound foundation that involved donor support and community ownership and engagement. AMREF, an organization that had been working within the local community had identified need for education on nutrition to the local community in order to reduce high child mortality rate in the area. A community radio was seen as an ideal medium to help these women groups achieve their goals, as AMREF used the same to build the capacity of the local community.

With donor funding from SIDA through ECONews, with local community making bricks and providing labour, the current premises of Mang'elele radio station at Nthongoni were constructed in 2001, which included two studios. The donors also helped equip the station with broadcast equipment, as well as supporting a nine week training programme on media production for volunteers drawn from the local community, while others were sponsored to train for diploma courses in communication at the government owned Kenya Institute of Mass Communication.

The MCIDP Management was able to acquire transmitting license with support of the then Information and communications Permanent Secretary Mr. Titus Naikuni, which



they were to pay an annual license fee of Kshs. 30,000.00. This paved way for Mang'elele community radio station to go air on February 2004. By the time the station went on air in 2004, it had received a cumulative donor support worth Kshs. 67.2 million\*2. The funding from SIDA went for 5 years, from 2004 to 2009. Meanwhile, another benefactor, EMIS-Kenya, a Danish organization supported the station to construct the administration block.

With donor funding, Mang'elele community radio was one of the most promising community media success stories not only in Kenya but also in Africa. In order to supplement donor support for the radio, the women groups established several projects, including poultry keeping, tree planting, a *posho* mill, among others, of which part of proceeds from these projects was remitted for management of the radio.

In addition, the station had some local businesses such as Makueni Cotton Ginnery sponsoring a regular agricultural programmes, while the Catholic Diocese of Machakos supported airing of two religious programmes: “*Thayu witu*” (“our life”) and “*Nikukee na Nikuutuka*” (“It dawned and it is dusk”), bringing in regular revenue. Other sources of revenue included sell of greeting cards, announcements and commercial adverts, as well as producing music for some local choirs at the station’s studio. The management also leased out part of the station’s transmitter’s bandwidth to Safaricom, a telecommunications company in Kenya. On average annually, the management would internally generated Kshs. 1.5 million as revenue that would supplement donors’ funding.

However, as from 2009, the women group's management started facing leadership wrangles, and collapse of ECONews Africa (ENA) in 2010 which had also been instrumental in the establishment of the Kenya Community Media Network (KCOMNET), a capacity building organization which Mang'elete radio station was a member – left a void that has not yet been filled in the East African sub-region (Da Costa, 2012) and this abruptly soured the donor relations, and donor revenue dried up. Most of the projects that generated revenue from the women groups in support of the station started failing, while the few the sponsors of development programmes stopped their sponsorships, a fact that made Mang'elete Community radio start experiencing financial crisis. It could no longer provide the revenue needed to support the station; including radio programmes production, as well as maintaining the workforce that had taken years to train.

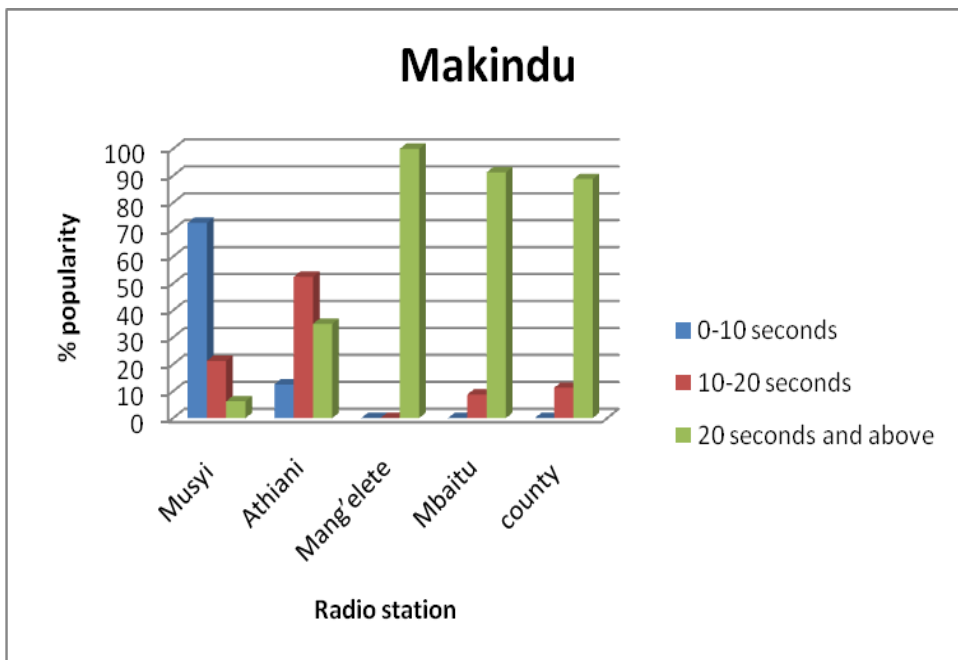
This was a time when commercial radio stations broadcasting in vernacular were mushrooming, and Mang'elete FM became a 'victim' of talent poaching. Virtually all the trained volunteers left the station for better working conditions and terms offered by the commercial radio stations.

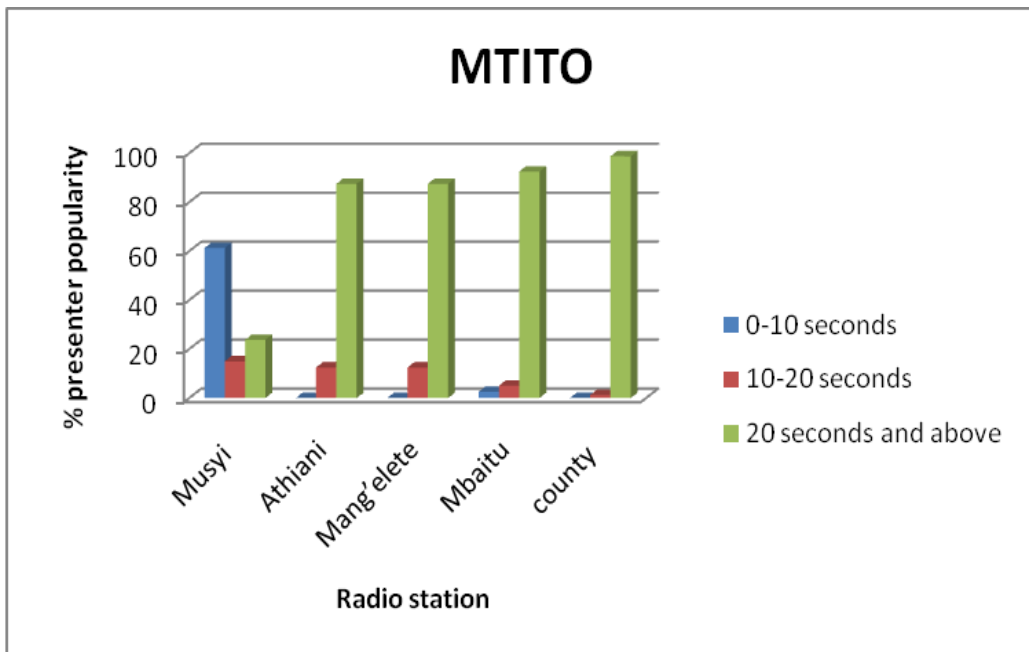
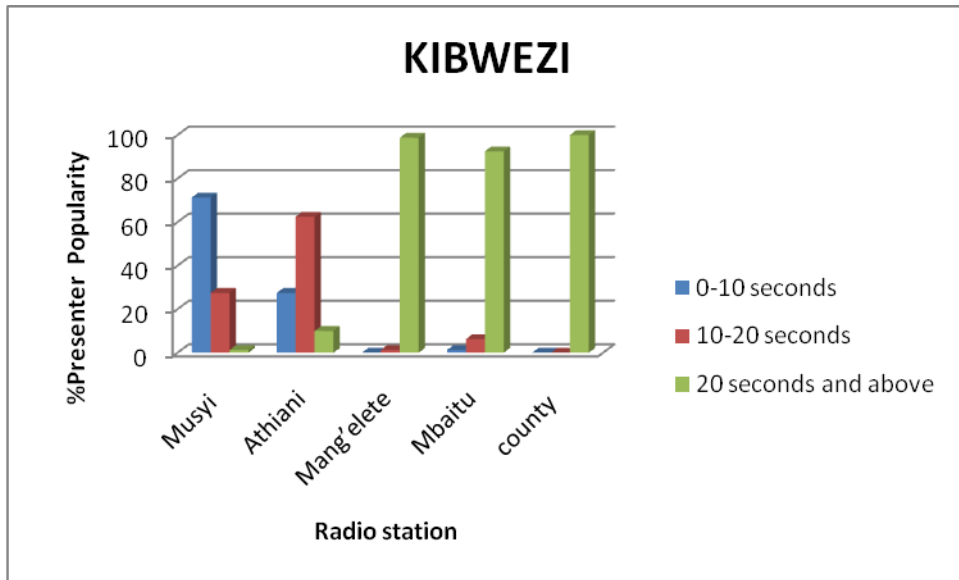
These former Mang'elete trained radio Presenters, including: Irene Wavinya Muthiani (Musyi FM), Carol Mwinzi (Athiani), Stanley Kyengo (Musyi FM), Titus Mutinda (Athiani FM), Mukunu Mbwiko (Mbaitu FM), Frankie Nyamai (Mbaitu FM), Onesmus Mwengei (Musyi FM) among others, are currently the top talent in commercial radio stations broadcasting in Kamba language, as found out in this study, where the listeners

were asked to name three radio presenters they know, and their responses were timed in periods of 0-10 seconds, 10-20 seconds and above 20 seconds. It was found out that the listeners could easily name commercial radio stations presenters within 0-10 and 10-20 seconds margin, but they hardly remembered current presenters from Mang’elele FM.

68.33% of listeners named presenters from Musyi FM, a commercial radio station, of which majority are former employees of Mang’elele Community radio within 0-10 seconds and further 21.25% named them within 10-20 seconds. 8.33% of the listeners named Athiani FM (commercial radio) presenters within 0-10 seconds (8.33%) and 33.75% could name them within 10-20 seconds. Mang’elele Community radio presenters were barely mentioned, with an average of 4.58% listeners naming three radio station’s presenters within 10-20 and while 95.42 of listeners could only manage to name them after 20 seconds, or not at all .

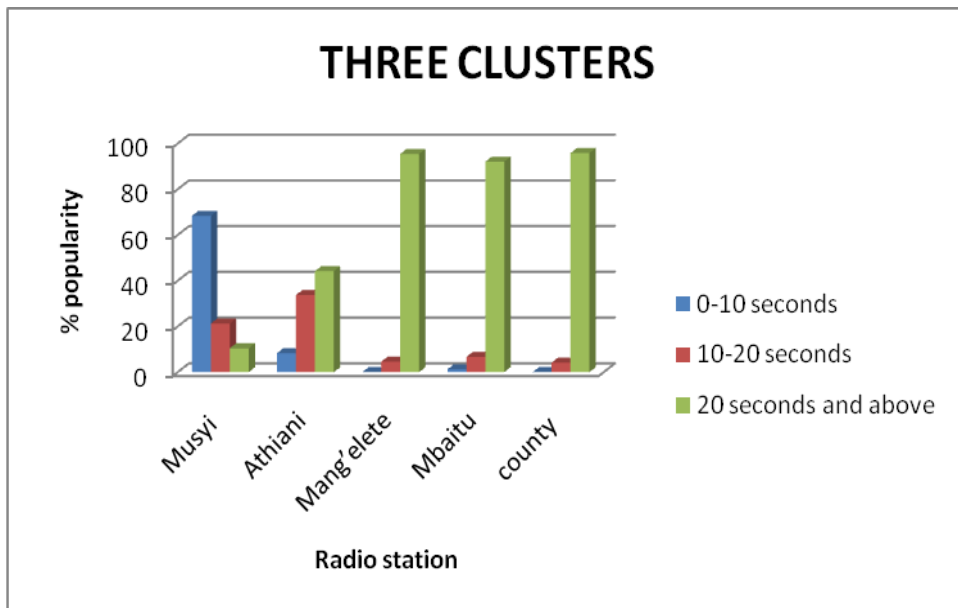
**Figure 4.8 Radio Presenters Popularity**





Source: (Author)

**Figure 4.9 Total Presenter popularity:**



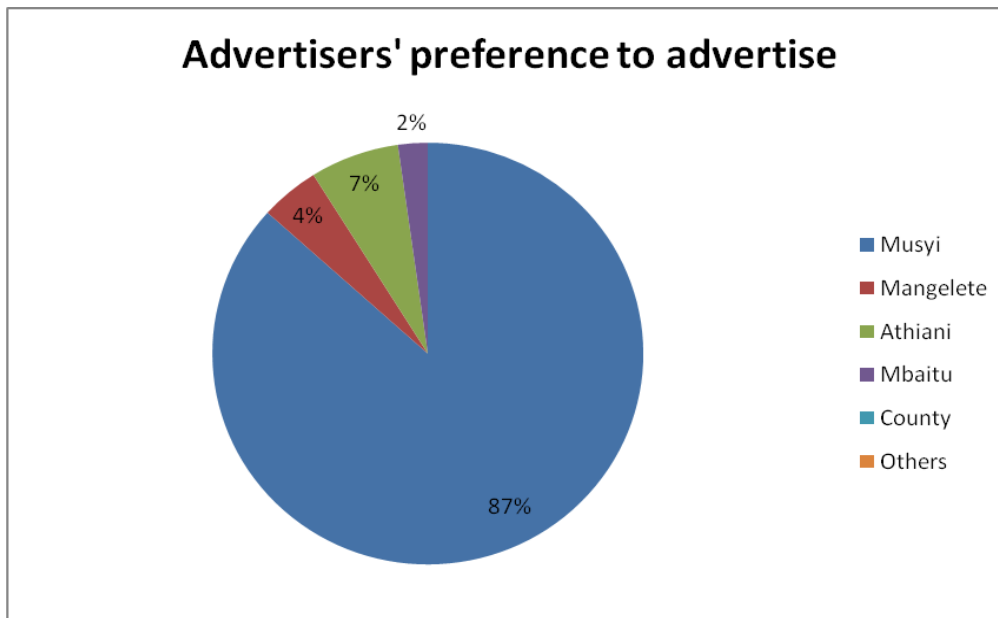
*Source: (Author)*

Such popularity with listeners was found to also affect the advertisers' preference, who preferred to advertise on more popular commercial radio stations, which would mean that commercial radio stations get the advertisers' revenue:

**Table 4. 3: Advertisers' preference to advertise:**

Radio station	%
Musyi	86.67
Athiani	6.67
Mang'elete	4.44
Mbaitu	2.22
County	0

**Figure 4.10 Advertisers' Preference To Advertise**



*Source: (Author)*

#### **4.2.5: Institutional and organizational sustainability - Leadership, management and community participation: Commercial radio versus Community radio**

Commercial radio stations are privately owned, and therefore, have stable leadership, that is modeled to guide the station towards profit making. In contrast, according to the *Guidelines for Application of Community Radio License* (September 2011) by Communications Authority of Kenya (formerly Communications Commission of Kenya), community radio stations should not be operated for profit, or as or part of profit making enterprises, and must be operated by persons who represent the interests of the community serviced, while at the same time, members of the community being served are encouraged to participate in the operations of the station, including selection and production of its programmes.

This is meant to bring about sense of ownership of the media by the community being served while promoting community's participation in running the station, and its content production. According to the said guidelines (2011), community participation is a crucial element that must be satisfied to acquire a community radio broadcasting license in Kenya. This does not apply in securing a private/ commercial media broadcasting license, where community participation is not a requirement.

Mang'elete radio broadcasting license was acquired in 2004, before these regulations came into being. Despite this lack of regulations then, local community participation was imperative in setting up the station. The radio station has a Board of seven (7) Directors including a Chairperson, Secretary and a Treasurer, two member-Directors, (all elected by the 33 women groups), and an Executive Director elected from the members of the Board. Also, the radio station's Manager is an ex-officio in the Board. These Directors would be elected after every 3 years. This is the main decision making body. The Station Manager is assisted in the daily management of the radio station by four Heads of Departments: Finance; Production; News and Programming.

After the launch of the station in February 2004, the Board and the Management would hold regular meetings to decide on various issues of the station, as well as review programming and revenue generation in support of the radio. The station would also engage community resource persons in its various programmes according to their areas of expertise, while using community opinion leaders for community mobilization. This made the station very popular with the local community.

However, in 2009, once the radio station was rocked with leadership wrangles, it took an order of court in 2014, to force the women group members to elect new officials, after years of mismanagement.

During that period, donors pulled out, the local programme sponsors stopped their sponsorship, and the station started experiencing financial difficulties. The station had to pull out of AMARC, a World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, as a result of its inability to pay the membership fees. The station's equipment fell into disrepair, including its sole power generator, to extend that it could only broadcast erratically with a radius of 50km. While the station could engage as many as 30 volunteer staff members when it started in 2004, it currently has 11 volunteers who, by the time this study was being undertaken, had not been paid for two months. While the Mang'elele community radio station has been undergoing these leadership and management challenges, the commercial stations have been thriving and growing.

#### **4.2.6: Social Sustainability: Goodwill Support from Local community:**

Jeniffer Mwende lives three Kilometres from Mang'elele Radio Station, and operates an autospare shop at Nthongoni Market, few metres from the station. Mang'elele FM is her favourite station, due to the fact she is related to it, not only as a community member, but also because her mother is a member of one of the 33 women groups that own the station. In addition, according to her, it is still development oriented, despite its challenges and therefore she would not mind to contribute financially to support it.

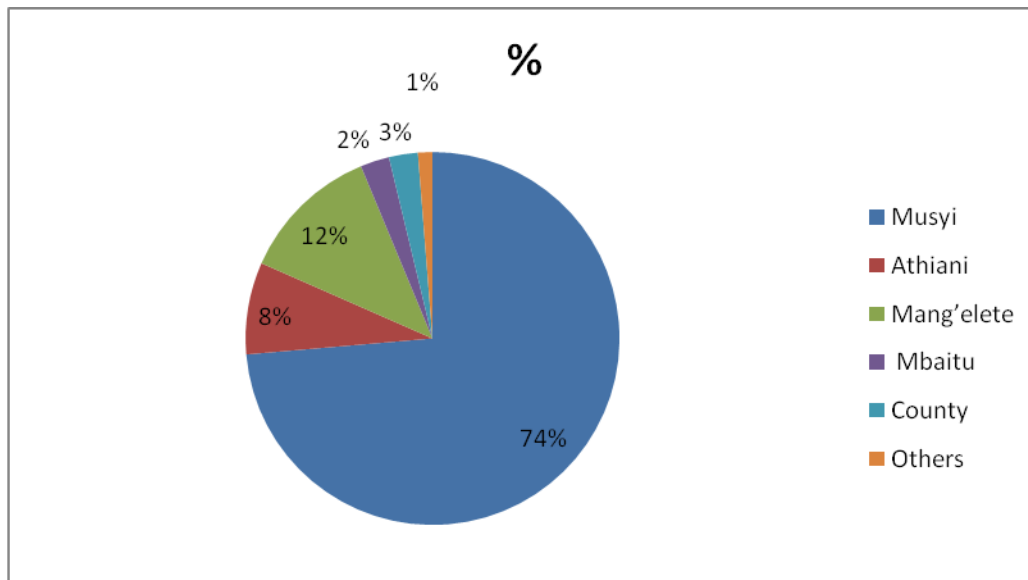


This study sought to quantitatively investigate if the goodwill Jeniffer Mwende expressed during a face-to face interview could be translated into material and financial support, and if, between the community radio and commercial stations, which one the locals would support. The listeners were asked that, given Kshs. 500.00 to donate to their preferred station as charity support, which one they would donate to. In all sampled clusters (Mtito, Kibwezi and Makindu), most listeners would support their popular (commercial) stations, with 73.33% listeners favouring supporting Musyi FM and Athiani FM enjoying 7.92% of listeners' goodwill. Despite its challenges, Mang'elete Community radio enjoys considerable good will from 12.08% listeners sampled.

**Table 4. 4: Listeners' preferred radio station for charity support**

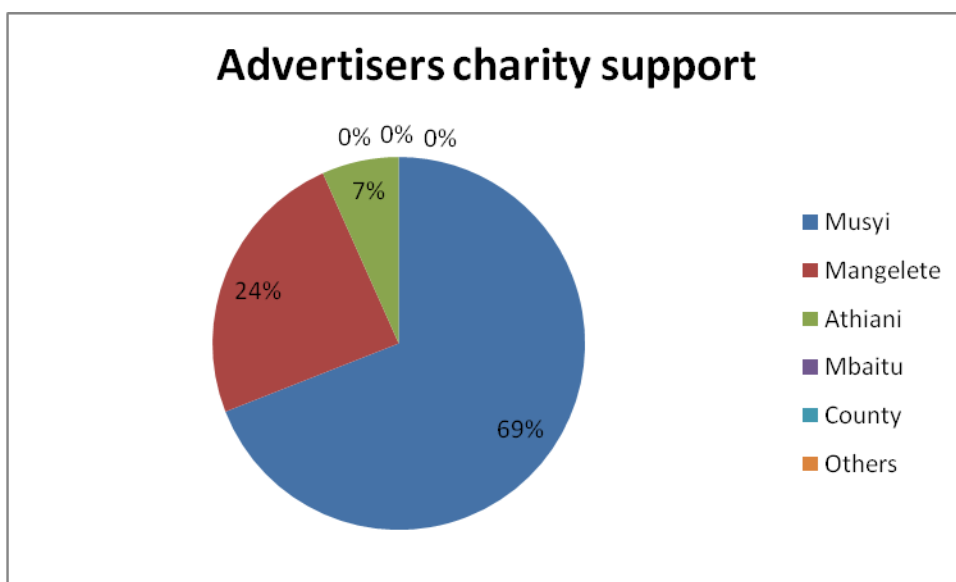
<b>Station</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Musyi</b>	73.33
<b>Athiani</b>	7.92
<b>Mang'elete</b>	12.08
<b>Mbaitu</b>	2.5
<b>County</b>	2.5
<b>Others</b>	1.25

**Figure 4. 11: Listeners' preferred radio station for charity support**



Possible and potential advertisers expressed higher level of goodwill of charity support for Mang'elete FM, where 24.22% would donate to support the community radio, while a combined 75.78% of the advertisers would opt for commercial radio stations.

**Figure 4.12: Advertisers' preferred radio station for charity support**



Some of the reasons the respondents gave for their support for Mang'elete community radio were that: 'The station is within vicinity, therefore, 'ours''; that 'they want it to grow and be visible' and that 'Because it is not well equipped like other stations (Sympathetic vote)'. Other reasons given included: 'It used to be used to broadcast development oriented and educative programmes' while some respondents would support it because they are members of women groups that own the station.

Some of the reasons why the respondents would prefer to support a commercial station included: 'The private stations (Musyi FM and Athiani FM stations) have (respondents') preferred presenters'; they have quality and variety in their programming'; 'they broadcast listeners' feedback, making listener feel appreciated'; and that 'their news bulletin are comprehensive, covering local, regional, national and international events'. Other reasons given were that commercial radio stations 'are the most popular stations and most listened to in the region (bandwagon)'; 'their broadcasting signal is clear and uninterrupted' and that 'they promote themselves through road shows'.

**NOTES:**

*Theophilus Mutua*\*<sup>1</sup> (page 53): The interviewee requested anonymity.

*Kshs 67.2 Million*\*<sup>2</sup> (page 55): Figures as quoted during a Focus Group Discussion with the Mang'elete Community Radio's Board of Directors and Station manager

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.0: Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the findings of this investigation, which respond to the three research questions identified in chapter one: How has commercialized media environment in Kenya affected the sustainability of community radio? What are main sustainability challenges and opportunities for community radio? What sustainability lessons can be learnt on existing community radio models in Kenya? The summary of the findings are derived from analyzing the data gathered both qualitatively and quantitatively and discussed in chapter four. The findings form basis for the recommendations made thereafter.

### **5.1: Summary of findings**

In *objective one* on impact of commercialized media environment on Mangelete community radio project, the study found that the sustainability of community radio is highly challenged by growing commercially oriented radio stations. With their superior broadcasting signal, quality multi-content programming that covers development issues, topical and current affairs commercial radio stations have been able to satisfy listener tastes, interests and needs better, compared to community radio stations, therefore gaining high listener preference.

Also, most listeners prefer ‘multi-content’ programming. With their superior quality news bulletins, entertainment programmes and programmes that cover development issues, commercial radio stations are able to satisfy listener tastes, interests and needs better,

compared to community radio stations, hence gaining higher ratings that attract advertisers. Most listeners and advertisers prefer commercial radio stations to Mang'elete community radio station (which, like the sole community radio in the region broadcast, in vernacular) due to their superior quality and reliable signal.

In addition, better working conditions have made commercial radio stations attractive to the trained radio presenters and producers, who, in the case of Mang'elete Radio station are poached from the community radio, after a lot of donor resources being used to train them.

In *objective two* on challenges and opportunities, it was clear that poor leadership and management of Mang'elete community radio projects have affected its ability to remain viable and sustainable. In addition, with low or lack of local community participation in decision making and operations, the community radio projects have been unable to sustain themselves once the donors cease their support.

In *objective three* on lessons learnt, the study found out that there is co-relationship between the volunteers' programme at the Mang'elete community radio station and its listenership. In this study, it was clear that community members were loyal to Mang'elete radio station if one of their own works at the station. In addition, Mang'elete Community radio enjoys considerable goodwill from the local community due to the sense of ownership, its proximity to the community and ability to engage community's

participation in its management and operations. This goodwill means that local community would donate in support of ‘their’ community radio if requested.

Finally, if community participation and involvement is well grounded in a community radio project, it has ability to withstand shocks of donor exit, since it will have strong social and institutional sustainability foundation.

## **5.2: Recommendations**

### **5.2.1: Enhancing local community’s participation in managing community radio project**

The overall sustainability of community radio is dependent on how local community embraces the ownership of the same. This would become possible if there is grounded system for local community’s participation not only in decision making processes of the community station, but also in actual operations of the station. One strength that community radio stations have over commercial radio stations is proximity of such stations to the communities they serve. In this, it is easy to use initiatives such as volunteerism to increase local community participation in managing and running the station, which would bring about sense of ownership, hence ensuring the station’s social sustainability.

### **5.2.2: Understanding the local community interests, tastes and needs**

Despite the fact that community radio stations are licensed to operate as non-profit making entities, unlike commercial radio stations, they all compete for the same audience

market. Even though community radio stations are not commercial enterprises, the Communication Authority of Kenya guidelines allow them to attract sponsored announcement/ programmes within the law. In order to attract even this limited sponsorship, they must gain trust of listeners, which put themselves in competition with commercial media.

The fact that the community radio stations are owned by local community and more important, they are based within the communities they serve make it easy for them to gain loyal listenership, which in turn would draw attention of possible local sponsors. However listeners would demand that, for them to give this loyal listenership, the community radio station must also satisfy their interests, tastes and needs. This will be possible if these community radio stations have a structured way of understanding what their listeners need or want by encouraging them to participate in programming and give feedback.

### **5.2.3: Tapping into local community's goodwill**

Community radio stations hold community's goodwill which they can tap for support, due to the fact that local people identify with the stations proximity. In this study, those interviewed were willing to support the Mang'etele Radio station because they viewed the station as an ideal medium for articulating local development issues, compared to commercial media, based on the past programmes the community radio station has carried. These members of local community, not necessarily members of the 33 women groups, but ordinary members, would be willing to support the station financially and

materially, as found out in this study. The Station's new leadership needs to engage such persons.

#### **5.2.4: Develop network & collaborations- community radio networks**

When Mang'etele radio station was an active member of some local and international community radio networks, it had a vibrant capacity building programme that enabled it to develop talent in-house. Such associations can also aid to lower the cost of programmes production for Community radio stations, since they provide 'ready-made' programmes as well as news that can be customized for local use. In addition, such networks would provide a forum for benchmarking with other community radio projects elsewhere.

#### **5.2.5: Need for a comparative research on sustainability of community radio stations in a commercialized media environment**

This research limited itself to a single case study of a community radio station in Kenya, based in rural area. There are 12 similar community radio stations, located in rural as well as urban centres. In order to develop a clear understanding of whether the challenges and opportunities identified in this study are applicable on other community radio stations, and to document more lessons learnt, there is need to undertake a comparative study that involves more than one case study.



### **5.3: Conclusion**

Research work by development communication scholars world over confirm that community radio is an ideal development tool to empower local communities that it serves. Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2002) point out that community radio project would begin attaining sustainability beyond donor exit when it gains the community's sense of internal cohesion and consciousness. A community that participates to analyze its needs in detail and think about the causes of its problems and marginalization will often come to the conclusion that it requires communication to help people formulate common understanding and common goals. This is the foundation stone for a sustainable community radio station (Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2002).

More so, it is imperative for development communication scholars and researchers to pay closer attention to sustainability challenges bearing on community radio projects as a result of rapidly growing commercial radio stations (and any other commercial media). This means that more research work is required on this area.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix I: Location of the Makueni County in Kenya



Prepared by Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Cartography/GIS Section  
Source: 2009 Kenya Population & Housing Census

This map is not an authority on delineation of boundaries

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2013



### Appendix III: Interviews Programme As Conducted

<b>Date and time of interview</b>	<b>Type of interview</b>	<b>Who (Interviewer/ Interviewee)</b>	<b>Venue of interview</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Friday; August 22, 2014  9.30am – 12.30pm	Focused discussion group	Redempta Nthia – mang’elele community radio founder, current executive director;  Meshack Nyamai: Station manager;  3 Board of Directors Members  Interviewer/ facilitator: James Singa	Director’s Officer; Administration Block; Mang’elele community radio premises; Nthongoni market	Interview conducted as scheduled. Their phone numbers not to be published.
Friday; August 22, 2014  Time: 3pm – 4.30pm	One-on one Interview	Interviewee: Theophilus Mutua; radio Presenter, Mang’elele community radio  Interviewer: James Singa	MICDP hall Mang’elele Radio premises	Interviewee requested anonymity, therefore his/ her name being used in this report is not real.
August 23, 2014  10am – 11.15am	One-on-one interview	Interviewee: Jennifer Mwende; community member, Nthongoni  Interviewer: james Singa	At Jeniffer Mwende’s Autospares store, Nthongoni market	Interview conducted as scheduled
August 26, 2014  2.30pm – 3.00pm	One-on-one Interview	Interviewee: Nesline Okiko, high court advocate  Interviewer: James Singa	At his offices; railway headquarters building, Haile Sellasie avenue, Nairobi	Interview conducted as scheduled.



### Appendix IV: Listener's Survey Questionnaire

**Cluster** (Tick appropriately): Kibwezi [  ] Makindu [  ] Mtito Andei [  ]

**Gender:** Male [  ] female [  ]

**Age:**

- a. 15 - 24 years [  ]
- b. 25 – 34 Years [  ]
- c. 35 – 44 years [  ]
- d. 45 – 54 years [  ]
- e. 55 - Above [  ]

Do you listen to radio? Yes [  ] No [  ]

If yes, how do you access it? (Tick where appropriate)

- a) Radio set [  ]
- b) Mobile phone [  ]
- c) Car Radio [  ]
- d) Internet [  ]

How often do you listen to radio (Tick where appropriate)

- a) Daily [  ]
- b) Twice a week [  ]
- c) Once a week [  ]
- d) I don't listen [  ]

Why do you listen to radio? For:

- a) Entertainment [  ]
- b) News [  ]
- c) Education on Developmental issues [  ]
- d) Passing time [  ]
- e) Other (specify).....

Tick where appropriate  
I listen to:

Radio station	Frequency			
	<i>Throughout the day</i>	<i>Once everyday</i>	<i>Once every week</i>	<i>I don't listen</i>
Musyi FM				
Athiani FM				
Mang'elete FM				
Mbaitu FM				
County FM				
Syokimau FM				
Others (Specify).....				

Suppose you have kshs.500.00 to donate in support of your favourite radio station, which one would you support? (Tick one)

Radio station	Tick
Musyi FM	
Athiani FM	
Mang'elete FM	
Mbaitu FM	
County FM	
Syokimau FM	
Other	

Why? .....

(The interviewer to check the time taken to answer the question below, and tick where appropriate)

Name 3 presenters you know from:

- Musyi FM : Time taken: 0-10 seconds [ ] 10 – 20 seconds [ ] over 20 seconds [ ]
- Mbaitu FM: Time taken: 0-10 seconds [ ] 10 – 20 seconds [ ] over 20 seconds [ ]
- Mang'elete FM: Time taken: 0-10 seconds [ ] 10 – 20 seconds [ ] over 20 seconds [ ]
- Athiani FM: Time taken: 0-10 seconds [ ] 10 – 20 seconds [ ] over 20 seconds [ ]
- County FM: Time taken: 0-10 seconds [ ] 10 – 20 seconds [ ] over 20 seconds [ ]
- Syokimau FM: Time taken: 0-10 seconds [ ] 10 – 20 seconds [ ] over 20 seconds [ ]

**Thank very much for your input and time!**

**Appendix V: Advertisers' Survey Questionnaire**

Cluster (Tick appropriately): Kibwezi [  ] Makindu [  ] Mtito Andei [  ]

Type of Business/ Organization : .....

Have you ever advertised your business through a radio station YES [  ] NO [  ]

If yes, which one?.....

If you were to advertise your business through radio, which of the following radio stations would you prefer to advertise through (tick where appropriate):

<b>Radio station</b>	<b>Tick</b>
Musyi FM	
Athiani FM	
Mang'elete FM	
Mbaitu FM	
County FM	
Syokimau FM	
Other (specify): .....	

Why do you prefer the station picked?

.....

Suppose you have Kshs. 500.00 to donate as support to your radio of choice, which one would you donate to? (Tick where appropriate)

<b>Radio station</b>	<b>Tick</b>
Musyi FM	
Athiani FM	
Mang'elete FM	
Mbaitu FM	
County FM	
Syokimau FM	
Other (specify): .....	

Why do you prefer the station picked?

.....

.....

.....

**Thank very much for your input and time!**

## Appendix VI: Interview Schedules

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: Social Sustainability: Official - Mang'elete Community Integrated Development Programme (MCIDP)**

- Why was Mang'elete FM set up? Does it serve the same purpose and vision today?
- What is the relationship between MCIDP and management of Mang'elete FM?
- How is MCIDP involved in running and supporting the station?
- What is the relationship between MCIDP and donors in funding Mang'elete FM?
- What is the relationship between the station and the local community? How does local community support the management of the radio? How and in what capacity?
- What are the challenges you think face the station internally and externally?
- What opportunities exist to ensure continued existence of the station?

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: MANG'ELETE FM MANAGER:**

#### *a) Station's revenue sustainability and management*

- How does the station sustain itself?
- Who and where does it get financing from for its operations (grants? Advertising? Donations? Subscriptions?)
- How sustainable are those sources?
- How dependent is the station on donor funding? Who are they?
- How has been their financing for the last 5-10 years? (specific figures annually)
- How many donors have withdrawn support if any and why?(figures for the last 5 years)
- How many are currently funding and what are they funding?
- Apart from donor support, how does the station raise revenue?
- How are revenues generated managed and monitored within the station (NB what is the administrative structure of the station?)

#### *b) Internal environment: Staff sustainability*

- How many staff members current? Their designations?
- How many are trained in community radio operations? At what level- College? Seminar courses? etc
- How many with no formal training?
- How many volunteers? How many employed? (Figures for the last 5 years)
- Volunteers: where do they come from (home distance (in KM) from the radio station)?
- How capable is the station to sustain/ retain them?

#### *c) Programming sustainability*

- What programmes do you air? (Get and analyze a programme schedule for a week, compare a current programme schedule and a past one say... 5-8 years ago)
- Who funds your programming?
- How is the listenership? How is it measured? How does the station benefit from the loyal listenership to sustain itself?

- Are there programmes that you have had to retire? Which ones and Why? (Lack of financing (donor exit)? Exit of producers? Poor listenership rating? Lack of programme resources for content? End of programme cycle?)
- Membership to any media networks? Which ones and for what purpose?
- Any other programming challenges do you experience? Which ones?
- d) *Facilities and adoption of technology (Audience coverage and sustainability):*
  - How adequate are your media facilities? (Any production studio? Outdoor production equipment, Etc) Who finances (Financed) their acquisition)
  - Any studio? How is it equipped?
  - Are you streaming your station? Any website?
  - How does the station develop content? Any support (e.g. network support e.g for 'ready-made' programmes) from partners? Who?
- e) *Interventions:*
  - What do you think need to be done to make Mang'elele FM gain competitive edge against all other existing FM stations ?
  - Any support from government (national and county) and its agencies (CAK, MCK etc)? Of what nature?
  - What other avenues that can be used to help generate more revenue for the station? Which ones are planned for implementation?

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: STAFF MEMBER:**

- How are the working conditions? Pay? Job satisfaction?
- Given opportunity to go to private station, would you leave Mang'elele? Why?
- Do you see yourself working in this station in the next five years? Why?
- What do you think need to be done to make Mang'elele FM an employer-station of choice for you?

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: LOCAL COMMUNITY MEMBER**

- Does Mang'elele Radio serve its purpose as development medium tool?
- What is the relationship between the station and the local community? How does local community support the management of the radio? How and in what capacity
- What are the challenges you think face the station internally and externally?
- What opportunities exist to ensure continued existence of the station?

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: MEDIA LAW SCHOLAR/ ADVOCATE**

- How adequate is the law as it exists to ensure survival of community radios in Kenya? (is law sufficient enough to support survival of community radio against commercialized media environment?)
- What hiccups exist in law(s) that affect sustainability of community radio?
- What would be legal remedies to strengthen law in support of community radios