

PLANNING TO START A COMMUNITY RADIO STATION?

A community radio station is supposed to address issues affecting the community.

Here are a few guidelines:

- Gather together a small group of enthusiasts
- Plan and publicise a series of public meetings
- Form a steering committee
- Join an association that supports the media and community radio stations like MISA Zambia
- Develop a constitution and lodge it with the Registrar of Societies
- Incorporate your association (register it legally)
- Talk to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting about your intentions
- Contact your local government leaders (Mayor/District Chairman/Town Clerk) and the Resident Development Groups
- Raise Community and local business awareness through promotions and publicity
- Recruit volunteer administrators, technicians, presenters, producers, and community access groups
- Form sub-committees to handle technical issues, station operation, administration, training, promotions, programming and fundraising
- Begin an intensive fundraising campaign
- Hold your first Annual General meeting and elect an official Committee of Management
- Determine your target audience's geographical location
- Consult with a transmitter and antenna specialist
- Seek suitable transmitter site and studio premises
- Source equipment
- Organise appropriate insurance cover (Public Liability. Insurance, Property Insurance, Defamation Insurance- also consider personal Accident Insurance for Volunteers, and Directors' and Liability Insurance)
- Purchase and install transmitter, antenna, link and associated equipment
- Soundproof and sound treat your studio space and install sound equipment
- Ascertain your community's programming requirements
- Formulate programming and produce a provisional programme guide
- Develop and schedule training programmes
- Determine sponsorship rates
- Apply for a test community broadcasting license (Contact the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting licensing department)
- Contact the Zambia Music Copyright Society for registration
- Decide how many hours you can manage during your test broadcast period
- Develop a test broadcasting schedule
- Commence test transmission
- Analyse problems and find ways of overcoming them
- Apply for a Permanent Broadcasting Broadcasting Licence

THE BASIC EQUIPMENT YOU NEED TO START A COMMUNITY RADIO STATION

- ✓ Transmitter (with exciter and peak limiter)
- ✓ An antenna
- ✓ Coaxial cable to connect transmitter and antenna
- ✓ Source audio equipment

If you do not have the money to include studios and a studio—link transmitter link, consider installing a multi-disc CD player (or better still a computer), in your transmitter hut. Then record your programmes externally, and transfer them to the play-out equipment for broadcast.

WHAT SHOULD A SIMPLE STUDIO SET-UP INCLUDE?

- I. A broad console
- II. At least one microphone/microphone stand
- III. Headphones
- IV. Stereo monitor loudspeakers/amplifier
- V. Two CD players and two mini-disc units (or a computer)

(Source: Western Australian Community Broadcasting Association) with slight adjustments

WHAT SHOULD THE STATION MANAGEMENT LOOK LIKE?

The following is the management establishment common in most community radio stations

POSITION	RESPONSIBILITY	REPORTS TO
Station Manager	Overall responsibility for the effective running of the station, providing strategic leadership Responsible for station maintaining all community broadcasting regulations	The Board
Producer	Responsible for all editorial matters to do with the station	Station Manager

	as well as ensuring that the equipment and studio staff are performing to the required standard	
The Advertising/Marketing Manager	Responsible for selling the station and its airtime as well as other services being offered by the station to prospective buyers.	Station Manager
Accounts and Administration Manager	To provide Administration support and maintain the financial records of the station	Station Manager
Programme Presenters	To present programmes on the radio station	Producer
Sales Executives	To sell the station's airtime, which is the major source of income for the station	Advertising/Marketing Manager
Volunteers (newsgathering/presentation/administration)	To help in collecting news, programme presentation and administration	News Editor Producer

SURVIVAL OF THE RADIO STATION

A Community radio station depends on the contributions of community members for its survival but experience in Zambia and other parts of the world has shown that the financial support from the community is never enough to keep the station effectively running. This therefore means a community radio station has to establish external partnerships to supplement community support and what the station makes from selling airtime. In fact the community, by virtue of its support and listenership is one of the partners off the radio station. Below are some of the other important partners.

PARTNER	ROLE
Donor Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development seed capital • Funding

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsored programmes
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal and logistical support • Air time sales for: educational programmes, civic education, public announcements etc
Business Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air time sales • Sponsored programmes • Live programmes
Facilitating Agents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development support • Training services • Monitoring services • Project management services
NGOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising • Air time sales

(Source: MISA) with some adjustments

HOW DO WE START PROGRAMMES RUNNING ON A COMMUNITY RADIO STATION?

- Very early in the planning stages of your community radio, form a programming committee. This committee should analyse the issues affecting the community and plan programmes focusing on these issues.
- There are a lot of community and commercial radio stations dotted across the country where you can learn about how they are doing their work. You don't have to copy everything they are doing but their ideas can be a valuable source of inspiration. The Internet is also full of information about radio stations, their programming schedules and programmes concepts/ideas.
- Brainstorm with members of the community about what they would like to hear on the radio station: culture, sports, music, politics, and entertainment. Contact the Central statistical office or your local district office about the population distribution (men and women, youth and children, workers, farmers, etc)
- Ask volunteers and all those interested in doing programmes on your station to submit their programme proposals
- Look at the resources available: money, equipment, and personnel. Find ways of doing programmes that fit within these resources. Beware of concentrating too much on just one issue. Diversify into a lot of other relevant areas
- Your listeners will stay tuned if you schedule your programmes in such a way that there is variety and good "flow"
- Encourage presenters to be open-minded. While we all have our personal tastes/preferences for entertainment and music, never allow your presenters to overload listeners with only what the presenters like. It is wrong for a presenter who does not like reggae to make it clear reggae is bad for all listeners
- Learn the codes of practice for community radio stations.

ALWAYS THINK IN ADVANCE WHAT KIND OF IMAGE YOU WOULD LIKE THE STATION TO HAVE. HERE ARE A FEW QUESTIONS YOU WILL NEED TO ANSWER:

- ✓ ***WHAT WILL BE OUR STATION LOGO?***
- ✓ ***WHAT ABOUT THE STATION MASCOT?***
- ✓ ***NEED FOR A STATION SLOGAN?***
- ✓ ***HOW ABOUT A STATION MOTTO?***
- ✓ ***WHAT WILL BE OUR STATION ID (IDENTIFICATION/CALL)?***
- ✓ ***HOW WILL THE STATION'S PROMOTIONAL PACKAGE BE DONE?***

DEALING WITH VOLUNTEERS

Your station will in the initial stages, and experience shows for many years to come, depend on volunteers to produce programme and offer administration/technical support. The turnover of volunteers in community radio stations is so high that it can be frustrating for a station that is determined to move forward with skilled workers. While it is almost impossible to stop people from moving on to where the grass is greener, you can help keep a good number of volunteers and encourage many others to make their contributions by asking yourself a few questions and providing for volunteers' happiness.

- *Who will recruit volunteers?*
- *Who will orient and train volunteers?*
- *Who will post their duties?*
- *How will volunteers be recognized for their contribution?*
- *Who will determine readiness of volunteer production skills?*
- *How will volunteers acquire a programme slot?*
- *What will be the minimum qualifications for volunteers?*
- *How long will each volunteer be allowed to be at the station in a day?*

RUNNING A COMMUNITY RADIO STATION IS TEAM WORK.

Like in any game where team effort is required for victory, it is important that everyone working with your community radio knows your vision, mission statement, rules by which you operate, what is expected of the station by the broadcasting regulator and the community the station is intended to serve .You can enhance team spirit and a sense of belonging by making sure:

- ✓ Post all the broadcasting regulator's documents and rules
- ✓ Everyone is availed a copy of the employment regulations of the station
- ✓ On-air operations guidelines for your announcers/presenters should be posted
- ✓ Grievance procedures for members of staff who have issues to raise in the course of duty should be made available in writing
- ✓ Consequences for not abiding by the station/regulator rule or guidelines should be clearly spelt out.

STRATEGIC PLANNING IS A MUST FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY RADIO

This is a process that you will always undertake to ensure that your community radio station continues to be effective and relevant as the years go by. Strategic planning at the time you are setting up a community radio station is aimed at having the management, board and operational structures necessary for the effective running of the radio station.

Below are some of the issues to consider in strategic planning:

- ✓ Set the rules that will be followed in the running of the station
- ✓ Define the purpose of your radio station, the target audience and assess which other radio stations share the same audience then determine how you intend to have an upper hand / advantage over the other stations you will share an audience with
- ✓ At the strategic planning stage, ensure that each of the Board members' roles are clearly defined (job description)
- ✓ Decide the radio station's organizational structure- starting with the board, going down through management and other workers/volunteers at the station
- ✓ Clearly lay down the job descriptions of all the positions at the station starting with the Manager going down to the lowest ranking volunteer.
- ✓ How will workers at the stations be hired? Who will be hiring them and what will be their salaries be like?
- ✓ How will members of the Board, Management and staff relate/reporting/operational procedures..
- ✓ Decide how you are going to sell air- time, how you will have programmes sponsored and put regulations in place about advertising i.e. are there some adverts/publicity that you will not allow on the station? Why?
- ✓ Formulate the station guidelines/rules
- ✓ Decide the mission statement of your station
- ✓ Where do you want your station to be in a decade and beyond?

THE BILLION-KWACHA QUESTION: HOW WILL YOUR STATION REMAIN RELEVANT TO THE COMMUNITY?

Community members are more likely to give a Community radio station support in the early stages of the project because they expect the radio station to address the issues that affect them. A few years into the life of the community radio station, some people begin to feel disappointed with the station because they think their needs are not being addressed, some members of staff and the board will begin to leave for various reasons. At this stage you need to revisit strategic planning. In the initial stages of the station you have to decide how you are going to retain the support of the community. Here are some points to think about:

- What will keep the community interested in supporting the radio station?
- Participating in making programmes,
- Attending general assembly,
- Playing their music,
- Holding community events/festivals,

- Open - day where community members come to interact and discuss the station's programming,
- Having a Community Advisory Board which is not involved with the operations of the station but serves to advise on the communication needs of the community
- Periodically doing a survey of the community's views of your programmes