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Abstract

Community media are not a new phenomenon in the world. They date back to the 1960's in New York when feminist programming was introduced on the airwaves. Ever since then, a number of community media have been started around the world and these are argued to be a form of an alternative to commercial media, that is profit-motivated and tends to ignore development and education needs of the masses. Community media are therefore formed to fill this gap created by commercial media and have been viewed as development communication tools especially because of their involvement of the local community in their activities and the provision of educative and informative programs to these communities.

This research investigates one such kind of media; Mama Fm, a community radio station located in Uganda, set up by female professional journalists to reach out to the rural women in the Ugandan society. The research employs the empowerment feminist theory and the development communication theory for guidance in the investigation of the effectiveness of this radio station in empowering these women through its various activities. Both these theories stress the importance of participation of the locals if indeed empowerment and development of the people is to succeed.

Whereas participation of the people in development activities is important, equally important are other aspects like accessibility, management and sustainability of the vehicle (community medium) that conveys developmental information to the people.

Interviews, focus group discussions and review of documents and programs were the methodological tools used to investigate Mama Fm's ability to bring about change in the lives of the rural women of Uganda. The argument centres around the activities the radio has put in place to ensure this, how the listeners perceive the station and its activities and whether or not the station is accessible to its listeners, what polices it has and whether or not it is sustainable to continue in the empowerment process.

Abbreviations

1. **AMARC**-World association of Community Radio Broadcasters
2. **AMDI**-African Media Development Initiative
3. **CDVP**-Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention
4. **IDRC**- International Development Research Centre
5. **IFAD**- International Fund for Agricultural Development
6. **FAO**-Food and Agricultural Organisation
7. **FOKUS**- Forum for Women and Development
8. **GAP**-Global Advocacy Project
9. **GMMP**-Global Media Monitoring Project
10. **GSP**-Get Smart Program
11. **HIV**- Human Immunodeficiency Virus
12. **KKCR**-Kagadi Kibaale Community Radio
13. **NCA** -Norwegian Council of Africa
14. **NGO**-Non Governmental Organisation
15. **NORAD**- The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
16. **PMA**- Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture
17. **ROP**- Rural Outreach Program
18. **STDs**-Sexually Transmitted Diseases
19. **TOV**-The Other Voice
20. **UBC**-Uganda Broadcasting Council
21. **UBOS**-Uganda Bureau of Statistics
22. **UBR** -Uganda Broadcasting Radio
23. **UCC**- Uganda Communications Commission
24. **UMWA**-Uganda Media Women's Association
25. **UN**-United Nations
26. **UNESCO**-United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
27. **UNICEF**-United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
28. **UPE**-Universal Primary Education
29. **URDTT** -Uganda Rural Development and Training Trust
30. **USE**- Universal Secondary Education
31. **UWONET**-Uganda Women Network

32. **VAW**-Violence Against Women

33. **WAM** -Women's Alternative Media

34. **WID**- Women in Development

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

A Know-How Conference[1] entitled "A Safari into the Cross-Cultural World of Women's Knowledge Exchange", held in Kampala, Uganda from the 23rd-27th of July 2002 highlighted pioneering initiatives for African women's empowerment in male-dominated fields of mass communications (Lewis and Boswell, 2002). A number of papers presented during that conference revealed how African women were "carefully scrutinising patriarchal media institutions, challenging the widely-disseminated stereotypes that degrade women, and developing new strategies for circulating transformative and progressive knowledge" (ibid.). The women wanted to confront a climate in which communication for development had been reduced to technological advancement in sectors dominated by elite men. A number of questions were raised at the conference among which were that who determines the content and flow of media information, and whose interests are served by an industry that has become increasingly technologically sophisticated and influential? (ibid.)

Women in many parts of the world have for years been neglected in matters of decision-making, making it difficult for their interests to be met, hence slowing the process of economic growth and development. Even the media that is supposed to speak on behalf of the less-privileged seems to have more important issues to discuss other than issues related to women (Sustainable Development Report, 1994). Statistics and empirical studies over the last 30 years have constantly shown that gender gaps between men and women exist in the following areas; nutrition, health, education, literacy, job opportunities, income, ownership of land, access to credit, access to resources, and participation in political processes. Even though the size of these gaps varies from country to country, the fact that they exist is universal. These gaps are a very big hindrance to the development of rural women in developing countries. The fact that rural women in developing countries are able to be the main source of their families' food, major contributors to the household income, as well as major

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[1] Every four years, a Know-How Conference is held. The one in Kampala (Uganda) was the first to be held in the Global South
(http://www.thefreelibrary.com/A+Safari+into+the+Cross+Cultural+World+of+Women's+Knowledge+Exchange-a0113852967)

contributors to the major resources for common community services despite all the hardships they face, one wonders how much more they would be able to achieve if their situation were better (ibid.).

Referring to gender inequality as the main cause of many of the problems in developing countries, the chairperson of the Hunger Project[2], Joan Holmes stated that when women are empowered, there is normally faster economic growth, reduced corruption in governance, lower malnutrition in children, reduced child mortality, and increased production in agriculture as well as more children at school, including girls. According to The Hunger Project, the root cause of the problems in the world is gender inequality and as a result the third Millennium Development Goal of the Project is to promote gender equality and empower women, with the hope that if this can be attained, then the end result will be an end to poverty, hence hunger (Holmes, 2005).

Today, in most parts of the world, the need for the empowerment of women is increasingly taking priority and more and more organisations most of which are run by women are coming up with projects i.e. community radios[3] to reverse the problem of women marginalization. This phenomenon is a not new one as women's radio stations and programming within community radio have existed since 1969 when WBAI[4] in New York introduced feminist programming (Steiner, 1992). Other forms of early programs and stations include RadiOrakel (99.3 FM)[5] in Norway, Radio Tierra (95.1 FM)[6] in Chile and Radio Pirate Woman (102 MHz FM) [7] in Ireland (Mitchell, 1998).

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[2] It is a global strategic organisation committed to the sustainable end of world hunger but with its highest priority geared to women empowerment, as women are responsible for bearing the primary responsibility for family health, education and nutrition.

[3] A detailed definition of this term is provided in a later part of this chapter.

[4] WBAI (99.5 FM) is a community radio station located in New York City. It is under a non-profit organization called the Pacifica foundation, which was founded in 1949 to bring together radios that foster understanding amongst nations and individuals, encourage creativity and promote innovative distribution of uncensored news. The station's slogan is 'your peace and justice community radio station.

[5] It was started in 1982, when Norwegian authorities decided to allow local radio stations to operate. The money used to start it was collected at a women's cultural festival. It is thought to be the world's first women radio.

[6] A community radio station whose mission is to provide high quality, innovative programming to the Gorge area and the world so as to bring together diverse populations for reasons of promoting mutual understanding, community support and opportunities for community development.

[7] A community radio station that runs for two months a year-in spring and autumn and has existed since 1987.

This research project is based on Mama Fm, a community radio started by a women organisation in Uganda; the Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) in order to highlight the plight of the underprivileged in Uganda, particularly the rural women[8]. The project seeks to examine and analysis the activities of this radio station as part of an umbrella organisation (UMWA), in bringing about the empowerment of Ugandan rural women.

1.2 Background to the Problem

1.2.1 Status of Rural Women in Uganda

One of the most marginalised groups of people in Uganda are the women i.e. they are the most affected by the inequalities that exist in education, access to productive resources, political power and social recognition (Nassanga, 1997). The rural women in Uganda who are mostly illiterate or semi literate are most affected by the above[9]. They are normally married off at an early age and are bound to have many children. As a result of their not being educated, they are not gainfully employed but are usually housewives and as such, are solely dependant on their husbands (ibid.). Ojiambo (1999a) noted that women in Uganda occupy only 9% of decision-making positions and only 1% of them have access to credit. Moreover, for development to occur, the balancing of gender is one of the fundamental elements that should be put in place (Nassanga, 1997). And yet, this is far from the situation in Uganda as will be discussed in detail below.

1.2.2 Social Status

According to a study carried out in two districts in Uganda in 1997, among women aged 20-44 years and their partners, 41% of the women reported being beaten or physically harmed by a partner, while 41% of the men reported beating a partner (Nassuna and Ouma, 2004). Violence Against Women (VAW) is recognized internationally as one of the critical areas of concern that impinge on women's

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[8] For purposes of this research, rural women shall refer to women in Uganda that are illiterate or semi-illiterate, hardly have a stable source of income and live in the villages of Uganda or in the poor suburbs of Kampala, the capital of Uganda.

[9] Statistics reveal that the adult literacy rate in Uganda is 69% and 42% for women in rural areas (Wakabi, 2005).

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empowerment and hence curtail their economic and social progress. And up to date, media reports in Uganda continue to reveal how domestic violence against women still exists and is still on the increase (ibid.). Consequently, the women's social progress slows down due to the fact that domestic violence usually results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to the women: including threats of such acts like; coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life, hence lowering their self-esteem.

The low social status of rural women in Uganda and Africa as a whole has time and again been attributed to the religious, ethnic and cultural aspects of various regions in Africa. For example, some countries have been found to have feared that in case women are woven into their economic, social and political systems in the same way as their male counterparts are, this may alter 'the colour and texture of the cultural fabric of their countries'(Sustainable Development Report, 1994). In Africa, human development which entails increased skills, capacity, freedom, creativity, self-discipline and material well being is hindered by several factors, among which are the cultural institutions. Due to the rigidity of these institutions emphasised by traditional and individual beliefs, societal initiatives are minimized, hence human development is discouraged. Cultural conflicts are further accelerated by issues such as factionalism, ethnic, racial and religious distinctions (Igandu, 1999).

In the Ugandan case for instance, some traditions imbedded in culture such as denial of women to land ownership, female genital mutilation[10] and marrying off young girls continue to prevail in some parts of the country (Tripp, 2002). Furthermore, women are considered lower in status than men in that their views and thoughts on public matters are considered sufficiently catered for by say, their husbands, fathers, brothers or village chiefs (Kawamara, 1992). Even when some women that were brave enough to engage in politics in the 1990's went out to address people, they were queried as to who gave them permission to get involved in public speaking, a job that is viewed as a man's job (UMWA Report, 1998). Such kind of thinking has continued to prevent women from coming out and taking up decision-making policies, meaning that their

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[10] The practice is carried out among the Sabiny tribe in Kapchorwa district, eastern Uganda although of recent, the government and women organisations are speaking actively against it.
http://asiapacific.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGACT770071997?open&of=ENG-2AF

voices are hardly heard and subsequently, their social needs are not addressed by those in decision-making positions (ibid.).

1.2.3 Education and Literacy Status

Improved education for women raises their capabilities of earning income, their productivity, the education levels of their children, their contribution to their community, and apparently lowers their fertility, revealed the Sustainable Development Report (1994).

Statistics and empirical studies over the last thirty years have constantly shown that gender gaps between men and women exist in many areas, among which are education, literacy, job opportunities and income. Even though the size of these gaps varies from country to country, the fact that they exist is universal (ibid.). These gaps are a very big hindrance to the development of rural women in developing countries, Uganda inclusive.

The current president of Uganda[11] introduced the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in January 1997 as part of government policy to provide free primary education to four children in every family, with the hope that this policy would have an enormous impact on the future of education in Uganda (World's Education Forum Newsletter, 2000). UPE led to the rise in the enrolment of primary school children from 2.5million from the time it was started to 7.9million in 2005 (Wakabi, 2005). Nonetheless, much as this is 'universal' education, it is not in reality universal as it caters for only four children per family and yet Ugandan families on average are larger than four children. What is not clear though is what the ratio of girls to boys is, in this UPE policy. There have been reports that parents' first priority went to boys while girls got to stay home and help their mothers with the heavy work load at home (Sanyu Mpagi, 1998). Again this kind of thinking by parents is embedded into their culture which is patriarchal in nature i.e. encourages male dominance over females. As seen earlier, illiteracy rates in Uganda continue to be higher in females than in

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[11] President Yoweri Museveni Kaguta has been the president of Uganda since 1986. He came into power when his National Resistance Army (NRA) toppled the then ruling government of President Tito Okello Lutwa. He has since won two presidential elections (in 2001 and in 2006) that have kept him in power until today. His third term ends in 2011.

males both in the urban and rural areas of Uganda hence denying the women an opportunity to develop themselves and members of their families (Nassanga, 1997). Important to note is that the government of Uganda encourages the education of women at higher institutes of learning by awarding every girl an extra 1.5points in addition to the grades she acquires in her final secondary school exams with the aim of increasing her chances of entry into the competitive institutions of higher learning. However, this does not seem to be changing the situation as the Uganda national population census of 2002 revealed that if one selected a random group of 100 illiterates from any part of Uganda, 64 of them would be women (Namubiru, 2008).

1.2.4 Economic Status

It is almost impossible to have 'true, sustainable economic advancement' for rural women when they are not integrated into the economic systems of their countries, especially basing on the fact that these women do not live in isolation- i.e. they are members of households and they are the backbone of smallholder farming (Sustainable Development Report, 1994). Women are also efficient users of resources in that when given access to say training, raw materials, market opportunities or credit; they are able to add their own initiative to come up with ventures that are normally successful. Higher income for rural women means improvement in basic foods and health of their households (ibid.).

Instead, the reality on the ground for most of the rural women in Africa, even in Uganda is that they lack all the above resources and so continue to live in poverty, which is the overall hindrance to women's empowerment at all levels of society in many of the African countries. The women in most cases are engaged in work for subsistence, which is normally taken for granted and not valued because development is assumed to begin only when people produce for the market (Ahikire, 1998). As a result of their lack of income, the women are excluded from the market, political and social decision-making forums. Consequently, their inability to meet their most basic needs makes them vulnerable to exploitation by those with power for policy and development (Udoh, 1999). Furthermore, because women are increasingly economic actors and heads of households as well as mothers, the more they remain poor, the more global economic growth continues to slow down (Buvinic, 1998).

1.2.5 Women and Agriculture

In Uganda, agriculture is the main source of income for rural households. This means that since the household is the most basic unit of production in rural areas, the ways in which its labour is utilised becomes a key issue in terms of measuring poverty and its eradication (Ahikire, 1998).

According to a study by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)[12] in 2000, 72% of all employed women and 90% of all rural women nationwide, work in the agricultural sector, whereas only 52% of the rural men do so. The work that women do involves: sowing, harvesting, head loading of produce, crop-drying, seed selection, pig and poultry rearing and bartering sunflower seeds for oil. Women are also involved in other tasks such as; weeding, bagging and crop storage. 85% of women are estimated to be engaged in planting, another 85% in weeding, while 55% are estimated to be involved in land preparation and 98% in all food processing. Nevertheless, despite all this input by women, decisions to market the produce are made by men (70%) or in a few cases; they may be made jointly (15%). Generally in rural areas, it is estimated that women's workloads considerably exceed those of men.

This diagnostic field study noted among others, the following patterns of division of agricultural labour in Uganda;

- Men tend to dominate the more remunerative activities in agriculture.
- Traditionally, men are responsible for cash crops, but women tend to be involved at all stages, with men becoming more active close to market time.
- When products such as vegetables are destined for the market, rather than for home consumption, men will be more likely to perform tasks that would otherwise be left to women.
- Whenever a crop becomes profitable, men tend to take over its sale and control its earnings.

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[12] A specialised agency of the United Nations, established as an international financial institution in 1977 to finance agricultural development projects primarily for food production in developing countries.
See http://www.ifad.org/governance/index.htm

- If a cash crop, and particularly a food cash crop, becomes unprofitable, men tend to lose interest in it, and women may take over its control.
- Women and children tend to be delegated the farm tasks that are tedious and time consuming.
- Division of labour can be influenced by changes in technology: men may take over when certain tasks are mechanised or animal traction is used. There can be many reasons for this, including cultural association of such technology with males, targeting of required training towards men only, and status benefits from use of the technology.
- When crops are head loaded to market, women and children do the work, but when bicycles are available for transport, men use them to transport the crop.
- Men perform the marketing of high-value cash crops and cattle, whereas women will normally sell surplus produce from their own plots, and their chickens and pigs

(http://www.ifad.org/gender/learning/role/labour/54.htm)

The above findings indicate that women in Uganda are highly productive but they hardly have any say when it comes to decision-making. Coupled with this, women are in most cases not entitled to own land, meaning that what they grow can be taken from them by the landowners who are in most cases men. Land is the most important resource in Uganda because much of the population depends on it for their livelihood. However, unequal access to land is the most crucial form of inequality between men and women and it continues to have negative consequences for women as social actors (Agarwal, 1995). Women provide 70–80% of all agricultural labour and 90% of all labour involving food production and yet they own only 7 % of the land (Kawamara, 1998). Indeed, this land ownership situation in Uganda has been a big hindrance to the progress of women as some societies even do not believe in women inheriting land from their husbands. The land is normally given to the woman's sons and if she has no sons, the brothers of her dead husband take control of it. Much as the government of Uganda has made an effort to change the land ownership rights of Uganda so that women too can benefit considering that their activities are largely agricultural, land rights continue to be given to male heads of households (Sanyu-

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Mpagi,1998). This is a practice dictated by the customary law which is still hugely practiced in Uganda and largely discriminates against women (Tripp, 2002).

1.2.6 Poverty levels

Poverty is measured in terms of the income that one has and the income gap between men and women in developing countries has continued to increase (Buvinic, 1998). Women are excluded from the market, political and social decision-making forums because they lack income (ibid.). Studies indicate that growth and modernization in many developing countries have done little to improve the condition of women (Tinker and Bramson 1976).

Uganda continues to struggle with problems of gender inequalities, which are normally in favour of the men (Tripp, 2002:413). An article in *The New Vision*[13] noted that the 2002 Uganda national population census report revealed that 47% of the labour force in Uganda is comprised of women. However, the same article further stated that two thirds of those 47% are unpaid family workers (Namubiru, 2008). The number of people living on less than a dollar a day was at 9.5 million in 2003, the same as in 1992. Conflict continues to affect the poverty level, which remains at 70% in the Northern part of the country[14].

Although poverty may hit a household, women tend to bear a bigger burden of it more than their male counterparts especially due to the responsibilities they hold for the welfare of the household, a condition that has been termed as 'feminisation of poverty'(Karl, 1995). Women are almost solely responsible for the families' health and for the provision of food, water and yet their work is not paid, nor is it recognized. It is not even a guarantee that because their husbands have money, the women too have it as men and women tend to spend money differently. Whereas women would use it to meet the basic needs of their families like food, health, education and clothing, the men on the other hand will use a great percentage of it for non-essential personal goods. Despite this, women do not have the same control as men in the control of the management and allocation of family income, especially if

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[13] It is a daily newspaper in Uganda owned by the state and has been in publication since 1986. It has the highest circulation in Uganda i.e. 4,000 copies daily (Wakabi, 2005).
[14] See http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2005/afr/ug.html

this income is earned by men. As a result, women's ability to participate outside their homes is affected by their status in their households. It is essential therefore for gender imbalances in households to be redressed in order to increase women's control in the household, as well as to increase a more equal partnership of men and women in sharing household responsibilities (ibid.).

It is against this background, that Mama Fm was founded with the aim of addressing the above issues, so as to pave way for the empowerment of rural women in Uganda through the provision of a platform for their voices to be heard.

1.3 Mama Fm

Mama Fm is the first of its kind in Uganda and "It is the first women radio station in Africa and, third in the whole world"[15]. The radio was started by a women organisation known as Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) mainly to fill the gap created by the commercialised media in Uganda that are known for mainly airing entertainment-based programs. It was therefore started for purposes of airing informative and developmental programs that are beneficial to the marginalised groups in Uganda i.e. the rural women. Mama Fm radio was started "(…) following a situational analysis which established that under privileged people in communities often lag behind in matters of development due to limited access and lack of basic information" (ibid.).

The radio station put its focus on the rural woman who is marginalised in the Ugandan society as she is in most cases illiterate and therefore lags behind in acquiring information. It targets particularly women between the ages of 15-45. The radio station seeks to promote developmental interactive communication and to broadcast gender sensitive educational programmes (ibid.).

With its slogan 'the voice to listen to', Mama Fm seeks to contribute towards the empowerment of especially women by putting across their concerns and promoting their participation in local and national developmental programs. This is mainly because these women do not have means of expressing their own realities and neither

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[15] See http://www.interconnection.org/umwa/community_radio.html

do they have the means to discuss potential solutions to their problems with decision and policy makers at the national level (Wanyeki, 2001:33). Besides phone-ins, faxes and letter writing, community participation is also encouraged through community involvement in programming and production. Research done by Mama Fm revealed that women's voices compared to those of their male counterparts are poorly represented on the air. For instance, the number of women speaking through radio compared to that of men is low with a ratio of only 15 women out of 100 men. Mama Fm's overall objective is "To empower society to appreciate the issues of the least heard women, children, people with disability, the youth among others, through the active use of media for sustainable development." As a result, it deals with a number of issues in its programming such as health, legal, land, economic empowerment, education, human rights, good governance, leadership, religion, agriculture, peace building, environment and politics. It also has a future plan of boosting its transmission coverage throughout the whole country, with the help of its development partners. The station is a member of the Association of World Community Radio Stations (AMARC), and is affiliated to the first women radio station, in the world, RadiOrakel found in Norway (ibid.). Why then, of all the media types that are available, did UMWA decide to use radio, as a tool for reaching out to the less advantaged in society?

1.4 The Use of Radio in the Information/Empowerment Process

Information is a necessary tool for development and empowerment and that once people are able to realize the need for a better life and they are availed with the relevant information, then they will be willing to undertake that change (Shepherd 1998). The reality however is that women in developing countries are excluded from the few communication channels that exist and yet even if they were to have access to these communication channels, the reality is that media structures in Uganda are a reflection of the over-all cultural orientation of the entire Ugandan society, in which women's voices are not expected to be heard in society (Nassanga, 1997). In addition, the mainstream media in Uganda have done little if any, to help women and the Ugandan society at large, to demystify this kind of stereotype thinking (Ojiambo, 1999a:11). In today's world, which has become characterised by advances in information technology, there is a huge potential for the media to make a greater

contribution to the advancement of women, considering that the advancements in technology have been seen to break national boundaries (United Nations Department of Information, 2001: 33). How then, can the media, particularly, radio, be able to achieve this?

Information can only become useful to its receivers only if it is 'relevant, timely and appropriate' and that the choice of the medium through which information is transmitted is 'appropriate, perceivable and affordable to the user'(Ojiambo, 1999b:2). In addition, there must be two-way communication; otherwise it will not attain its desired goals (Ojiambo, ibid.). The information transmitted must also be in a language that people can speak and understand and that the information should be in a form that is available to them i.e. they can access it on their own terms. The information should also raise questions, while at the same time; encourage responses from the recipient, other than just educating them, or just raising awareness of an issue (ibid.).

For information to reach the masses there must be a tool through which this information can be transmitted and this tool should be able to reach the people and they should in turn be able to afford it. Radio is one such kind of tool as it is by far today, the cheapest and affordable means of communication by the majority of the poor. Many scholars have argued that it is important for the poor and marginalised in Africa to have access to communication tools because these enable them to participate in public debates. Consequently, radio as a communication tool is assumed to have power to change the lives of the marginalised. According to a report by UNDP[16] (March, 2006), for information to be effective in bringing about empowerment, it must be able to do the following;

- Increase access to information for marginalized groups
- Highlight and marginalize amplified voices
- Create space for public debate, dialogues and action[17]

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[16] See http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/Overview_pub_FastFactsDemGov.pdf

Radio is well-suited to be able to do all the above as it has the potential to reach marginalized groups since it is a relatively cheap means of communication. It therefore has potential to reach out to these people and involve them by creating space for them to air out their views. Sameer et al, observe;

> Radio's familiarity, reach, affordability and accessibility are not the only reasons why it plays such an important role in the information society: it is also extremely well-placed to use newer technologies. Broadcasters can use email and the internet to find information locally and internationally, and mobile telephones to enable reporters to file news. They need PCs to type scripts, edit and archive programmes, interviews and other audio material and minidisk recorders to enable them to get out into their communities and collect material that can be easily edited (Sameer et al., 2006: 33) .

A report by Panos[18] (2006) acknowledges the potential of radio for development i.e. its capacity to bring about change among the rural populace but only if existing and potential broadcasting policies can include the poor and marginalised so that they can be informed on matters relating to their everyday needs and they can also have the chance to have their views and opinions heard.

Sameer et al (2006) observe that radio can provide access to information as well as act as a platform for interactivity. Due to its extreme wide reach, it is well-placed to provide relevant information to its listeners. Radio has also been around for a long time and is one of the most important Information Technologies in many developing countries that can be used to inform a vast majority of people about issues that are necessary for their empowerment.

1.4.1 Radio Use in Uganda

In the case of Uganda, radio is a popular medium channel as it fits within the lifestyle of many Ugandans in the sense that it does not necessarily require electricity to work. In most cases, batteries can be used and these are reasonably priced for the poor to afford and also some radio sets do not require batteries but can just be rewound to play. Radio can also be listened to while one is at work or is walking. The fact that

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[18] An organization that promotes the participation of poor and marginalised peoples in national and international development debates through media and communication projects. It is part of the world wide Panos Network of independent institutes working to ensure that information is used more effectively to foster debate, pluralism and democracy. Also see http://www.panos.org.uk/global/projectdetails.asp?ProjectID=1026&ID=1002

radio broadcasts in different local languages is very essential in addressing the information, education and entertainment requirements of its audiences. According to an extensive research done by Dr. John Wotsuna Khamalwa for the African Media Development Initiative (AMDI)[19], radio remains the main source of information and entertainment for many people, especially in the rural areas. The level of radio listener-ship in Uganda is very high, with InterMedia (cited by Khamalwa, 2006), estimating in 2005 that 100% of the population had listened to the radio in the past year, while 92.8% had listened to it in the past seven days of the time he did the research, and 73.7% as recently as the day before the study was done. Results of the 2002 census in Uganda showed that about half of the households (49.2%) in the country reported that "word of mouth" was their main source of information, followed by radio (47.8%). This is such a large portion of the population when compared to less than 1% of households who reported that the print media (newspapers and magazines) were their main source of information and 1% who reported that television was their main source of information (UBOS Report 2002 citied in ibid.).

Given that background, radio has a great impact on its listeners as they get most of their information from it. This study however specifically focuses on a community radio in Uganda i.e. Mama Fm.

1.5 Community Media/Radio Defined

The term community media is defined in varied ways in the world today. Bonin et al (1998) say that the word 'community' can be quite flexible and may include social, secular, political, economic and cultural factors. Baguma et al (2000) define community media as those media types used by a society or people with common ideas, characteristics, interests or ownership. In a more detailed way, Mwajabu (2001) defines a community radio as that radio that is for people from one geographical area or location who have similar or specific interests. Bonin et al (1998) state that in addition to operating within a group of people with similar interests, community media may also operate within a geographically based community or social group. Meanwhile, Mwajabu (ibid.) states;

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[19] AMDI was launched by the BBC World Service Trust in January 2006 to mobilise a range of African and international stakeholders to boost support for the development of the media in Africa.
See http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/specials/1552_trust_amdi/page2.shtml

Community media can be defined as media for a certain community and for specific reasons. They are owned and controlled by a defined community, are non-profit making and have boards of trustees or boards of directors. In other words, they are media of the people, for the people and by the people. They are services that influence the public opinion, create consensus, strengthen democracy and above all, create a community/communities (Pg. 168).

Community radio has also been defined as 'having three aspects: non-profit making, community ownership and control and community participation, and this is according to AMARC (cited in Nattimba, 2004).

Tabing (2002) defines a community radio station as that which is operated in the community, about the community and by the community. This community can be territorial or geographical i.e. a township, village, district or island. The community may also be a group of people with common interests who may not necessarily be living in one defined territory. Community radio can also be managed by one group of people such as women, children, farmers, fisher folk, ethnic groups or senior citizens (ibid.).

Even though the above definitions may defer slightly, all authors agree that a community radio station is normally started for the purpose of transmitting information that caters for the primary needs of a given geographical community or a community with similar interests. Community media are known to carry, advertise or air programs on specific needs such as health, education, employment, marketing, gender, peace, environment, among others (Bonin et al, 1998). With community media, there has to be active community participation.

The nature of community media is participatory and the purpose of community media (radio) is developmental (Wanyeki, 1999:30).

Two-way communication among people is the most effective way in the process of information, education and exchange of ideas and that community media are ideal choices for such kind of interpersonal communication especially because in most cases, they use the language of the people that they target or if not, translations are made so that the listeners can understand the broadcasts (Mwajabu, 2001). Community media often uphold positive, moral and cultural values of a community and that they are not supposed to run sexist programs or any kind of program that is biased against the disabled and minority groups (ibid.).

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Community radios therefore differ a lot from commercial radio stations in the manner in which they operate because while the community radio 'is integrated with practices of community life', commercial radios on the other hand are integrated with the life of the business community (Nattimba 2004). John Bosco Mayigo, Coordinator of the Uganda Media Development Foundation, a training and advocacy body says that community broadcasters use a lot of educational programs while commercial ones prefer music and comedy as a way of attracting listeners (cit. in Wakabi, 2005). Community media also run programs that meet their audience's requirements i.e. it is the information needs of the community that determine the content of the radio stations and these are normally produced in-house using community participatory methods (Jimmy Okello, General Manager of Radio Apac, cit. in ibid.). Unlike commercial broadcasters whose staff are mainly full term and paid employees, for community broadcasters, most of their staff members are volunteers, who are not paid for their contribution to the radio stations (Wakabi, 2005).

On the other hand, community radio's program format is similar to that of a mainstream commercial radio in regards to aspects like news, drama, talk shows and interviews. However, there is a heavy emphasis on local content on community radios (Tabing, 2002). Nevertheless, they should not be seen as being in opposition to the established mass media, but rather should be looked at as alternative and supplementary forms of media that serve special interests of fulfilling the specific local needs of a community (Mwajabu 2001:169). Media, in the hands of governments is seen as an instrument of propaganda and indoctrination, while in the hands of private owners they are more of vehicles in the service of interests of the elite. Furthermore, they have been tools for division and sometimes conflict in the hands of political organisations and then, in the hands of religious institutions they have been used as a tool for evangelism. And even if in some cases it may be possible to show correlation between development goals and media activity, proving causality can be more difficult (Buckley 2006). And yet, on community media, Buckley says this;

> There are many case examples where community media has been linked directly to the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals – improved livelihoods, promotion of gender equality, better health and education, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, contributing to environmental awareness and sustainability – however

it is not always helpful to think of community media only in instrumental terms or to assess impact against a narrowly defined set of quantitative indicators. The most frequently stated benefit of community broadcasting is its impact in empowering poor people to speak for themselves (ibid).

1.5.1 The Role of Community Media

Mwajabu (2001), discusses the roles of community media at length, classifying them into the following categories; information, entertainment, education and transmission of values, advocacy, sensitisation, integration and social interaction and lastly, personal/community identity.

Under information, he observes that community media have the responsibility to inform their audiences by broadcasting programmes that 'provide information about the events and conditions of the community and what is happening around the world so that people are well informed' (Pg. 170). Community media should also inform the community about any innovations or adaptations that are needed for the community's success, for example constructing of schools and such information can be passed on to the community through advertisements, editorials, talk interviews, discussions, drama, songs, news and current affairs programs among others. Through question and answer programmes on community media, individuals can seek advice on practical matters or opinions and they can also exchange ideas on various issues such as education and sports or speak about problems in their society.

Mwajabu (ibid.) further says that community media have a role of providing amusement to the community members because this enables them to relax and reduce social tension. The media can do this by playing music, as a form of 'diversion' of the community from their problems

On the issue of mobilisation community media are very helpful in activating interest among people and involving them in supporting community projects, such as say, constructing dispensaries, or mobilizing them against negative practices such as genital mutilation (ibid: 171).

Under advocacy, Mwajabu (ibid.) contends that community media have the ability to speak for people, to stand up and fight for their rights by airing programmes that raise the awareness of the rights of people. For instance, press releases, announcements, interviews and so on concerning community events can be broadcast in order for people to find out what is happening and possibly, have an impact decision-making.

Community media have a duty to sensitise their audiences on issues that are of concern to them e.g. issues such as Aids, corruption, drug abuse, terrorism, etc. this can be done through inviting of people that are specialists in a certain field to speak to the people and give them relevant information on that particular issue.

"Community means togetherness" (Mwajabu, 2001:172), hence community media should have programmes on the importance of social roles in a community, in order to promote integration and social interaction. Through interviews, talk shows and debates, individuals can gain insight into the circumstances of others, thereby promoting social interaction.

Lastly, on the issue of personal/community identity, Mwajabu (ibid.) argues that community media have a responsibility to promote and maintain the culture of the members of the community it serves so as to promote a sense of belonging. A way of ensuring this could be through the playing of music in the language of the community members (Pg.173).

1.5.2 Is Mama Fm a Community Radio?

In Uganda, many stations call themselves community radio stations simply because they seek to serve communities in a certain area and because they are owned by a member or members of that area (Wakabi, 2005). Monica Chibita, a lecturer of Mass Communication at Makerere University (cit. in ibid) said that a recent study by the Broadcasting Council[20] in which she was involved indicated that community broadcasting is not very well defined or understood in Uganda and for this matter, it is difficult to get an accurate idea of how many 'genuine' community media there are, or

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[20] This was formed by the Electronic Media Statute 1996 and is composed of twelve members. Its chairman is appointed by the Minister of information and its major function is to issue out broadcasting licences to potential broadcasters in Uganda (Wakabi, 2005).

as to where they are located. In fact, after this study, an official of the Broadcasting Council claimed that there was no single true community radio station, if they were to be measured against the international standards of community broadcasting[21] (ibid.).

Nevertheless, despite the above observations, there was a consensus on some stations that qualify to be called community media in regards to their missions (that include a strong public interest), ownership, programming and involvement of the communities they serve in the manner in which they generate content and determine the programs they run. These radio stations are, Kagadi Kibaale Community Radio (KKCR)[22], Mama Fm and Radio Apac[23] (Wakabi, 2005). The draft broadcasting policy of Uganda defines community broadcasting as "broadcasting which is for, by and about the community, whose ownership and management is, representative of the community, which pursues a social development agenda, and which is not for profit" (ibid.).

Mama Fm qualifies to be a community radio basing on the various definitions of community media already stated previously. For instance, it is a small scale radio station, organised by a community (of Ugandan women media practitioners). Mama Fm's target audience is the disadvantaged in the Ugandan society, particularly the women. Furthermore, Mama Fm has specific reasons for its set up as earlier seen, is non-profit-making and has a board of directors. In other words, Mama Fm fits the definition of a community radio, being a radio 'of the people, for the people and by the people' (Mwajabu, 2001:168). To emphasise this argument further, Mama Fm brings the concerns of women to the development agenda (Nattimba, 2004) by bringing women to the public arena so that issues that affect them are debated and sometimes, solutions provided (Kawamara, 2003).

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[21] For instance, the African Charter on Broadcasting defines a community radio as that which is accessible, non-profit driven, relates to a geographical community or a community of interest and has funding from sources that do not interfere with its goal of community broadcasting. It should also promote people's interests and to give those who do not already have one, a voice (Wakabi, 2005).
[22] It was started in August 2000 and based in Kibaale district, west of Uganda. It is a brainchild of the Uganda Rural Development and Training Programme, an NGO and covers 10 districts in western Uganda and also parts of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.
[23] The station was launched in October, 1999 using radio equipment donated by The Commonwealth of Learning. It is based in Apac, northern Uganda and reaches roughly six other districts i.e. Masindi, Gulu, Kitgum, Kaberamaido, Lira and Pader.

On the whole, Mama Fm qualifies to be called a community radio because as has been noted, its reasons for establishment, its structure, manner of operation and target audience conform to the basics of what most scholars have defined community media to be. A report done by Wairagala Wakabi for the Global Advocacy Project (GAP) on community broadcasting in Uganda included Mama Fm as a community radio because it has "more attributes of a community broadcaster than other stations in Uganda posses" much as it may fail the international definition of true community broadcasters (Wakabi, 2005).

1.6 Significance of the Study

Because Mama Fm was set up for the purpose of reaching out to the disadvantaged in the Ugandan society, particularly the women, this study seeks to establish whether the activities of this radio station are of practical significance to the women it serves. Communication for development has been highlighted by many scholars as one of the crucial contributors to the empowering of people as knowledge is considered to be powerful. In attempting to find out whether a women radio can meet the goals of empowerment, this study will critically examine and analyse the activities of the radio station in order to show to what extent it has contributed to this universal goal of empowering women. The study also seeks to see how the women have benefited from the activities of the radio station and the challenges met by the station in meeting its goals. Another aim of the study is to help those in the management and organisation of Mama Fm in improving if need be on their services in the fight for the empowerment of women.

1.7 Research Questions

How has Mama Fm, as a community radio ensured the empowerment of rural women in Uganda?

In addition, I will employ the following sub-questions to guide me in seeking the answers to my research problem;

- What kind of programs are aired on Mama Fm and how relevant are they to its target audience?
- As part of an umbrella organisation (UMWA), what other projects is Mama Fm involved in and what is their significance to rural women in Uganda?

- In what ways have the listeners of Mama Fm benefited from the activities and projects of the radio station?
- To what extent are the rural women involved in the planning and production of the program content on Mama Fm?

In answering these questions, I hope to find out what exactly the radio station is doing and how it is doing it to help empower the rural women i.e. what strategies it employs to ensure that its listeners get empowered and also how it is perceived by its listeners.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

In most cases, researchers base their investigations on particular paradigms that act as their guidelines in carrying out their research (Yin, 1994).This study applied two theories that acted as a base for investigating the work and activities of Mama Fm. The fact that the radio station is involved in providing information for development in order to empower its listeners, the first theory the study applied is the empowerment feminist theory and the second is the development communication theory.

The reason for the choice of these theories is that both of them are centred on grass root development, which is one of the aims of Mama Fm. In addition, these theories emphasise 'beneficiaries' of development initiatives, one of the key issues of this study (Ugandan rural women). Furthermore these theories push for principles such as participation, two-way flow of information, empowerment, and self-reliance, among others.

1.9 Methods Used

Qualitative research methods were used especially because this study was interpretive and descriptive in nature. These methods include; interviews focus group discussions and document analysis.

Conclusion

Generally, this study is about rural women, community radio, feminism, development communication and empowerment and it is also about a novel initiative (women

community radio), its practices and its meaning in terms of the development process. This first chapter has basically given an overview of the study, giving its significance and research questions. The next chapter will give a detailed background to the study, by highlighting the gender dynamics that shape rural women's response to information. The third chapter will present the theoretical framework for the study in detail while the fourth will discuss the choice of the methods used to collect and analyze the data. It is in chapter five that the activities of Mama Fm will be presented, discussed and analyzed. The chapter will be divided in different sections, each of which will deal with a particular issue of the findings. Finally, chapter six will contain the presentation of the conclusions based on a review of the research questions outlined in this chapter. A critical review of the theoretical literature will be made basing on the research findings. In summary, this chapter will deal with the overall research question of the study concerning the extent to which Mama Fm has contributed to rural women empowerment in Uganda. At the end, recommendations will be presented.

CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

> For rural women in developing countries to advance economically, there must be rural development. Similarly, for rural development to be successful, it must involve rural women and their potential (Sustainable Development Report, 1994).

Most experts in the field of development have come to the realisation that sustainable rural development in developing countries can only occur if it is directed towards the local people, and if it involves them within the development process. They stress that women must be involved because in most of the developing countries, women contribute a lot to the production of food and labour. However, in reality, women continue to lag behind in most societies in all spheres of their lives.

'Lack of enjoyment by women vis-à-vis men of equal status is a characteristic feature of women in all the African countries' (Sustainable Development Report, 1994). Anthropologist analysis has revealed that all over Africa, women's lives, their health and well-being are being threatened mainly due to their being over burdened with work. Even though some progress has been made in rectifying this issue, it is still modest and critical gaps continue to be in existence in many parts of Africa (ibid.).

Indeed women all over the world, especially in developing countries have been and continue to be exploited despite the fact that they are efficient users of resources in that when given access to say training, raw materials, market opportunities or credit; they are able to add their own initiative to come up with ventures that are normally successful. Higher income for rural women means improvement in basic foods and health of their households while health education for these women means increased levels of nutrition, health and sanitation of their households. Furthermore, improved education for them raises their capabilities of earning income, their productivity, the education levels of their children, their contribution to their community, and apparently lowers their fertility (ibid.). However, because the women lack the above resources, they are constantly victims in their homes and even in the societies in which they live. For instance, women are almost solely responsible for their families' health and for the provision of food, water and yet their work is not paid, nor is it recognized (Kar, 1995).

2.2 Empowerment Defined

The concept of empowerment is defined in various ways but for purposes of this study, the definition by Kabeer (2005) will be used as it specifically talks about the empowerment of women. To be disempowered means that one has been denied the ability to make choices because being powerful entails the ability to make choices. Therefore, one can only be empowered only if they have been disempowered before i.e. denied the ability to make choices (ibid.). This therefore means that empowerment entails change and refers to those "processes by which those that have been denied the power to make choices acquire that ability" (ibid: 13). In order to have a choice, there must exit alternatives and that is why, poverty and disempowerment go hand in hand because without income, one can not have the ability to meet one's basic needs. Secondly, these alternatives must not only exits, but they must be seen to exist so that people can make appropriate choices out of them. If these alternatives are not seen to exist, then empowerment may not occur. For example a women that accepts violence from her husband continues to do so because doing otherwise would mean that she has gone beyond the normal realm (ibid.). In other words, basing on the above explanation, for empowerment to occur there must have been disempowerment before and also the disempowered people must have alternatives from which to choose so that they change from a state of being powerless to that of having the power to bring about change in their lives[24].

2.3 Why the Empowerment of Rural Women?

> Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the advancement of equality, development and peace. (Nassuna and Ouma, 2004)

The greatest difference between Ugandan women lies in a minority urban elite and a rural majority, who are mainly illiterate. In such a situation, if development is to be attained, then all available resources must be utilized, including the women, especially the rural women (Nassanga, 1997). Uganda still has a long way to go as the level of women's representation is still low in most of the cases. This is due to the poor

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[24] This is what the term empowerment means for purposes of this research project.

representation of women in all levels of education in Uganda and although the admission of women into universities has increased since UNICEF[25] carried out a survey in 1989, the number of women who graduate continues to be lower than that of men. For instance during the period from 1983-1993, out of 15,668 graduates with first degrees, only 3,575 were women (ibid.). Another factor that may be contributing to the low status of women in Uganda may be large families, especially among the poorer women and the double burden of work and family commitments. This is according to a Ministry of Health Demographic and Health Survey in 1988. After the survey, the report that was made noted:

> Rural women are not informed about their legal rights concerning land ownership, inheritance, etc. They engage in farming haphazardly because they have no access to professional help and information. They are unable to protect their families from preventable diseases and deaths because they lack knowledge of the simple modern techniques that are now readily available. (UNICEF, 1989:5)

The topic of the economic (and social) empowerment of (rural) women is not a new one as it has been going on for decades now. Early concerns in this field can be traced back in 1975 when the first World Conference on Women which was held in Mexico City from the 19th of June to the 2nd of July. This conference, which coincided with the 1975 international women's year and called for by the United Nations General Assembly, was aimed at focussing 'international attention on the need to develop future oriented goals, effective strategies and plans of action for the advancement of women.' The purpose of this was to remind the international community that discrimination against women continued to be a problem in the majority of the world (World Conference on Women, 1975).

In 1980, the second World Conference on Women in Copenhagen, Denmark took place. It was noted during this conference that significant progress had been made in matters concerning women i.e. a number of governments and the international community had made steps towards achieving the target that had been set out five years earlier in Mexico. Nonetheless, despite this progress, it was still noted that there was significant disparities that were emerging between the rights secured and

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[25] This is the United Nations International children's Emergency Fund whose focus lies in the following areas; child survival and development, basic education and gender equality, HIV/Aids and children, child protection, policy advocacy and partnerships.

women's ability to exercise these rights. It was during this conference that three specific areas were highlighted in which there was need for highly focussed action in case the goals of equality, development and peace that were spelt out during the conference in Mexico were to be attained. These specific areas were equal access to;

- Education
- Employment Opportunities and
- Adequate health care services

In addition, the conference called for stronger national measures to ensure women's ownership and control of property, as well as improvement in women's right to inheritance, child custody and loss of nationality. There was also an urge to the ends of stereotyped attitudes towards women (World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, 1980).

Ten years later, after the first Conference on Women in Mexico, the third was held in Nairobi, Kenya in which it was revealed that the extent of poverty, disease, illiteracy and unemployment were on the increase in developing countries and the most affected people were women (Momsen, 1991). The above problems were due to the after effects of colonialism such as modernization of agriculture, which altered the division of labour and led to the loss of control by women of such resources such as land as well as their exclusion from access to new technology, hence increasing their dependency on their husbands for survival.

The above conferences on women later led to the 1995 UN fourth World Conference on Women and the NGO Forum in Beijing, which revealed the poor state of most of the developing countries that had been accumulating debts since the 1980's, leading to Bina Agarwal, an Indian feminist/economist participant in the conference, stating that the economic situation in these countries was 'the single most crucial issue' (Beijing Platform for Action, 1996 in Dralega, 2002).

Since then, a lot of importance has been placed on the achievement of women emancipation, with the United Nations Decade for Women, realising a need to consider women when planning for development. The discussion of development should greatly consider gender because when the roles of women are incorporated

into the development processes of developing countries, then these countries will be availed with more opportunities for development (Udoh, 1999:1). It is no wonder that in many parts of the developing world, a number of women's organisations have been established at both community and national levels in order to initiate and implement development projects for the benefit of women and the nations as a whole (Momsen, 1991). Women must be woven into the mainstream economic, social and political systems of each country, so that they, their families, their communities, and their countries can benefit from the potential they represent and the economic growth they are capable of achieving.

> The costs of ignoring the needs of women are many: uncontrolled population growth, high infant and child mortality, a weakened economy, ineffective agriculture, a deteriorating environment, a divided society and a poorer life for all. (Momsen, 1991:103-104).

Again, that is another assumption that the needs of women need to be met through any available channels so as to prevent the many problems that women, especially in the rural areas of the third world experience today. By using Mama Fm, a community radio in Uganda started by women, specifically to target women; this study will seek to ascertain this assumption by looking at the work of this radio station in view of determining to what extent this assumption may be true.

2.4 The History of Community Radio in Uganda

As a result of the continuous failure of a number of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and government donor-funded programs on poverty alleviation due to lack of proper information flow, a realisation by development communicators arose for the need of an alternative media to bring about change in the nature of communication (UMWA report, 2003).

At the same time, the state funded radio station i.e. Radio Uganda was deteriorating at a rapid pace as a result of limited funds brought about due to a reduction in funding to the radio station from the ministry of information. This was after it had been reduced to a department under the President's office. Subsequently due to limited funds, there was a loss of morale among the employees, loss of quality in programming and reduced regularity in equipment maintenance. In the end, because of poor

maintenance, the radio's signal became too weak to reach the far off areas (Baguma et al, 2000). However, the situation has since changed when the state radio got a facelift from the government. Its name was changed to Uganda Broadcasting Radio (UBR) and its premises were renovated and equipped with newer technology. Furthermore, a number of young media practitioners were hired. This happened in 2005 under the provisions of the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation Act that effectively merged Radio Uganda and Uganda TV into the current Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC). There are only two radio stations in Uganda that are state-funded and run by the Uganda Broadcasting Council i.e. Uganda Broadcasting Radio and Star FM. Currently, UBR is the only station in Uganda that covers a significant proportion of the country and broadcasts in over 25 languages (Wakabi, 2005).

It was at the point when former Radio Uganda was at its lowest that the development practitioners especially in the field of gender and women issues realised a need for alternative communication to reach the vast majority of the rural populace. This led to NGOs taking up the role as key players in establishing these radios for communities that lacked the resources, expertise and skills to establish and operate radio stations of their own (Baguma et al, 2000)

Subsequently, a number of community radio stations were established, with Kagadi Kibaale Community Radio as the first started by the Uganda Rural Development and Training Trust (URDTT). In northern Uganda where a civil war has been going on for the last 20 years, another community radio was set up to contribute to efforts geared towards peace-building in the region. The radio station is called Radio Apac[26]. Mama Fm was then launched and started in 2001.

Basing on the reasons behind the establishment of community radios, it is clear that they are set up to address issues of developmental concern to their audiences and they also exist to serve a particular geographical community or a community of common interests. These radio stations therefore have a vital role to play in the development/empowerment process of those communities.

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[26] See http:www.interconnnection.org/radioapac/homehtm

2.5 Community Radio: What does it mean for rural women?

Radio is a medium of communication that plays a very important role in spreading information. However, unlike other media, radio is far reaching, even in areas without electricity and areas in which people are illiterate. In addition, radio increases participation and opinion sharing and improves and diversifies knowledge and skills and caters for health and cultural needs (Phipps, 2004).Hence, because of its unrivalled reach, radio is the best means of technology to meet the information and communication needs of the rural women, much as there has been advancement in technology. Nevertheless, there still exists a digital divide in the world and as such, radio comes in to bridge this gap (Buckley, 2006).

Due to its easy access by rural and poor people, radio provides a channel for these people to participate in debate and to express their opinion on public policies. Without a source of information, these people would not know their rights and entitlements, nor would they be able to challenge certain decisions and would also lack necessary information to improve their lives (ibid). The need by the poor people to be heard and to be able to participate in national policies, led to the formation of a new form of radio i.e. the community radio. This kind of radio has been identified as having the ability to reach out to those that have constantly been marginalized and excluded in society (ibid) especially since it provides access and voice in the local languages of the people. A number of international organisations have realised the need for community radio and have since advocated for its use to reach the poor people in societies. For instance; The World Bank has said: "Community radio stations can be critical enablers of information, voice and capacities for dialogue", in social accountability and public voice through community radio programming, (Social Development Notes No. 76, 2003). Community radios are fast becoming a sound system of communication all over the world and in most regions and continents; Europe, North America, South America, Africa and Australia, there are hundreds of community radios (Tabing, 2002). "Community radio is one of the most effective and least costly means of communication for development, especially in rural communities" (UNESCO cit. in Buckley, 2006) and "legal and regulatory frameworks that protect and enhance community media are especially critical for ensuring vulnerable groups freedom of expression and access to information" (UNPD Practical Note, 2003).

According to the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO); "Community radio activities can help in bridging the rural digital divide by facilitating the link with new information and communication technologies" (in Buckley, ibid.). This is because through community radio, members are given access to educational and developmental information. The radio acts as a free market place of ideas and opinions where people are given the opportunity to express themselves socially, politically and culturally. In other words, community radio helps to put members in charge of their own affairs (Tabing, 2002).

The concept of community radio has continued to spread all over the world in parts of Africa and Asia and it tells a story of people striving to speak out and be heard, which in a way has led to self reliance and empowerment. People can use it to engage in dialogue about their livelihoods. "It is a story in which the pursuit of social and development goals has been deeply entwined with the struggle for human and political rights and particularly the right to freedom of expression" (Buckley, 2006).

It is vital for women to have their own medium through which they can voice their opinions and engage in debate that is beneficial to the understanding of the societies in which they live. This is because generally, mainstream media are known to portray women in a stereo typed manner that is not beneficial to them especially as far as their social status is concerned. According to Steiner (1992), the main aim of community radio for women/ Women's Alternative Media (WAM) as she refers to it, is to express and celebrate the views of a wide range of women while using media as tools to help the women achieve their aims. These kinds of media are usually small scale enterprises, and are made by women often working collectively. They aim at involving women in the production process where necessary and there tends to be a feminist ethic, which is often more valued than the professional ethic. If necessary, work is done by voluntary or low-paid labour and most activities are non-profit oriented (ibid.).

2.6 Portrayal of Women in the Ugandan Media

An analytical report of research conducted in Uganda in 1994 on the coverage and portrayal of women in the Ugandan mass media revealed that the media gave very little coverage to women's issues; moreover this little coverage was negative, thus perpetuating gender imbalances. This, as Nassanga (1997) observed, has resulted in a situation where women are under-represented in all the spheres of influence. There is generally a bias against women in the media that it is common for male journalists to dismiss women's issues as trivial and boring (Kawamara, 1992). Despite changes in women's actual roles, they are still portrayed by the media in restrictive ways i.e. showing them in terms of their traditional role as submissive and dependant wives/mothers whose functions are to cook and to give birth to children. Today, a number of women are totally engaged in various income-generating activities to supplement their husband's income but these working women are portrayed by the media as deviant women and those that are engaged in formal employment are expected to work as secretaries, nurses or teachers (Nassanga, 1997). If a woman ventures beyond these professions, then her intentions are treated suspiciously and it is even worse when she makes it to a top-managerial post. At one time, *The Monitor* newspaper of Uganda ran a story with the title, 'Women sleep their way to the Top' with the argument that the majority of women literally sleep their way to success i.e. attaining a top position in society (8-12 October 1993:5).

Statistics on the manner in which women are portrayed in the media reflect a dismal story. In 1995 women made up 17% of news subjects; five years later the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP)[27], which involved teams collecting data across the world, revealed that this figure increased to only 18%. This was despite considerable intervention, including the adoption of the Beijing Platform of Action. The GMMP 2000 also found that women were featured primarily in stories involving entertainment, and received little or no coverage in news stories dealing with politics. Women were photographed twice as often than they were asked for comment. Thus, "woman" in the media becomes the object, whether this object takes the form of sexual object, or hard-done-by victim (Lewis et al, 2002).

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[27] The project was born out of the 1994 International Bangkok conference on 'Women Empowering Communication' organised by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) in conjunction with the International Women Tribune Centre and Isis international, Manila

Mukama sums it up well;

> Women are perpetually stereotyped as domesticated, given to leisure, fashion and beauty interests. They are also invariably portrayed as brainless, dependent, indecisive, (and) subservient and sport for men's pleasure. Women are persistently objectified as men's possessions. Educated working women activists are portrayed as audacious insubordinate agitators, while those who opt to remain single are portrayed as prostitutes, social degenerates, and immoral beings that sleep their way to the top. Those who hold high political or administrative positions are branded as incompetent and inefficient. They are ultimately demonised and isolated as irrational snobs. (Mukama, 2002:147).

One probable cause of the above could be that there are less female media practitioners than male ones all over the world and therefore, difficult to push for a different manner in which reports about women are made in the media. According to Goretti Nassanga (in Lewis et al, 2002), mainstream media institutions are 'ruthlessly' masculine in that they ignore gender-sensitive reporting and largely practise hostile forms of gender discrimination. In these institutions, women are hardly represented at the decision-making level, which also reveals how much gender inequality exists in these institutions. Nassanga further goes on to say that the image of a successful journalist is that of an aggressive man, ruthlessly seeking information. According to Mitchell (1998), the way women are portrayed in the media and how they act to counteract this kind of image is as a result of the following;

- Histories of women and radio, both personal and institutional
- Equality in radio employment including the positioning of women in particular roles
- Gendered relationship between producers, audiences and radio texts
- Absence and presence of women's interests and perspectives in radio discourses

Research about the work of women in Fem FM[28] and Radio Venus[29], both of which are community radios revealed that the women were positive about the amount of publicity and audience response that their radio activities had achieved. This sense of achievement then added to their image of themselves as confident women. The women were also pleased with the positive reflections of themselves that they were

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[28] This is located in Bristol in the South West of England
[29] This is also in England but the Northern part i.e. Bradford. Both of them were developed from feminist radio activity in the 70's and 80's.

seeing and hearing on the radio stations (Mitchell, 1998). Organisations such as UMWA have been seen as triumphant on the African continent as they have come up with strategies to encourage women to break into such male-dominated fields and also with strategies to address the information and communication needs of women by establishing a community radio for women.

2.7 Women Organisations: Reversing the Situation

Women organisations have been seen as a means of bridging the gap that exists in mainstream media. The media claim that they produce what the audience wants to hear, read about or see. But one wonders, how an invocation of a homogenised people can justify media portrayals that dehumanize large sections of the public (Lewis et al, 2002), especially women that are usually the victims.

It is for the above reasons that a number of women organisations have sprung up across Africa to address these issues through the training of female journalists and the setting up of alternative communication to help address the needs of the less advantaged in society (ibid.). Examples include the African Women's Media Centre, situated in Dakar and established in 1997. It offers training and networking programs for incorporating the voices of African women in different sectors of the economy. Secondly, there is the Women's Media Watch in South Africa established in 1995 and challenges all forms of discrimination in the South African media (ibid.). And thirdly, the Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) which is written about in detail in this study, established by Ugandan women journalists to challenge gender imbalances in the mainstream Ugandan media.

UMWA is the oldest women's media initiative in Africa, formed in 1983. Over the years, the Association has worked closely with the Ugandan women's movement to become a prominent force in supporting women's media work, challenging gender stereotypes in the media, producing publications such as *With Women in Mind: Towards a Fair Mass Media in Uganda* (1998) and *Use of the Mass Media: Tips for Women Leaders* (1998), and generally pursuing a dual strategy of challenging gender blindness in Uganda's mainstream media as well as introducing new alternative forms

of communication (ibid.) i.e. Mama Fm, the case study of this project, among others that will be discussed more in a later chapter.

It is true that the media do have a very crucial role to play in correcting the prevailing gender imbalances and in ensuring full participation by all in the development process. This can be attained by giving women adequate coverage and relevant information so that the women can realise that they too have the ability and capacity to improve their welfare and that of their families through development-related activities (Nassanga, 1997). Mama Fm having been set up by women for women is focussed on doing just this and as such, has stepped in to fill the gap created by commercial media in Uganda.

2.8 Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA)

2.8.1 History/Background

The idea of establishing UMWA was conceived after 1982, following a move by two female media practitioners, one from Uganda (Elizabeth Lwanga) and another from Kenya (Eunice Mathu) to mobilize women involved in mass communication to deliberate on issues like discrimination, negative portrayal of women, acquisition of skills and necessary academic background to be able to occupy positions of decision-making in the media industry (UMWA Report, 2001). It was felt that issues affecting women and children were not getting the attention they deserved in the media coverage. There were also concerns about the inaccessibility of information by women and the lack of space for them to express themselves (NORAD Report, 7b/2003).

A new era for women journalists in Uganda was created in a meeting held on 6th July, 1983 at the Press Club in Kampala. It was here that a steering committee was formed for the task of forming an organisation, with Harriet Namwebya as the interim Chairperson and Justice Leticia Kikonyogo as the constitution drafting person. This marked the birth of the Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA Report, 2001)

Like any other young organisation, UMWA underwent a series of challenges ranging from financial constraints, conflicts in decision-making, lack of government support,

lack of office premises to lack of confidence for its continued survival from members of the public (ibid.). It started off and was sustained by a membership of 24, which included a care-taker and an administration of 5 members and its meetings were held in either the members' homes or their offices. In order to raise funds, UMWA embarked on a series of fundraising activities, which saw a number of Ugandan companies coming in to help. These included Uganda Bata Shoe Company, Uganda Baati, Mukwano, among many others. UMWA continued to survive even in the face of a political turbulence in Uganda in the 80's. The organisation faced a setback when all its materials and items which had been donated were stolen. And when 8th March was declared a recognised day for women in Uganda in 1984; UMWA was at the centre of the celebrations to mark the day. For the very first time in the history of the Ugandan media, the Ugandan media women were in charge of their media affairs, hence making UMWA very popular especially with other media organisations. It was at this point that UMWA became registered with the ministry of information and broadcasting, hence marking the starting point of its continued growth (ibid.)

It is also important to note that UMWA was able to go through its challenges with the help of donors like; the Norwegian Council of Africa (NCA)[30], who were the initial sponsors of the organisation. At present, UMWA is a viable organisation, doing an honest job of championing the positive portrayal of women in the media, increasing the visibility of women in mainstream media and increasing access to developmental information (ibid.).

2.8.2 Structure of UMWA

UMWA whose slogan is 'professional women working together to make a difference', is an NGO for female Ugandan journalists. The association is voluntary and non-partisan, as well as non-profit making.[31]

UMWA's primary goal is to promote interactive communication and to enhance visibility and status among the less advantaged groups so that equal gender relations

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[30] Formerly the Norwegian Council for Southern Africa (NCSA), the NCA has extended its operations to the rest of Sub Saharan African countries, with the main aim of spreading information and knowledge about them to the rest of the world. NCA still finances the work of UMWA and it receives funding from NORAD for this project through the Norwegian umbrella organisation, FOKUS.
[31] See http://www.afrika.no/english/Projects/UMWA/index.html

can be realised (ibid.). The association is governed by an executive committee which consists of eleven members, including a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, a general secretary, a vice-general secretary, a treasurer, a vice treasurer and five committee members. UMWA's day to day activities are carried out by a Secretariat headed by a Co-ordinator.

2.8.3 Objectives of UMWA

- To provide, disseminate and exchange development messages to different target groups for their use, discussion and feedback.
- To provide a forum for exchange of ideas and a platform for expression to women and others who have been insignificant in the existing media.
- To put issues of marginalised people on the national agenda for positive legislation by policy makers.
- To promote good governance, democracy and observance of individual human rights
- To give communities a sense of duty and social responsibility
- To solicit for scholarships for members to further their studies
- To foster development and raise the status of women in Uganda
- To advocate and lobby for gender balance in communities at different levels of decision making both in government and the private sector
- To provide and sustain a publicity arm of the Women's movement in Uganda

(UMWA Report, 2001)

2.8.4 Projects under UMWA

The main areas of the work of UMWA include creating awareness on development issues, sensitization of women on their rights and capacity building of women working in the media (NORAD Report, 7b/2003). In order to carry out an effective work in those areas of operation, UMWA runs Mama Fm and it also operates other projects and these are; *The Other Voice (TOV)*, Get Smart Program (GSP), Public Awareness and Educational Campaigns[32]. All of these projects are geared to reaching out to the less advantaged women in the Ugandan society with the aim of enabling

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[32] These projects will be discussed in detail in chapter five when analysing the activities of Mama Fm.

them to speak and have their voices heard. It is important to look at all these projects because they are in one or another linked to Mama Fm and since they are all geared to women empowerment, it would be interesting to see how Mama Fm works hand in hand with them to meet her goals, as well as those of UMWA. At first though, we shall have a look at Mama Fm.

2.9 Mama Fm (Its birth)

Mama Fm is said to be a dream come true for members of UMWA. It is among the numerous projects run by the women's organisation and the idea to start it came up in 1994 when UMWA was doing a situational analysis of the coverage of women's issues in the media.[33] It also looked at how women were portrayed in the media, the space committed to women related activities, the listening habits for people living in rural areas, as well as the information channels available and utilised by women. UMWA came up with a number of revelations among which are the following;

- Women were the least covered, with their stories confined to the inside pages of newspapers under the brief section. On the radio stations too, women related issues got the least coverage.
- Women made news only when they had been battered or had been found in unbecoming circumstances
- Women were stereotyped, with most news about them depicting their feminine roles.
- Programs targeting women were aired at times when they were not available at home; say when they were in the garden or asleep after a hard day's work.
- Media owners and editors had exclusive powers to determine the editorial policy, when and where to publish. Radio was found to be the most affordable medium of communication for the people in rural areas and it was discovered that radio is a major tool for development, and a source of information particularly in the rural areas.
- Women preferred listening to radio between 1pm and 4pm
- There was a very big information gap between women and men, and also between rural and urban areas.

(http://www.wougnet.org/Documents/UMWA/mamafm.html)

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[33] See http://www.wougnet.org/Documents/UMWA/mamafm.html

2.9.1 Significance of the discoveries

The above discoveries by UMWA are very essential for this research project as they form a basis for which Mama Fm was started. The main discovery is embedded in the portrayal of women by the then existing media in Uganda and this takes us back to earlier on in this chapter where we saw that the ownership (by mostly men) of media organisations has a lot to do with the content. We saw that a lot of decisions in media organisations were made by the men as they dominated the media industry in Uganda, hence contributing largely to the end result in terms of the media content. When women keep seeing fellow women being portrayed as house wives, victims or sex objects, then they do not have a motivation to try and be something other than that. Instead, their self-confidence, mobility and participation in public spheres are affected negatively. It is therefore important for them to be able to see women that have made it in life so that they too can be encouraged to be like them.

Not only is it important for women to see and hear from other women about their achievements, it is vital that the women be provided with relevant information that they can apply in their day to day life so as to bring about a positive change. If these media stereotypes about women are to change, it is important to have women in top decision-making positions in media organisations. Furthermore, it is vital for the women to have access to information that benefits them in terms of improving their position and status in the societies in which they live. In a nutshell, a paper presented during the Asia Media Summit Pre-Workshop on Gender in 2005 proposed some strategies for bringing about change in regards to the above issue, to include the following;

> (…) to increase the portrayal of women as significant contributors to society as leaders, workers and thinkers, not just as carers, sex objects or victims. The development of appropriate alternative and community media can also enable the dissemination of diverse expressions and experiences, particularly from marginalised groups who are better able to own and manage them at the community level.
> (Asia Media Summit Pre-Workshop on Gender, 2005)

It is no wonder that the members of UMWA began thinking of ways to rectify the above problems, hence coming up with the idea of starting up a community radio

station, to address the above issues. One of the characteristics of community media is that they are owned and controlled by people in a community. The word community in this respect does not only mean a geographical region, but it can also be used to refer to a community of interests especially among the disadvantaged sectors of society.[34]

Hence in the case of Mama Fm, UMWA is a women's community that set out to meet the specific needs of a specific group of people that had something in common i.e. their gender. Basing on this, and what we have already seen, Mama Fm as a community radio set up by women for women is meant to be able to address all the issues that UMWA discovered were wrong with the media industry in Uganda. Mama Fm works at changing the way women participate in radio programming as producers and as listeners and also works at giving a human face to the women and gender issues that were previously predominantly represented in terms of mere statistics. The aim was to give the statistics a face and a voice.

The above background has been supplied about UMWA and Mama Fm because as mentioned earlier, Mama Fm is one of the projects under UMWA and therefore tracing its background required giving an overview and background of the formation of UMWA. Also important to note is the fact that UMWA came up with the idea of starting a radio station in order to address the problems they discovered in the media industry of Uganda, especially when it came to covering and representation of women in the media.

Conclusion

The issue of women empowerment is a very important aspect of the world today basing on what has been revealed so far about the status of women in societies generally. This study seeks to establish ways in which community media have come in to bridge the gap created by commercial media through various ways that in the end, should encourage women to speak up for themselves, hence contributing to their empowerment process. This chapter therefore made reference to women and their role

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[34] See http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/me/meb/meb03/meb03a/meb03a05

in fighting the stereotypes of female portrayals in the media through the establishment of organisations that try to challenge these issues.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

The empowerment feminism theory and the development communication theory were used in this study since the study deals with issues such as two-way communication, participatory communication and behavioural change, all of which are embedded in the above theories. These theories will therefore act as a guideline to analyse and determine to what extent a community radio can enhance the empowerment of its listeners by applying the principles mentioned above, that are contained in both these theories. In order to enhance a more understanding of these theories, a brief history is given of the changes in both the empowerment feminist discourses and development communication theory and these will later on be put into context in order to fit within the framework of Community media.

3.2 Empowerment Feminism

The empowerment feminism theory developed as a result of the failure of previous attempts such as the welfare approach, a model of social research that was under the colonial administration from the 1950's to the 70's to integrate women in development (Karl, 1995:84). This approach failed because of its assumption that women were a part of the household or community in which they lived, or were just simply looked at as objects of warfare (ibid.). The welfare approach tends to encourage high levels of dependency, hence contributing very little to the self-reliance of women. Nevertheless such an approach is popular in reaching women and is normally preferred by governments that are interested in upholding their cultural and social values, mainly because this approach does not call for the questioning of issues like status quo in terms of say, division of labour, or even the equal access to and control of resources (Staudt et al, 1989).

It is from the realisation of the shortcomings of the welfare approach that a new approach emerged, i.e. Women in Development (WID), with an aim of integrating women into the development process. WID is a very wide approach whose origins can be traced back to the agenda setting role of women proposed by Ester Boserup in her book, 'Women's Role in Economic Development' (1970). In here, she highlighted the essential roles of production by women in terms of agriculture, as opposed to only

their role in the process of reproduction i.e. wives and mothers that had been a commonly accepted situation in the 1950's (Moser, 1991). Hence, the new thinking adopted by WID was that instead of neglecting women, they should instead be integrated in development projects (Karl,1995) and this resulted into the emergence of three approaches within the WID approach, which are identified by Moser (1991) as ; equality, anti-poverty and efficiency.

By the beginning of the 1980's, the equality approach had been abandoned widely by most national, as well as international organisations, on realising that the poor people, especially the women still remained poor, even after this approach was employed. The approach had been concerned with the unequal status between men and women, which emphasized the integration of women into wage work and economic independence as synonymous with equity (Mosse, 1993, 62-64). This approach had also been a major highlight of the UN International Women's Year under the themes of Equality, Development and Peace, with attempts to meet women's gender needs, basing on a top-down legislative intervention in development programmes (Mahoney, 2/1991:13, cited in Dralega, 2002). However, the approach faced a lot of criticism especially for the top-down approach it proposed which was just a mere reflection of a First World feminist preoccupation with equality (Mosse, 1993).

It is at this point that the anti-poverty approach to development started to be adapted by a number of development agencies mainly because it recognised poverty as the starting point of the inequality between sexes, rather than subordination. Hence it set out to improve the income of women so as to better their livelihood (ibid.). Basing on this assumption by this approach, low income women were focussed on by development agencies as the main target group, with the goal of creating income-generating activities for them through access to resources such as land and credit (ibid.). However, this approach too has not been free from criticisms mainly due to the fact that in most cases, income generating projects are often accused of paying little attention to the fact that women are already overburdened with work (ibid.).

Eventually, upon the realisation that large sums of money as well as resources were not making such a big impact, the interest of development agencies shifted to yet another approach; efficiency, which has been widely accepted as a model for women

and development (Moser, 1991). Women are not just reproducers, but they are community managers as well, because women as workers are as able as men in the process of self-building. In addition, women as community managers are capable of showing much more commitment than their male counterparts in making sure that services are maintained (ibid).

Generally speaking, none of these WID approaches survived criticism as it was alleged that they do not question the model of development based on economic growth and the dominance of males in policy-making processes, with little or no contribution from women (Karl, 1995). Consequently, a new approach aimed at increasing the input of women in the processes of planning and development began to emerge (Karl, 1995:102), with such initiatives such as Development Alternatives, Women for a New Era coming up with their main emphasis on self-reliance and the general participation of women in the whole process of development i.e. the empowerment approach (ibid).

3.2.1 The Empowerment Approach
This approach is meant to correct all the weaknesses that exist in the approaches already discussed and it highlights empowerment as the top most priority in attaining development. It is important to note that there are various definitions for the term empowerment; hence, depending on the area of empowerment sought, its definition will vary. Nevertheless, the neutral focus in the concept of empowerment is that for development initiatives to be successful they must begin from the grassroots and they must target the powerless and the marginalized (Dralega, 2002).

The empowerment of women is a process that involves awareness and capacity building, both of which lead to greater participation, greater decision-making and to transformative action (Karl, 1995:14). Women empowerment entails the acquisition of the ability to make strategic life choices, meaning that one has the ability to make choices when they have power. However because not all choices are equally relevant to the definition of power as some choices are more important than others in the way they impact on people's lives, the notion of empowerment therefore refers to 'the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this

ability was previously denied to them' (Kabeer, 2000:28). This ability to make choices incorporates three inter-related dimensions i.e. resources (includes access in addition to future claims to material, human and social resources), agency (includes processes of decision-making) and achievements (the outcomes of well-being) (ibid.).

Resources and agency together constitute the potential that people have for living the lives they want and the potential for achieving valued ways of 'being and doing' (Sen 1985b, cited by Kabeer, 2000). Whereas resources involve the facilities necessary for use to attain development, agency is about being able to define one's goals and act upon them, and this can be exercised by both individuals and by collectives (ibid.). Hence, agency in most cases is promoted by the organizations that seek to empower women by ensuring a collective capacity towards self-reliance and enabling the redistribution of power, so as to encourage women to participate in the control and influence of the directions in which development occurs. In this case, Mama Fm is the agency/agent responsible for attaining women empowerment and therefore will be scrutinised in terms of the criteria it employs in order to achieve positive results in the empowerment process of women.

Participation is given a lot of importance in the empowerment approach. A UNDP Fast Facts Report[35] states, 'genuine involvement and participation can only occur if the information needs of all citizens (including those at the margins of societies) are met and the voices of those most affected by development decisions are heard.' (UNDP report, 2006:6). This report further argues and demonstrates the ability of the media to strengthen communication mechanisms for vulnerable groups, hence in the process, play a role in leading to their empowerment. This is what is referred to as 'communication for empowerment', an approach that puts the information and communication needs and interests of disempowered and marginalised groups at the centre of media support (ibid.). Empowerment is an essential element as it is in a way, a sub-set of development. It is important to note that not only is it enough for the affected people to participate in the process, they must also be aware and informed about the agency's intended development aims and plans for them and how they can benefit from them (Young, 1993).

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[35] UNDP is involved in strengthening national policy through its interconnected development practices such as democratic governance. Annually, it publishes a report about its activities in this field.

3.3 The Development Communication Theory

This theory has undergone a lot of changes from the time it started to take root in the 1960's up until now. After the Second World War, many countries in what is now the developing world continued to lag behind in terms of restructuring themselves, whereas their counterparts in Europe continued to strive. Many scholars, Daniel Lerner (1958), Wilbur Schramm (1964), and Everett Rogers (1976), among others therefore began engaging themselves with what development was and how development communication could facilitate development, as well as the kind of research methodology that should be employed to achieve the desired development goals (Melkote, 1991:1-2). All this was in a bid to propose viable ways for helping the developing countries attain development. This is what led to the development of the modernisation paradigm/theory which was later criticised especially by scholars from the developing world for its assumption that the developing world could just adopt a Western style of life if it is to develop. For instance, Rogers (1976) argued that it was best for the developing countries to embrace Western agriculture, medicines, tools and techniques to replace the traditional ones, which had been assumed to continue hindering their development.

This however as was to be realised later on could not work because unlike Europe that had its own expertise, the developing world lacked such expertise, hence mere transfer of finance and material was not going to work. Instead, the people of the developing countries had to change their way of life before re-establishing themselves. Scholars then realised that development did not only involve the transfer of technology, but it involved also the 'communication of ideas, knowledge and skills' to enable success in the adoption of the new changes (Melkote, 1991:22). For this communication to yield successful results, it had to be persuasive in influencing the developing world to adopt the Western kind of technology. However, this approach too was found to have short-comings as it involved a kind of agent who was conversant with Western technology and who was meant to persuade the people at the grassroots to adopt this new technology. This approach to development communication met a lot of criticism as it involved the flow of information from an agent at the top, to the rural person at the bottom. It came to be referred to as top-

down communication. This approach reached only a few people, the educated ones, who had a big responsibility of convincing the masses to accept Western technology.

This is when, yet again, a new approach to development communication came up, 'the passing of traditional society' which was proposed by Lerner (1958) and Schram (1964), who argued that by being exposed to images of the lives of people in the modern world, people in Developing Countries would be propelled to change their lifestyle and behaviour, and adopt a new modern way of life. This approach too failed as non-adopters in the developing world outnumbered those in the developed world and as such these non-adopters in the developing word were referred to as 'laggard and recalcitrant' (Melkote, 1991:26).

However later on, it was discovered that the non-adopters/peasants were not just resistant to change but that there were other factors affecting their resistance; hence it was argued that if these factors were eliminated, then the peasants would be able to adopt to change (Ascroft et al. 1973b). Dissanayeke (1985 in Dralega, 2002:40) pointed out that as long as there is no knowledge of a people's culture, it can not be possible to bring about meaningful change and development, however well the intention may be. The focus of communication changed from top-down flow of information to co-equal knowledge sharing between users and sources. Communication would now be used to help people in self-development efforts, serve as a mechanism for solving community's problems and also serve as a vehicle in bringing about community participation (Melkote, 1991:2677). This approach was in favour of participation of the people at the grassroots so as to liberate them from a 'spiral of silence' and ensure that the development plans were relevant to them. This approach also stressed the independence of local communities by developing their local skills and material resources, hence leading to greater self-reliance in development and freedom from external dependency. Furthermore, it called for the integration of the old and new, traditional and modern ideas, in order to create an equal blend that is relevant to a particular community's needs. It also stressed the point that new development projects should not assume that everyone is literate and that messages that are not tailor-made for illiterate people will not have any impact on them (Melkote 1991 & Serveas et al. 1996).

McQuail (1994)'s development media theory emphasises the need for interaction with target audiences, as well as on the establishment of local media channels to provide access and enable a bottom up communication (Denis McQuail, 1994:131). This is because poor people, in this case, rural women in Uganda are assumed to have knowledge on their own local methods of farming, food security and their needs and priorities (Goduka, in Chiwome, 2000:134). As a result, Mama Fm should use this knowledge that the rural women already have by integrating it with the new knowledge in order to bring about social change.

Ultimately, participation is a recurring theme in both the development communication and empowerment approaches. For participatory development to be empowering according to Maphosa (2000), it must in addition to leading to self-reliant economic development and self-transformation, be also a process that enables the local people to identify, analyse, assess, prioritize and gain power and control of their own development needs and aspirations within the environment they live.

3.4 Participation in Community Media

A key principle of communication for development is the mobilization of people and the enhancement of participation in the projects meant for them through dialogue (Servaes, 1999:60). This participatory kind of communication allows audiences to play an active role in making a decision regarding what kind of communication could be functional in their context. In such a situation, communication facilitates development and does not enforce it (ibid: 62). For a development strategy to be feasible, its focus must be on the local area, local activity and as far as possible, local decision making should become central in development planning. Two-way communication as opposed to one-way communication should be emphasised and horizontal communication should be applied in favour of vertical communication (Wilber Schramm Cit. in Lent, 1987).

Participatory communication tends to highlight small rather than large media, horizontal, rather than vertical communication, collective self-reliance rather than dependence on outside experts, and action, rather than theory-oriented inquiry (Berrigan, 1979). This is what is referred to as community participation, which

according to (Cohen and Uphoff cit. in Jacoson and Satish, 1999:267-268) is that kind of communication in which individuals and communities are involved in the decisions and programs that affect their lives, from project identification and design to implementation and post-project evaluation. As a matter of fact, there are variations in the specific definitions of this kind of communication. It may be referred to as 'popular', 'participatory', 'indigenous', 'self-governing' and 'emancipatory' (Jacobson and Satish, 1999: 268). However, a characteristic feature of participation is that there is involvement of people in the processes of decision making and program implementation (ibid.). Furthermore, there is the sharing in the benefits of development and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programs. In so doing, community participation promotes the goals of increased community ownership of projects, greater community capacity, and better prospects of sustainability (Cohen & Uphoff, cited in Jacoson and Kolluri, 1999:268).

For true participation to be attained, the one key concept that ought to be put in place is dialogue. This is according to a number of scholars (Jacobson and Satish, 1999:265,; Dervin and Frenette, 2001:70&85). Indeed, the Ottawa-based International Development Research Centre (IDRC) embraced this approach when in 1996; it employed a participatory approach called *Communication at the grassroots level: The Exchange of Information; Two-way media; and non formal Education* (Besette, 1996:22) in which participation at the grassroots communication involved people in an interactive environment. This kind of approach helped the participants to identify their problems, understand their causes, encouraged them to propose solutions and at the same time, facilitated them to organise themselves in order to take appropriate action (ibid.).

Participation is a key element in community media according to Tabing (2002) because it is what distinguishes community radio from other media i.e. the high level of people's participation, both in management and program production aspects. He further notes that in community media, citizen participation is allowed at all levels-from planning to implementation and evaluation of the project. The citizens are also involved in the decision-making process, including making decisions about the contents, duration and program schedule. The citizens or their representatives also have a voice in the management and financing of radio program projects. In other

words, without this kind of participation, radio can not be referred to as community radio because as has been noted, one of the core principles of community radio is the enabling of ordinary people, to participate in the station (Mitchell, 1998). Nair and White (1993) defined participatory communication from a transactional perspective as a two-way dynamic interaction between grassroots receivers and a source of information that is mediated by development communicators.

The 1990's saw a new trend in the field of communication in which the Internet sent text and data flowing around the world. A decade later still, the use of the Internet continues to grow as photos, audio and video become easily transmitted as text. However, these technological shifts have prompted economic and political shifts, as well as fundamental shifts in the nature of audiences and programming itself in that large, heterogeneous audiences are becoming something of the past while the media increasingly market to segmented audiences in terms of say, ideology, class, ethnicity or race (Johnson and Menichelli, 2007). Consequently it becomes difficult in such a fragmented world for the existence of an electronic place where people can convene as citizens. They pose this question, 'Can the new media create a public square where people can be heard-and hear each other?' (ibid: 1)

The answer to that question is yes as can be seen in a number of communities in the US (and the world in general) that have taken control of media, adapted new technologies to social, economic, educational, cultural and information needs of their residents, hence in the long run, delivering public services effectively (Somerset-Ward, 2000). These kinds of media go beyond the standard notions of media in the public, to embrace practices that allow more citizen participation in issues like media production, governance and policy. Armed with such knowledge, citizens can then gain more confidence to participate in matters concerning their societies and their countries at large. Castells (2005) says that it is known widely that without access to information networks and global flows of media, social inequality is bound to be created. Therefore, this is when community media come in to explore local issues and to define places where people live and how they relate to each other, while reflecting their local values and culture (Johnson and Menichelli, 2007).In this way, the people are made to feel as though they too, are part of the society they live in and are

accepted members because they too have a platform on which they can air their views. The quote below summaries the representative nature of community media:

> Without the presence of local institutions committed to supporting communities in their efforts to grapple with a global media culture and create digital inclusion, it is unlikely that the democratic potential of network communications can be realised" (Johnson and Menichelli, 2007:3).

Conclusion

This chapter has revealed that participation is very vital in enabling the empowerment and development of marginalised groups. It has also shown the ability of community media to enable participation of the marginalized in issues that affect them in order to bring about social change. It has also acknowledged the role of the media in informing vulnerable groups on issues that affect them, provide opportunities for them to air their concerns in public areas and to provide spaces for them to discuss and debate issues between themselves. In as much as participation is very important, access to the medium of communication is as important so as to provide a platform for participation. Furthermore, the media should have a self-management policy that embraces the listeners; and above all, must be able to attain sustainability so as not to break the development process (Tabing, 2002).

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

A methodology is defined as "a theory and analysis of how research should proceed" (Harding, 1987: 2), meaning that for any research to be complete, certain methods must be employed to collect relevant data that will lead to conclusions. (Kaplan, 1964:18) defines a methodology as "the study—the description, the explanation, and the justification—of methods, and not the methods themselves" In other words, methodology provides justification for the methods of a research project, while methods are the "techniques for gathering evidence" (Harding, 1987:2) or "procedures, tools and techniques" of research (Schwandt, 2001:158).

In the case of this research which is for the purpose of measuring the effectiveness of a community radio i.e. Mama Fm in enabling the empowerment of rural women in Uganda; a number of research methods will be used to help produce the relevant data that will be used to analysis the radio's effectiveness. Yin (1994:15) noted that research methods enable the investigation of an empirical topic by following a set of pre-specified procedures. Research methods also define the manner in which a research will study a given phenomenon (Silverman 2000:79). This means therefore that appropriate methods must be chosen for any given research in order to arrive at the correct conclusions.

As such, qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were used. Patton (1990, 13-14) defines qualitative research methods as those which 'permit the evaluation to study selected issues in depth and detail.' Since this study aims at evaluating the performance of Mama Fm in elevating the status of rural women through communication, these methods will be vital resources for finding the answers to the problems. Wimmer and Dominick (1994:45) have noted that the key advantage of qualitative research is that not only is it more flexible than quantitative research, it also allows the researcher to observe behaviour in a normal daily environment. This therefore makes it easier for a researcher to understand in detail the phenomenon under study.

For this study, three qualitative research methods were used, namely; interviews, focus group discussions and document review/analysis. Since this study is explorative as well as descriptive, it needed the above methods in order for me to arrive at relatively accurate findings. The study focuses on rural women, Mama Fm's structure and management plus the program content on Mama Fm. The fact that this study aims at describing and discussing how the women benefit from the content on this radio station, the above qualitative methods were most appropriate.

4.2 Why Community Radio and why Mama Fm in particular?

As noted in a previous chapter, information is very vital if development is to occur and it is even more vital if information is being relayed in a language that is understood by the recipients.

> Language has the power to create, define, categorize, label, legalize and in any other way, bind groups of people. Language represents knowledge, linking what can be known "reality", constructing life in its shadow. The politics of this kind of representation can not be ignored (White, 1999:18)

On looking at the characteristics of community radio, there is no doubt that it is well suited to reach-out to people that have been denied information either because of language barrier, social status, geographical location or literacy levels, among others. I therefore decided to narrow down to community media as they are more inclined towards the grass root people and are mainly interested in developing and empowering them through participatory communication. Furthermore, compared to film, television or newspapers, radio is generally a relatively under researched and under valued area of the media. It can be argued that as a form of cultural production, radio is marginalised and also women and radio as an area of research within radio studies is also undervalued (Mitchell, 1998). I therefore chose radio in particular, to add to the existing body of knowledge and also to discuss the opportunities that women have in terms of access, training and development in community media and to show how this kind of alternative media can be a tool for women empowerment. Having done research in this area, I will contribute to a theory and praxis of alternative media as tools for women's participation in the public or social arena (ibid.).

Mama Fm, being a community radio, the first in Africa and specifically targeted to benefit rural women was a good choice of study given the fact that world over, women have for long been left behind in all spheres of life, especially in the developing countries which are mainly patriarchal. As earlier observed that knowledge is power, this study seeks to see how much more powerful the female listeners of Mama Fm have become since they began listening to this radio station. It is also important to note that Mama Fm has a mission, goals and aims to fulfil as stated on their website and all these are geared towards the empowerment of its listeners. It is not enough to rely on information by Mama Fm about what they hope to do and what they have already done, without going to the ground and establishing the authenticity of these claims.

4.3 Challenges Faced

The challenge of this research was to evaluate the progress made by Mama Fm in meeting its number one goal, i.e. the empowerment of rural women. However, one big challenge was that because this research was based on development and feminist theories, it was quite a challenge evaluating the performance of the radio, as the set standards or theories to compare these evaluations with, are difficult to establish, just by studying those theories.

It was also very difficult to evaluate the benefits of the women listeners from the radio station's program as development and growth is a gradual process and can not be substantiated in numerical measure. Furthermore, this research was done in a period of two months, making it even more complicated to come up with accurate and reliable results. Hence, I had to rely on the testimonies of the listeners on what their perceptions of the radio station are.

4.4 Research Tools and instruments

Research data can be collected using a variety of tools and instruments but not all can be used. Only a few that are relevant to the research study can be used, otherwise it will be a waste of time, employing all of them regardless of whether they apply or not. The methods used in this research are outlined and expounded on as shown below;

4.4.1 Interviews

Polit and Hungle (1991) describe interviews as a method of collection of data involving one person (the interviewer), asking another person (the respondent) questions and these are conducted either face-to-face or by telephone) and now, also through email). The purpose of this is to acquire information from the respondent, as Lindolf (1995) argues that the most important way of understanding others and their activities is by asking them. Interviews are therefore the most widely used method of data collection Jensen (2002:40).

Data collection through interviews is advantageous in that there are usually high response rates, control over the interview process by the interviewer, who is able to put the respondent at ease by using effective interpersonal skills. It is also possible for ambiguous questions to be clarified by the interviewer during the interview process. Furthermore, respondents are encouraged to expand on their own experiences when the interviewer uses open-ended questions (Appleton, 1995).

Preparation for an interview should be done by writing down your questions beforehand so that your time, as well as that of the interviewee is not wasted. People are not sources that you keep going back to, to seek more answers because you were not prepared in the first place (Booth et al. 1995).

I had two interviewees, i.e. the Executive Director of Mama Fm and a presenter and the coordinator of the Listeners' clubs[36] at Mama Fm. I interviewed the Executive Director of the radio station (Margaret Ssentamu) in order to get in-depth knowledge of what the radio's strategies are and how they have been employed to meet the station's goals. For the coordinator of the listeners' clubs (Charles Suuna), I interviewed him because he deals directly with the listeners, who are a very vital group of people in this research project. I chose to interview each of them individually as this left room for me to introduce any topics of relevance to the subject and also allowed the respondents time to reflect on the questions. I was also able to make follow-ups on specific and particular areas that needed clarification. Prior to these

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[36] These clubs comprise of the listeners of Mama Fm. Through these clubs, the listeners meet on a regular basis to discuss issues that have been raised on the radio station or issues that they would like to hear on the radio. More information on these clubs is in the next chapter.

interviews, I prepared an interview guide that guided me during the course of the interviews, so as not to deviate from the main subject matter. I used a tape recorder, so as not to miss anything and later transcribed the interviews.

Despite the advantages that personal interviews have, they also have a few shortcomings. For instance; they tend to be costly and time consuming, both in terms of organising them, travelling to the interview venue and the length of the interview itself. Furthermore, a lot of time is spent trying to transcribe the interviews, analyse and code them (Appleton, 1995). Indeed, I experienced almost all the above challenges as I had to make numerous phone calls to set an appointment for the interviews and also had to travel to and from the premises of Mama Fm to conduct the interviews (and focus group discussions) as they were carried out on different days

On the whole however, the data collection process for me through these interviews was a process of learning and during the course of the progression of the interviews; I tended to gain more confidence and skills in handling the whole interview process.

4.4.2 Focus group discussions:

The method of focus group discussions possesses elements of both participant observation and individual interviews (Morgan 1988 in Madriz, 2000). It has of recent grown in popularity and recognition as a valuable method for qualitative data collection. The reason for this is because it is a good method for exploring a wide range of issues (Colucci, 2007). Due to the fact that humans are 'social' beings, they have long been gathering together and discussing important issues in groups. It is this element of human behaviour that researchers used, refined and made into a method of research (ibid).

Wimmer and Dominick (1997:97) suggest that focus group discussions are vital as pilot studies so as to detect ideas that could further be investigated using other methods. This technique of interviewing participants in a group enables a researcher to attain information on trends and variances, reasons and causes through the views of respondents (Yin, 1994:182).

On the other hand, group discussions may tend to lean towards 'consensus ground-dissenting views' that may become marginalized and discussion among the participants may become invisible as the pressure in the group directs the discussion towards a common frame (ibid). Nonetheless, such kinds of processes make the group discussion more natural as a form of data generation:

> Group dynamics are such that opinion and participation are not equally weighted; some people have disproportionate influence. But real life is like that: opinions are not as much the property of individuals as public-opinion polling would have us think. Opinions arise out of interaction, and 'opinion leaders' have disproportionate influence (Liebes and Katz, 1990:29)

Two focus group discussions, on two different days were carried out with some of the female listeners of Mama Fm. The first group consisted of seven participants and the second, of six participants. Furthermore, both of these focus group discussions were conducted at the premises of Mama Fm, with Charles Suuna, the coordinator of Mama Fm's listeners' clubs as the moderator of the discussions. This is because the language used in the discussions was Luganda, a language I am not very conversant with, but which all the women were very fluent in, and is also the main language used on Mama Fm. The women participants were from various suburbs around Kampala city and they ranged from 24 to 65 years of age. All the women were low income earners and they ranged from widows, to housewives, to job-seekers, and to owners of small businesses. Apart from one participant who was a university graduate, all the rest were school-dropouts due to various reasons like lack of school fees, early marriages, wars or death of parents. A tape-recorder was used to record the discussions so as to act as a back-up in case anything was missed out when taking notes in the discussions.

From these discussions, I gathered a lot of information concerning what their expectations from the radio station were, whether or not their expectations were being met, what they wish could be done differently etc. The answers I got from these discussions acted as a guide in my analysis of the radio's relevance in regards to its programming to the basic needs and wants of its listeners. Dralega (2002:56) argues that focus group discussions leave room for the respondents to introduce topics of relevance to the conversation and they also give respondents time to reflect on the

questions. In addition, discussions allow for follow-up questions on specific areas that are not clear.

This methods proved to be successful as the women opened up and expressed their feelings and opinions and this could be as Dralega (2002) noted that women tend to find comfort in numbers and also, individual attitudes and beliefs do not form in a vacuum but that people need to listen to others so as to reaffirm that, which they already know (Krueger, 1988.44).

4.4.3 Document Review

This method acted as a supplement to the data that was collected from both the interviews and focus group discussions, since it does not rely on the direct participation of the respondents. Although Sarantakos (1998:277) warns that documents maybe biased since they represent the views of their authors, he further notes that they are advantageous because they enable the researcher to acquire information more easily and faster. In addition to this, Patton (1990) states that program documents 'provide stimulus for generating questions that can be pursued through direct observation and interviewing.' It is also time saving and cheap as it does not require any cost to read the documents. With this method, I was able to obtain a ground of knowledge from Mama Fm's past and on-going projects. I was provided with a number of documents and publications by Mama Fm that helped to provide background knowledge about the work and activities of the radio station. These documents were written by staff of Mama Fm and UMWA and were very useful in tracing the radio station's roots up to date.

One of the advantages of this method was that I was able to access data much faster and more easily by simply reading through the documents. The documents I acquired included the Mama Fm's policies, its objectives, plans, achievements, conference reports and journals. It is from these documents, that I was able to come up with an interview guide for my interviews as they provided me with a more detailed source of the activities and background, as well as challenges of Mama Fm.

4.4.4 Program Analysis

This is similar to the above, only that this time, it is an analysis of the programs that are aired on Mama Fm. I listened to Mama Fm for a period of three weeks in order to find out whether the programs aired on the radio station were relevant to their target audience's needs. However, I did not go in-depth to analyse each of these programs but their titles, as well as the response from the focus groups, which guided me on examining the relevance of these programs to the listeners.

Generally, the interview with the Mama Fm's Executive Director gave me an insight from the production side/input by looking at their strategic plans, while the program analysis gave me an insight into the kind of content (output) on Mama Fm. The focus group on the other hand, provided me with an insight from the reception side on whether or not the ownership decisions and policies are beneficial to the recipients and what impact the radio content had on the lives of its listeners. The document review was necessary as it acted as a guide for coming up with questions to ask the owners of the radio station.

4.4.5 Use of the Internet as a tool for research

I employed the internet as a research tool and this proved to be very effective as it saved me a lot of time in trying to look for the relevant information, say from libraries. Google scholar and Sage pub were research engines that I used a lot during the course of this research. These engines enabled me gain access to online journals in line with this field of research. Furthermore, I was able to access the websites of Mama Fm and the Norwegian Council for Africa in order to get more insight into their activities. In fact, Stewart and Mann (2000) noted that on-line research was very helpful to a researcher in terms of acquiring additional information, moreover at limited cost, time and reach.

On-line research proved to be advantageous in that I had wide geographical access, hence this saved me time. Handling of data was also very easy as I could download material and print it for further consultation.

4.5 Methodological Challenges/Limitations

One of the limitations I faced was during the focus group discussions in which the women all praised the work of Mama Fm but when asked about its limitations, most of them were hesitant to answer and this could probably have been due to the presence of the listener's club coordinator who helped me translate the questions into the women's local language. Much as they gave the limitations, I believe they were capable of expressing themselves more if the situation had been different.

I lost a lot of time and spent a lot in trying to make appointments with my interviewees, who would keep changing the dates and asking me to call them for confirmation. Even when I was finally able to secure an appointment with the Executive Director of Mama Fm, I had to wait an hour plus before I could see her because she had a meeting at the time my interview with her had been scheduled.

Conclusion

This chapter has basically highlighted the research tools and methods I employed in collecting the data for this research. In addition, it also mentioned the challenges I underwent in collecting my data, which could have affected the end result of my findings that will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

The findings in this chapter were gathered from personal interviews, document reviews and focus group discussions. These findings seek to answer the main research question of this project, which is;

How has Mama Fm as a community radio ensured the empowerment of rural women in Uganda?

To answer this question, this chapter will look at Mama Fm in terms of four aspects i.e. access, participation, self-management and sustainability because from what was revealed earlier on, for a community radio station to be effective, all the above factors must be embedded in its operations. It is also important to note that Mama Fm is part of an umbrella organisation, Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) and it therefore operates in line with the other projects under that same umbrella organisation. As such, this chapter will contain a discussion the projects under UMWA that work hand in hand with Mama Fm to achieve the radio station's goals.

This chapter will be divided into four sections. The first one will talk about the accessibility of Mama Fm to its listeners. The second will look at the level of participation of the listeners in the activities of the radio station, while the third will look at the nature of the management of the radio station. The fourth part will discuss the sustainability of Mama Fm as a community radio, before any conclusions are made.

5.2 Access

According to Tabing (2002), access to the medium of communication is the primary step towards the full democratization of the communication system. He says that people should have access not only to the media products but also to the media facilities. Further more, the feedback channel should always be open and there should be maintenance of full interaction between the producers and receivers of messages. One of the things to look at here is the location of Mama Fm and also its reach (in terms of its signal strength).

5.2.1 Location

Mama Fm is located in Kisaasi, a suburb of Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. The station's premises are about eight kilometres from the city centre. Even though the station is located a few kilometres from the city centre, it feels like it is hundreds of kilometres away. This is due to the banana plantations dotted with earth mound houses that dominate its environs. While here, it is very common to see women carrying hoes to the garden with babies hunched on their backs. Also another common sight is that of women doing domestic chores, with their daughters helping out, and groups of girls carrying water from the well. 'It is for these people that Mama Fm was started, and therefore it makes sense that it is located in their environment.'[37]

In order to arrive at the premises of Mama Fm, one goes through the posh suburbs of Kampala, before the tarmac comes to an end and a dirt track leads all the way to the station. 'Once on the dirt track the convenience of an urban lifestyle and the façade of the well being it creates, are all blocked out of view by the raised curtain of dust left in the wake of moving cars'(ibid.).

Most of the suburbs surrounding Kampala city are not very different in appearance from Kisaasi, the suburb in which Mama Fm is located. The further you move away from the city centre, the more rural a place gets. Hence much as the radio station is located in Kampala, its surrounding appears rural and the people that live there tend to lead a rural or semi-urban lifestyle. In fact, all the women that took part in the focus group discussions live in the suburbs of Kampala and most of them were illiterate or semi-illiterate, apart from one who was a university graduate. The participants of the focus group discussion that live within Kisaasi, said that the radio station was accessible and that they could easily go there if they had something they wanted to have aired on the station. "Mama Fm's doors are open to members of its audience that may want to come in and share their stories or problems with the hope that they can be aired", says Margaret Sentamu the Executive Director of Mama Fm. She adds that the response has been great and she is impressed with the number of women that visit Mama Fm on a regular basis. She says that 90% of those that come in seeking for advice, help or clarification after listening to their programs on Mama Fm are women.

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[37] See http://radioafrica.oneworld.net/article/view/72080/1/

However, some of the participants that lived in other suburbs claimed that the radio station was far and they were unable to meet the transport costs involved in getting to the station's premises.

According to a publication by Mama Fm (***101.7 Mama Fm: The Voice to listen To***), geographically, the radio station covers a population of over 13 million people in the Central, parts of West, South Western and Eastern Uganda. Sentamu says that despite the fact that Mama Fm desires to reach all rural women in Uganda, its efforts to do so have been frustrated by its signal which is rather weak. Originally, the station's mast was located on Naguru hill in Kampala, making its signal strong However, when the station was relocated to a place of low altitude (Kisaasi), its reach reduced to almost half. According to a NORAD Report of 2003, Mama Fm covers 17 districts of Uganda. This means that a lot of the population of Uganda that could have benefited from the activities of the radio station are left out because Uganda currently has a total of 77 districts with a population of roughly 24,748,977[38]. What therefore happens to the other half that the station does not reach?

Mama Fm partners with UMWA in some projects and this, according Margaret Sentamu, has helped Mama Fm to reach out to other rural women in Uganda that do not get a chance to listen to the radio station due to the weak signal. One such project under UMWA that Mama Fm works closely with is 'The Get Smart Program' and the other is the Public Awareness and Educational Campaigns.

5.2.2 Get Smart Program (GSP)
This program was started by UMWA in order to provide a forum for women to actively participate in information generation, sharing and dissemination[39].

Originally known as 'Rural Outreach Program' (ROP), the name of the program was later changed to 'Get Smart Program' because according to Charles Suuna, a presenter at Mama Fm, 'Get Smart' was more consistent with the vision behind setting up the whole project. UMWA wanted to provide women with information that

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[38] See http://www.statoids.com/uug.html
[39] See http://www.afrika.no/english/Projects/UMWA/index.html

would widen their knowledge on government policies and therefore in the process, the women would be becoming 'smarter'. It was therefore deemed to be a more appropriate name for the project. This project aims at responding to the long felt marginalisation of rural women in the political, economic and social fields; hence it focuses more on the provision and dissemination of development oriented information. It was started to disseminate development oriented information and to cover issues of people living in rural areas. The program is in line with the fundamental right to speak and be heard and aims at sensitising the community about their rights, obligations and developmental issues so that they can meaningfully participate in affairs that affect them.

This program was started three years ago (2005) when UMWA took advantage of the existing groups of women in various sub counties of Uganda. These groups of women, commonly known as 'Nigiina' are a relatively new phenomenon in Uganda. The women in these groups meet on a regular basis to discuss their livelihood and suggest ways of improving it. They also receive gifts in kind and cash sometimes from each other in turns, in order to improve their well being. It is these already established groups of women that UMWA decided to reach out to with this program with the aim of sensitizing them on government plans and policies that were in the process of being implemented or those that had been implemented. According to Suuna, "when the government comes up with new policies, normally the rural women do not have a chance to air their views about what they think of these policies and how beneficial they will be to them".

Whenever there is need to address an issue about government policies with these women, a group of Mama Fm employees and UMWA staff go to the field to meet with these groups of women and ask them questions concerning a new government policy to find out how knowledgeable they are about it. They then go a head to educate them more and tell them how it will benefit them and then give them a chance to ask questions about what they may not have understood. Suuna says that among the government policies they have discussed with these women are; Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA)[40], Universal Secondary Education (USE)[41] and

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[40] This is a strategic framework for eradicating poverty through multi-sectional interventions to enable

Universal Primary Education (UPE). He further says that in most cases the women are not aware of these policies and therefore he feels that UMWA and Mama Fm have done a lot in accessing this information to the women. After the discussion sessions, which are always recorded, a report is made and the next day, the results of the discussion are reported as a news item on Mama Fm. Secondly, the recorded discussions are edited and depending on how agent they are or on the availability of time during a presenter's program, the edited clips are played on air for others to hear. Suuna stressed that the women have been encouraged to attend the 'Get Smart Program' meetings when they hear their voices on air and he says that so far, the program runs in six Ugandan districts i.e. Luweero, Mukono, Kiboga, Soroti and Mubendde. All these districts have access to Mama Fm apart from Soroti and according to Margaret Sentamu, this is advantageous to Mama Fm because it gets to reach the women in Soroti through this program and yet originally, they would not have been able to do so.

5.2.2.1 Challenges

Whereas this program has enabled Mama Fm to reach women in Soroti who do not receive the radio signal, there are still more districts in Uganda that have been left out. Suuna attributes this to the limited funds available to Mama Fm for its operations, much as the station would like to expand its services through the GSP. At the moment, the program is sponsored by the Norwegian Council of Africa but Suuna says that the funds are limited and are for a given period of time. He therefore believes that it is better for them to concentrate on a few areas within their budget so as to do quality work, instead of trying to cover a wide area with limited resources.

Furthermore, in trying to be accessible to as many women as it can, Mama Fm meets some challenges one of which is that sometimes, women miss out on listening to important programs because when the men go out to drink or to work, they go with the only radio set at home. The number of women that own radio sets is low in

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the Ugandan people to improve their livelihoods in a sustainable manner. Its mission is to eradicate poverty through the transformation of subsistence agriculture into commercial agriculture.
[41] This policy was launched by the Ugandan government and took effect in February 2007. Its aim is to reduce the rate of school drop-outs after the primary level due to lack of school fees. Many children used to drop out of school after completing primary education under the Universal Primary Education scheme.

Uganda and therefore this means that they can not decide on which stations or programmes they would like to listen to. The result is that their voices compared to those of men are poorly represented on air. Some women as revealed by Margaret Sentamu, do not attend the 'Get Smart Program' meetings unless they have got permission from their husbands.

Sentamu attributes the above to the patriarchal society of Uganda in which men are considered above women in society. She adds that Mama Fm is aware of that situation and so the station has embarked on a mission to target men as well especially those that have children. Hence the station runs programs on the benefits of educating the girl child, programs that discourage early marriages and polygamy so as to target men especially because they are the ones that pay school fees for their children, marry off their daughters early for material gain and also engage in extra-marital affairs. According to Sentamu, these programs have registered a lot of success as there are a lot of men compared to women that call in to discuss these issues.

Although this is a good sign, it has some underlying implications i.e. that women are not listening to the radio as much as men are and this could be as a result of the reasons already given. Mama Fm therefore has a duty to ensure that its target audience; the rural women, get to hear the programs that are aired on the radio station. Hence, through the GSP, Mama Fm has on a number of occasions distributed simple radios to rural women to enable them to listen to the programs in groups. At the time of carrying out this research, over thirty radio sets had been distributed in different parts of the country to rural women.

5.2.3 Public Awareness and Educational Campaigns

UMWA, in association with Mama Fm, design, conduct and manage public awareness and educational campaigns in order to reach more people. Notable campaigns that have been organised before include campaigns on the dangers of early marriages, premarital sex, girls dropping out of school and gender violence. One of their most successful campaigns was the one conducted during the General Elections of 1996 and 2001 and also the Referendum on the Political Systems, which required Ugandans to choose between a system of a one-party state and a system of multi- parties.

Sentamu says that a lot of people had not understood what a referendum was and what it is they were supposed to vote for but after a series of these campaigns in different parts of the country, the general public was more informed and therefore ready to take part in the voting exercise.

Other campaigns that have been organised before by both UMWA and Mama Fm were campaigns on the dangers of early marriages (rampant especially in rural Uganda), dangers of pre-marital sex, girls dropping out of school and gender violence in Kivulu slum, located in Uganda's capital city, Kampala. UMWA carries out these campaigns in order to get closer to its listeners so that they have a visual access to what they hear on the radio station. This makes the station's presence to be felt more among the society and its role to be appreciated by not only the women, but by the society at large. . One of the major issues Mama Fm has been addressing of recent has been the issues of Violence Against Women (VAW) and under the funding from the Norwegian Council of Africa (NCA), the radio station has managed to address this issue through public awareness and educational campaigns. Margaret Sentamu acknowledges that this is a very crucial matter that needs to be addressed and she believes that through short dramas and skits about the effect violence has on women and the country as a whole, gradually, people's perceptions will begin to change. She says that the dramas attract large crowds that include men, meaning that the message is being spread and hopefully there will be change.

Sentamu further says that Mama Fm hires a van in which it plays music that draws attention to the van. This van moves slowly while someone in the van announces who they are and that they are going to stage a play in a certain area. The music and the announcements attract people who follow the van to its final stop, from where the intended message is passed on to the crowd normally in form of a short play

Most of the participants in the focus discussions revealed that they had attended one or more of the public awareness campaigns. They said they liked them because of the way 'serious' issues are presented in form of a play that is humorous. As such, they were able to get useful information, while at the same time being entertained**.**

Although Mama Fm does not reach all the rural women in Uganda due to its weak signal, through the GSP and the public awareness campaigns, it is slowly but gradually increasing its reach and spreading relevant information to those that would otherwise have not got it. Also through the donating of radios to rural women in Uganda, more of the radio's target audience have gained access to it. Nonetheless, a majority of the population that would have benefited from Mama Fm still do not have access to the radio station, meaning that they miss out on information that could highly benefit them.

5.3 Participation

It is not enough for the women to have access to Mama Fm without taking part in the activities of the radio station. The Beijing Declaration affirmed that;

> It is essential to design, implement and monitor, with the full participation of women, effective, efficient and mutually reinforcing gender-sensitive policies and programmes, including development policies and programmes, at all levels that will foster the empowerment and advancement of women.

Participation is viewed as one of the key channels to practice democracy in a society as it gives a voice to those that were originally voiceless. Participation in the production and management of media is the logical step after access (Tabing, 2002). Citizen's participation in radio should be allowed at all levels – from planning to implementation and evaluation of the project. The audience should be involved in the decision-making process, including making decisions about the contents, duration and program schedule. Community media have been seen as a great tool in ensuring the participation of the voiceless by involving them in the media activities (ibid.). How has Mama Fm done this?

5.3.1 Planning and Implementation

Being a project under UMWA, planning and implementation of the radio's activities are normally done by UMWA directors in conjunction with those of Mama Fm and its listeners. According to Margaret Sentamu, Mama Fm gets in touch with its listeners through the **listeners' clubs**. These consist of the people that listen to Mama Fm and these can be men too. This idea of listeners' clubs was conceived a year after Mama

Fm went on air by a male listener, Rev. Tussubira Lwanga Magoba. According to Charles Suuna, the Reverend has a school that equips women with skills on how to be nursery school teachers. During one of the programs that Suuna used to present on Mama Fm in which listeners would call in and talk about their problems, the Reverend offered to take up five girls who had dropped out of school because of lack of school fees in his school, free of charge. He then proposed to the management of Mama Fm that it would be a great idea for the station's listeners to converge in groups on a regular basis so as to discuss their problems and try to come up with solutions. The Management took up the idea and urged its listeners to form groups, which they did. Not only do the listeners meet to discuss problems but in case there is reason to celebrate due to an achievement by any of their members, they still meet. To date, says Suuna, 'there are over seven registered listeners clubs which include; Ssemutto, Mityana, Nabweru, Masuliita, Mukono, Ggenda , Abayita Ababiri and Namuseera clubs and that three more are about to be set up in the following areas; Bamunanika, Kalagi and Kassozi' He says that the clubs are supposed to meet at club level once a month and then every four months, they are supposed to meet at the Radio Station to interact with members of other groups and listen to each other's problems as well as success stories.

During these gatherings, listeners express their views to the radio staff about what they would like to hear on radio. The listeners are also encouraged to give their views about the radio station and they are encouraged to make suggestions about what changes they would like the radio station to make in terms of its programming or its other activities. The listeners, under their executive committees then make reports that are presented to the general assembly of Mama Fm, which in turn forwards them to the directors of UMWA for discussion. Once approved, the suggestions are then put into practice. Normally the listeners ask for certain issues to be discussed or addressed in some of the radio's programs i.e. 'Katukyogereko' (meaning, 'lets talk about it'), a program that addresses societal problems.

Suuna says that the listeners to an extent have a hand to play in the programs that are aired on the station. He says that the radio station depends a lot on the listeners and therefore their opinion matters a lot. "It is important to provide listeners with what they want, especially if it benefits their social welfare", he says. He gives an example

of the time the listeners said that they wanted a program that tackles issues of home i.e. the manner in which husbands and wives solve problems amicably, how to raise their children and so on. The management took the listeners' request into consideration and at present, Mama Fm runs a program called 'Amaka ggo', meaning 'Your home', in which they bring guest speakers to talk to their listeners about handling home issues.

However, because not all the listeners of Mama Fm are members of a listeners' club, this means that they do not take part in suggesting what they expect from the radio station i.e. planning. This was evidenced in the focus group discussions in which those members that were not part of a club claimed that they had no say in the radio station's activities. They claimed that they did not have time to attend the meetings of the clubs; hence they missed out on that opportunity. Although Margaret Sentamu said that listeners could come into Mama Fm premises if they had anything they wanted to request or suggest, the participants of the focus group discussion that lived far away from the radio station claimed that they could not do that because of high transport costs.

On the other hand, those that attended the listeners' club meetings on a regular basis claimed that sometimes, their requests are turned down by management. For instance, many of them said they would like the radio station to set a side a time for 'announcements', whereby they can have their announcements read out on air but at the time of this research, the management of Mama Fm had not put this in place. Furthermore, they claimed that they have been asking for the station to air 24 hours but still that had not been put in place.

Sentamu explains that management is aware of the listeners' requests but that it takes time to implement things and therefore the response is never immediate. Whereas the involvement of the audience in the operation of the radio station is vital as it gives the audience a sense of importance and boosts their esteem, the fact that not all their ideas are taken up, may discourage them from participating. Sentamu says that although this may pose as a disadvantage to Mama Fm, it is on the other hand, for the good of the listeners because not all they suggest may be for their benefit, much as they may think so. Nevertheless, she stresses that the station does its best to supply what the audience

demands and many of the issues that are addressed in their programs come from the discussions from the listeners' clubs. She also says that through the listeners' clubs, the radio station endeavours to explain to its listeners why some of their requests can not be availed to them as they wish.

By forming listeners' clubs, Mama Fm brings these people who have similar problems and interests into close contact and encourages interaction amongst them. This helps them feel free to open up and to air out their views as they wish without fear. In so doing, they get a feeling of importance and liberty as people who have concerns and that they can be heard. It is the duty of the leaders of the listeners' groups to forward the topics of discussions to Mama Fm management for further review and also for discussion on the radio's airwaves for others to listen. This therefore means that members are able to participate in determining what topics to be discussed on the radio station and also they are able to get clarification about certain issues that were discussed on the radio that they did not understand. In fact the station's strategy to involve target communities in not only programming but also in presenting has enabled the station to stay on air with quality programs.

On the whole, planning and implementation at Mama Fm is done mainly by the Management of both UMWA and Mama Fm. Much as the listeners do participate, especially in the planning bit by making suggestions to the management, their participation is minimal, considering that they do not sit in the decision-making meetings. More so, not all of them are able to participate in the listeners' clubs for reasons already mentioned above. Furthermore, "much as it would be more meaningful for the station and its listeners if say the listeners developed drama skits out of their discussion so that they could be aired, the funding difficulties of the station make it impossible to involve the listeners wholly", says Sentamu.

5.3.2 Participation on Air

Mama Fm's vision statement of 2020 is to have 80% of rural women have access to developmental information, to be knowledgeable about a number of issues that affect them, raise the level of consciousness e.g. rights of ownership, involvement in decision-making, gaining confidence and self-esteem, acquiring knowledge about the

practice of modern farming and active involvement in politics (UMWA Report, 2001). As a result, the station airs a variety of programs, most of which are in a local language; Luganda that is spoken by the majority of the people in Uganda. The programs are also generally development-oriented and are local. The programs on Mama Fm can be grouped into the following categories;

1. Political issues
2. Social issues (human rights, religion, culture and peace building)
3. Health matters
4. Business activities
5. Agriculture
6. Government Policies/ Legal matters
7. Environment
8. Education

These generalisations were arrived at basing on my conclusions after listening to Mama Fm for three consecutive weeks. I discovered that the station has one or more programs that falls in each of the above categories. Although in some cases, it is very easy to place a certain type of program under any of the above categories; it may not be easy to place some programs in a one particular category as the issues discussed in that program may cut across a number of those categories. Also important to note is that whereas some programs are run daily from Monday to Friday, others are aired once or twice during the week. With all the above topics being tackled within the programs on Mama Fm, there is a variety of knowledge and information out there for Mama Fm listeners to make use of. In addition, this variety of topics caters for a wide range of the diversities of interests that exist in Mama Fm's audience. Despite the fact that the audience of Mama Fm may have some common interests, each of them is an individual and therefore has individual needs and wants. This means that the chances of leaving out a listener are very slim as the programs cut across a wide range of topics and therefore this encourages participation from the listeners. Participants of the focus group discussions mentioned a number of programs that they chose as their best and the common reason they all gave was because the programs were interactive. Below, is a discussion of the programs on Mama Fm that were considered favourites by the participants in the focus group discussions;

5.3.2.1 'Kiwumulo'

The majority of the participants mentioned the program 'Kiwumulo' (meaning 'rest') which airs on weekdays from 9:15pm to 11:00pm as their favourite program. These include; Hafsa Nabunya, Hajat Nambooze, Maggie Kagga, Prossy Matacue, Vicky Sesanga and Harriet Muhangi. This program involves the reading of a book/novel. It can be equated to story-telling. The reasons given by the participants for choosing that program as their favourite revolved around issues like; it teaches them about the history, culture and ways of the Baganda[42], thus increasing their existing knowledge on the subjects. Some also mentioned that the program teaches them more Luganda than they already know. This program falls under the category of education as it involves reading of a book which has knowledge that can only be got if one is literate. Basing on the fact that most listeners of Mama Fm have minimal education, they can hardly read or write, this program comes in handy as the presenter reads for them while they listen and learn. At the same time, because the books normally read are about the history and culture of Uganda, this program can also fall under the category of social issues i.e. religion and culture.

Human beings are always in search of knowledge as it is believed that knowledge is power. Hence by reading for people that are unable to read for themselves, or do not have access to books, is a great incentive to them in terms of providing them with information which can prove useful in their day to day living. Among all the programs, this was the most popular among the focus group participants.

Above all, this program was chosen as a favourite amongst most participants because it is interactive. At the end of every chapter, listeners are encouraged to call in and give comments about what they have heard or ask questions for further clarification. In this way, they are able to participate and express themselves on radio and as mentioned earlier, the program is conducted in Luganda, a language easily spoken and understood by Mama Fm listeners, hence they can express themselves very well when they call in during the program.

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[42] This is the largest tribal group in Uganda. Members of this group are called 'Baganda' and they speak 'Luganda'. The Baganda live in the central parts of Uganda.

5.3.2.2 'Katukyogereko'

'Katukyogereko, simply means 'Let's talk about it' and it mainly deals with issues that are normally neglected by society. It is an interactive program in which the audience is encouraged to call in and ask questions or voice their opinion on what is being talked about. Usually a presenter hosts a guest speaker who is an expert on that particular issue that is being discussed. It was chosen as the best program on Mama Fm by Nanyonga Anita and Tomusange Joyce, who said that this program was their best because of the different guest speakers that come in daily to talk about a wide range of issues like education, health, politics, agriculture, environment, human rights and matters of day to day living. In fact, this is one of the programs on Mama Fm that cuts a cross all the categories of programs hosted by the radio station. Most of the participants liked it though especially for the health information and tips they get. They commended this program for providing them with tips on how to live in a healthy environment. They also liked the fact that the program is interactive and that they can call in to ask questions if any.

5.3.3.3 'Amaka Ggo'

This means 'your home' and was the preferred choice of both Hadijja Kateregga Nabagala and Namwanje Joan who stated that she likes the program a lot because it teaches her about marriage and therefore she learns a lot about what to expect when she gets married. Hadijja Kateregga Nabagala, who is married, claimed that she has learnt a lot about how to behave as a married woman and how to take care of her home. She says that that program has made her an expert on marriage affairs and that she normally passes on what she has learnt to other married women, who have also benefited positively from her advice. This program falls under the category of Culture as it dwells a lot on how a woman is expected to carry herself as a child, mother or wife in a home. Normally in most Ugandan communities, it was the duty of the paternal aunties and uncles to give advice to their nieces and nephews before they got married but these days, that culture is dying out. This program therefore comes in handy to advice those that seek such kind of information so that they are well-equipped when the need arises.

It was also chose as a favourite because it is an interactive and encourages listeners' participation through calling in and airing of their views or asking of questions for clarification on certain matters.

5.3.3.4 'Ebyobufuzi'

'Ebyobufuzi' means 'Government Policies' and that is exactly what that program is about. It informs listeners of new government policies or changes in the existing policies and also explains to them in simple terms what they mean and how they as Ugandan citizens can benefit from them. Edisa Kamya, the only participant that named this program as her favourite said that it has taught her a lot about government policies and how they operate and that she feels free to hold a conversation with others that are knowledgeable about it. Because she can not read, she said that Mama Fm had done a wonderful job in explaining to her the moves taken by government and advising her on how to benefit from them where necessary. She particularly mentioned how she learnt about free Primary education from Mama Fm and she was able to send two of her grandchildren to school without having to pay school fees. She says she likes the fact that different guest speakers come in on different days to talk about current issues, which she would otherwise not have known about or understood if she did not listen to this program. She also likes the fact that listeners can participate in this program by calling in to air their views on the topic of discussion.

5.3.3.5 'Edini ekyusa emyoyo gyaffe'

Nora Nabanjja Nalongo mentioned the above program as her favourite. 'Edini ekyusa emyoyo gyaffe' can be translated as 'religion that transforms our souls' and this program is basically on religion. It tackles both Christian and Islam, the two dominant religions in Uganda. Usually a speaker from either Islam or from Christianity is invited to talk about a certain issue in the Koran or Bible that can be practically applied in daily life. The reason she said this program was her best was that the program is religious and encourages listeners to live honestly and spiritually so as to have a peaceful environment for everybody to enjoy. She also liked the idea that she can call in and ask for clarification during the airing of the program. This program falls both under religion and culture, as well as social issues.

5.3.3.6 Essubi lyo kumakya'

This program runs daily in the early morning and its title means 'hope in the morning'. During this program, listeners call in to convey their greetings to their relatives or friends and then they request for a song that they would want the presenters to play for them. The program is normally punctuated by remarks from the presenters on how to be creative by giving examples of local people in society that have been able to come up with various productive ways of earning a living. Namutebi Joan said that she enjoys listening to music and she normally calls in to send greetings to her friends. She also listens to the advice from the presenters, which she says is very relevant to her situation as a young person, looking for creative ways of being self-reliant. This program is entertaining, as well as informative at the same time, as the presenters normally come in to encourage listeners to do something that can help them earn an income. The program therefore could lie under the category of business, especially because names of local members that have succeeded in what they do are mentioned and people are encouraged that they too can do the same. The fact that people can call in to make song requests or send greetings to their loved ones gives a personal touch to the program and makes it more enjoyable.

5.3.4 Challenges

The main reason the women that took part in the focus group discussions gave for choosing the programs they chose as their favourite was because each of those programs encouraged them to participate. The women all liked the fact that they could call in and ask questions or seek clarifications on issues they did not understand well. Not only are the programs interactive but they are also informative, educational and are also aired in the language that the women understand and can speak. However, the women claimed that it was expensive for them to participate in these programs because of the costs of making calls. Others said they did not even have phones and therefore could not participate, as much as they would love to. Margaret Sentamu said that because of that, the radio station came up with the listeners' clubs so that those that can not call during the programs may meet with others and discuss the programs and also ask necessary questions.

5.3.5 Evaluation

Field activities that involve evaluation of Mama Fm's programming used to be done once in a while by giving listeners questionnaires to fill in so as to express their views on the operation of the station and the level of satisfaction they get from it. However, Charles Suuna says that management realised that this was time wasting as well as costly because the majority of the listeners are illiterate. Instead, management encouraged the listeners to converge every four months at the premises of Mama Fm and air out their views. Suuna says that the response is so overwhelming that at times, up to 500 members of the listeners' clubs converge at the station's premises.

However, according to Sentamu, 'the suggestions especially given by the respondents are treated with caution because the station is operated professionally and not everything that the listeners would like to be aired goes hand in hand with the station's operational policies'. Nevertheless, through these clubs, Mama Fm has strengthened the monitoring and feedback systems of UMWA, which in turn have resulted in better project delivery (UMWA Report, 2004).

Not only do the listeners' clubs act as feedback channels for Mama Fm but they also enable the interaction of their listeners, who in turn are able to make more friends with whom they can easily relate to and rely on in terms of difficulties. This therefore builds on their social well-being, which is very important as most of these women are unemployed and are therefore always at home, making it difficult for them to meet other people with similar interests as theirs. One of the focus group participants, Nora Nabanjja Nalongo praised the listeners' clubs for enabling her to make many friends She said that she now feels that she belongs more in her community than before. She also mentioned that since she did not have a mobile phone to participate during live programs, she applauded the listeners' clubs for acting as a vehicle for her to air out her views and also to seek clarification on some issues she may not have understood during the live broadcasts of some programs.

Generally speaking, the listeners clubs have created a platform for the station to get feedback on what its listeners want or expect from them, thereby ensuring their participation in the station's evaluation. This in turn gives the radio station an idea of

what changes to make so as to satisfy its listeners more, hence keep them listening to their radio station.

5.4 Self-Management

Self-management of the communication facility follows participation (Tabing, 2002). Once the community members gain necessary experience and assimilate the required skills, there should be no reason for preventing them from managing and owning the radio station (ibid.). This actually explains the reason as to why the women listeners of Mama Fm are not actively involved in the planning and implementation aspects of the station i.e. the women lack the required skills and because most of them are illiterate or semi-illiterate, training them becomes even more difficult. Margaret Sentamu argues that the easiest way to let the listeners be part of the management of the radio station is by having policies that embrace their needs. Being a project under UMWA, Mama Fm is managed by UMWA's Board and observes the structures within this organisation (UMWA Report, 2001). The radio station has a managing director and a board of governors who foresee the running of its operations and they are all answerable to the UMWA Board. Mama Fm has a number of policies that all staff of the station must uphold. According to Sentamu, these policies are for the good of the listeners and they aim at serving them in the best possible way they can.

5.4.1 Employment Policy

Mama Fm's policy states that the station shall depend on qualified specialised staff, but it also welcomes those that wish to learn on the job and they have the 'right' attitude. Like all community radio stations, Mama Fm employs volunteers with specific terms of reference. The station depends on the services of volunteers as programme producers who are facilitated to carry out the fieldwork for their programmes. Ninety two percent of the presenters and producers at Mama Fm are "volunteers" who get very little money that is far below a living wage. Management should encourage the filling of all key positions by women, although it may be open to the other gender as well. The policy further states that all staff shall undergo a specified gender sensitisation and analysis blended with a Rights Based Approach training before they are allowed to sign any contracts(UMWA Report, 2001).

Nonetheless, in reality, the majority of presenters at Mama Fm are male. Sentamu argues that Mama Fm would indeed want to hire more women because it is even written in one of its policies that all key positions at the station should be manned by women. However, because men are more available than women and are willing to work in harsh conditions, they are normally hired instead of women, she says. She gave an example that the station manager used to be a woman but she left after a short period and that now, there is a man acting as a station manager. So as much as the station would like to hire women, most of them can not work in cases of uncertainties such as whether the next pay-check will come or not. Suuna says that out of eighteen presenters currently at Mama Fm, only eight are women. On the other hand however, the listeners of Mama Fm as revealed by the response of all the women that participated in the focus group discussion do not have a problem with the station having more men as presenters as long as they do their job well. They all agreed that what they wanted was information and knowledge and it did not matter whether it was a man or a woman that was giving it to them.

5.4.2 News policy

Just like any other media organisation, Mama Fm relays information to its audience through the airing of news at different times of the day, normally with some updates in case of any. Mama Fm believes that it is vital for women-related issues to take centre stage, if there is to be sustainable development in Uganda. As a result, women's voices and concerns must also be treated as first priority in the news on Mama Fm. In line with this, Mama Fm has developed a news policy for guidance during the preparation and airing of its news. The news policy of Mama Fm is as follows;

- Every news story shall have a women's angle
- Women related stories and activities shall be priority on Mama Fm news
- News in the radius of 100kms (of the location of Mama Fm) shall be considered first for broadcast. Other news stories can be headlines, if they qualify to be termed as 'breaking news'.
- News shall be analytical, educative and informative
- News shall have a human-interest angle
- Foreign pieces shall be updated as more details come in

- Stories shall have a news angle and an analytical element in them

- Stories shall be updated as often as more details come in

- Follow-up on stories is a must

- Foreign news stories should be re-written to give a human and local touch instead of the usual stilted BBC style. It should be re-written in the context of how people visualise it in their respective areas.

In regards to the length of news, Mama Fm's policy is as follows;

- News bulletins shall not be more than 8minutes

- Stories to be read on air shall not be more than 8 lines each

- A news bulletin shall have 3 sound bites at most, two by women

- Sound bites shall be 30 seconds maximum.

(Source: UMWA Report, 2001)

It is one thing to have a written down policy and it is a completely different thing, implementing that policy.

5.4.2.1 Implementation of the policy

Mama Fm believes in having every news story aired on its frequency to have a woman angle to it. This is very good especially since the radio station has the well-being of women at heart. However, one may wonder whether it is possible for all stories to have a woman angle. Another question to ask would be that what does Mama Fm mean by stating that every story should have a 'woman angle' to it? Whether or not it is easy to implement this particular policy may not be as crucial as what happens if every story Mama Fm gets for the day does not have a woman angle to it? Does that mean that the radio station will not run any stories for that day? Hence, much as this policy was created to put the needs of women across, it is not very clear as to what it means or how it is implemented.

News is meant to be informative and educative and that is why Mama Fm wants its news to be analytical so as to provide information in detail, hence providing education about the issues being talked about. However, listening to Mama Fm, most of its news bulletins are about ten minutes and they lack analysis and detail. The news is

normally short and precise and usually there are no follow-ups on issues, much as that is another point in the radio's news policy. This scenario could be as a result of say lack of competent personnel to analyse the news in detail or lack of funds to make follow ups and research more into a news item so as to provide more detail. Hence this particular news policy of Mama Fm is good, but the problem comes in with implementing it. Nevertheless, as earlier noted, Mama Fm has a policy that says that its news bulletin should not exceed 8minutes. This therefore could be the reason for the above. However if the news is to be detailed and analytical, it is bound to take longer than 10minutes, meaning that Mama Fm's policies on news do not compliment each other.

Mama Fm also wishes to update its stories from time to time as more details come in. However, on listening to Mama Fm news over a period of two months, it was quite easy to notice that Mama Fm airs news every after an hour, during the day until 8pm. However, there are hardly any updates in the news. Usually the news read in the morning at 7 O'clock, is the same as the one read at 8 O'clock in the evening. This could also be explained that Mama Fm does not get more details of the news stories, and that is why it does not update its news. There are possible reasons as to why the station does not get more details, one being that the radio station lacks up to date equipment that can be used to gather more information fast and relay it to the public as it comes in and secondly, the station has few staff members and usually there are shortages when it comes to getting more details about particular stories.

By putting women's issues as first priority in their news content, Mama Fm instils a sense of importance among its listeners, majority of who are women. According to a publication by Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA), the representation of the work of women in Uganda is generally very low. For instance in the print media, women's total representation is only 27%. This is a necessary cause of alarm, owing to the fact that women's representation in Mass Communication training at Makerere University, Uganda's largest university is higher than that of men by 12%. This is mainly because many women opt out of media practice due to numerous hurdles they have to cross in the 'tough' field of journalism. It is therefore important for Mama Fm to highlight news concerning women, as it is not normally considered important by

other media. In this way, the women listeners are able to identify with this news by knowing what other women in the country are going through.

As already seen above, there are some loopholes in the manner in which news is aired on Mama Fm. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the station values the importance of news as an informative and educative tool to its audience and that is why it formulated a news policy for purposes of guidance in its operation. It is therefore important to note that if Mama Fm did away with the few loopholes in its policy, and then adhered to it 100%, then its audience would be able to get maximum benefit from its news, as the policy is well-written and covers important elements essential for addressing the needs of women.

Nonetheless, credit should be given to Mama Fm for the fact that in most cases, the main news story on Mama Fm is usually about women. Normally the stories are about women that have received help from organisations, women that have achieved success in their field of work, among others. This is very essential for Mama Fm as a radio for women because the women listeners are able to identify with the news and also it reminds them that somewhere out there, there are other women going through similar situations as them and that their issues are being broadcast for other people to hear and learn about. As a result, a sense of importance is instilled in the listeners', hence their esteem is raised, a vital element for their empowerment.

The station runs a 15-minute program daily called Press Review from 8.00-8.15 in the morning, in which a review of the news in the main newspapers of Uganda i.e. *The New Vision, The Daily Monitor* and *Bukedde* (a Luganda newspaper) is made. He says that the station can only afford to buy those three newspapers. In case there has been a political burning/critical issue in the news, it is normally discussed in a program called 'Tuteese' (Let us discuss) in which guest speakers that are well-informed on that issue talk about it on air in the first hour of the program. During the second hour of the program, listeners are encouraged to call in to give their views and ask questions where possible.

Due to the limited funds to cater for reporters' needs while in the field, Mama Fm finds it difficult to get news on women, as much as it is available. The station

therefore subscribed to a news agency i.e. Uganda radio Network on which it gets news from it. The website is updated daily with news about Uganda and so the radio station as a subscriber, can pick a story of interest and run it on their air waves. The station, as earlier mentioned, also gets tips from its stories from the discussions held by the women and staff of Mama Fm during the 'Get Smart Program'.

5.4.3 Music Policy

In addition to a variety of educational and informative programs, Mama Fm also plays music on its airwaves. This is mainly for the purposes of entertainment, which is one of the roles of the media. Not only is music good for entertaining the listeners of Mama Fm, it also enables them to relax and to reduce social tension. In a way, the music acts as a sort of diversion from the everyday problems and challenges of the listeners. The station mainly concentrates on Ugandan pop African and Ugandan urban type of music, which according to a survey carried out by Mama Fm in October 2000, was the preferred choice of music by the majority of Mama Fm's audience. Out of other types of music surveyed, such as pop, 80's music, dance music and the late 90's music, the listeners of Mama Fm chose Ugandan pop African (adopted from mainly the Democratic Republic of Congo and also known as 'lingala') and Ugandan urban type of music (sang by young musicians of Uganda, mainly in the Ugandan local languages). The most preferred music type had a combination of 75% and the rest of the other music types shared the remaining 25% portion. Mama Fm's Policy on the music it plays is as follows;

- The music mix should be dominated by the three most preferred types of music i.e. Ugandan pop (e.g. Afrigo band), African Modern Soukous/Lingala and Ugandan Urban (young popular Ugandan artists).

- In consideration of the target audience, music types such as 'kadongo kamu' (usually a solo or duet done with only one musical instrument, with the singer normally telling a story) and South African music should be played.

- In the mix highlighted above, then other types can be blended in like pop, dance, oldies, R&B, Country Reggae, Ragga, soft rock, spiritual/gospel and traditional folk story.

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- Emphasis should be on songs about the emancipation f women.

- Efforts should be made not to play the same category of music type back to back; i.e. some form of 'sandwiching' should be encouraged.

- Songs of the same artist should not be played back to back

One of the distinguishing features of community radios from commercial ones is that the latter tend to play more music than the former who put more emphasis on educative programming.[43] Therefore, why is music part of Mama Fm, a community radio?

5.4.3.1 Entertainment factor

The media has a number of functions, entertainment being one of them, in addition to others like education, information and acting as a watch dog for society. As a medium of communication, Mama Fm has a duty of entertaining its listeners through a number of ways, music inclusive. Therefore during the day at certain intervals, Mama Fm plays music in order to break the monotony from the variety of talk-show kind of programs it has; usually the music is played when it is time for a short break during a program. However, there are particular programs i.e. 'Esubi lyo Kumakya' (hope for the morning) which are generally dedicated to playing music for the listeners. During this early morning program (between 8 and 10am on week days), listeners can call in and request for songs they would like to hear. Normally, they ask for songs in Luganda (the most widely spoken local language in Uganda) and these are played for them. This is advantageous in that the listeners get to have their requests; songs that relate to their situations being played for them, and in turn these songs that normally have meaningful messages are listened to by other listeners of the radio station.

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[43] It is mentioned in chapter one under the heading, 'community media/radio defined'.

5.4.3.2 Connection with the audience

As earlier noted, Mama Fm has a music policy which encourages the playing of the type of music that is most preferred by the audience, according to a survey the radio station conducted. This therefore means that its listeners feel connected in a way to the radio station because their interests are being met. This connection to the audience can also be linked to another policy by Mama Fm to play songs that talk about the liberation and emancipation of women. Due to the fact that Mama Fm is a radio for women, the playing of songs that acknowledge women in high regard is very essential as it continues to reassure its listeners that they too are important in society. This is very important especially because Mama Fm's number one objective is to put forward the issues of the least heard in society especially the women, so that they can be appreciated by the society. The playing of songs that holds women in high regard is very vital if society is to change their perception about them.

5.4.3.3 Participation

During most of the music shows on Mama Fm, listeners are encouraged to call in and ask for songs of their choice to be played on the radio. As a community radio, Mama Fm encourages active participation from its listeners especially during the airing of most programs.. This encourages them to keep listening to Mama Fm as they get a sense of satisfaction that they are considered by the radio as listeners and are therefore appreciated. For instance, one of the focus group discussion participant, Namutebi Joan said that 'Essubi lyo Kumakya' a program that runs daily in the early morning was her favourite due to the fact that she can call in during this program, and convey her greetings to her relatives or friends and then request for a song that she would want the presenters to play for her. She said that she gained a lot of satisfaction in having her request song played and that it gives her a sense of importance that she is listened to.

5.4.3.4 Conveyance of a message

Different music/songs carry different messages. As seen earlier, Mama Fm concentrates on music that its listeners like and it also encourages the playing of songs that talk about women's emancipation positively. As such, not only are the viewers being entertained, but they are also being educated and informed about vital issues in

their lives. It should be noted that one of Mama Fm's objectives is 'To provide, disseminate and exchange development messages to different target groups for their use, discussion and feedback'. In addition, another of Mama Fm's objectives is, 'To re-awaken among communities a sense of duty and social responsibility'. Hence in playing music that carries important messages about development, Mama Fm's listeners are enlightened on these issues and they can then discuss them with others who may or may not have heard a particular song before. They can also realise that they have a duty to ensure that women are not degraded in society but are also human and deserve to be treated with respect. This therefore means that Mama Fm kills two birds at the same time; entertaining and educating its listeners through one channel, i.e. music.

5.4.3.5 Sense of identification and belonging for the audience

Mama Fm's broadcast is mostly done in a local Uganda language called Luganda. Similarly, the majority of the music played on Mama Fm is by Ugandan musicians and most of it is in Luganda. This is mainly because Mama Fm's listeners prefer Ugandan music to foreign. By adhering to their needs and playing their favourite music, Mama Fm ensures that listeners get maximum benefit from tuning to it. The listeners on the other hand, because they understand the lyrics of the songs, they can easily pick the message of the songs and relate them to their everyday life. Since the songs are sang by Ugandans, the listeners can identify with the artists and the messages in the songs and therefore they feel a sense of belonging and togetherness, which is good for the audience of any kind of community media. How then, is Mama Fm ensuring that the above points are being put into consideration in the kind of music it airs?

Listening to Mama Fm, it is quite evident that hardly any Western/foreign music is played on the radio station. In addition, most of the Ugandan songs that are played on the radio station, normally have messages that are beneficial to the audience i.e. songs about treating women right, keep safe on the road and guarding against Aids, etc. Due to the fact that Mama Fm's audience are people that feel less-privileged in society, it is vital that the kind of music they like and understand is played for them. Mama Fm has got a policy on the kind of music they play, which advocates for the kind of music

preferred by their audience but at the same time, music that does not go against their goals as a community radio, advocating for women's rights. Therefore much as listeners can call in to ask for their requests, presenters must think twice before playing the requested songs, otherwise some songs may not go hand in hand with the station's values, goals, objectives and beliefs. This therefore can sometimes prove disadvantageous to the radio station on the part of listeners whose requests may not be played. They might feel like their interests are not being met and that would be a disadvantage to a radio that claims to be a 'voice for the voiceless'. Nevertheless, this problem can be solved by explaining to the listeners why the particular song or songs they wish to be played can not be aired, so that they do not feel ignored.

On the whole, Mama Fm has endeavoured to stick to its Music policy by playing the kind of music it outlines in its music policy and shunning any kind of music that may denote a negative portrayal of women. In so doing, the radio station has gained respect from its listeners i.e. Maggie Kagga, a participant in the focus group discussions who noted that Mama Fm has a well-selected variety of music which is entertaining but not degrading to women, hence making it friendly for the whole family listening. The problem of the majority of its listeners not being able to call in leaves a lot to be desired as the radio station can not do much about it. One participant, Vicky Ssesanga was of the view that Mama Fm should avail its listeners with credit on their mobile phones so that they can be able to call in and participate during the interactive programs. Whereas that sounds like a 'good' idea, it is not feasible basing on the fact that the radio station has a tight budget and has a list of priorities that it should attend to first before some of those issues. Hence at the moment, the station can only rely on those that have mobile phones and the ability to call in and participate.

All in all though, the music policy of Mama Fm is good and it has been a source of awareness to its listeners who revealed that the music on the radio station makes sense and it talks about issues that affect their daily life. This in turn gives them something important to think about and yet at the same time, the music provides relief and entertainment during a hard day.

5.4.4 Advertising Policy

As a community radio, Mama Fm had no intention at the time of its launch to have adverts aired on it. However, as Margaret Sentamu explained, due to purposes of having to meet part of its running costs since the donors do not give it 100%, Mama Fm has been forced to run adverts on its radio station. The difference however is that Mama Fm does not run any kind of advert on its station as it has a goal behind everything aired on its station: to put women's interests at the forefront. The radio station has a policy on adverts which guides it in choosing the kind of adverts it runs on the airwaves. The advertising policy states that Mama Fm will not air;

- Adverts or messages that tend to ridicule or de-motivate women
- Adverts or messages that downplay the founding mission of Mama Fm
- Adverts or messages that are against internationally accepted health regulations.

Mama Fm broadcasts informative messages by UMWA (against domestic violence, healthy living, family planning, development activities and also on HIV prevention) and these are run daily at intervals on the radio station. The messages are very beneficial to the listeners as was revealed in the focus group discussions where the participants noted that the continuous repetition of those messages enables them to get the message behind it and eventually start practicing it. They particularly highlighted the message that urges both man and wife to go for an HIV test together so as to know their status and if positive, receive counselling thereafter. A number of the participants pointed out that this message helped them encourage their husbands to go for HIV tests with them because even if they had been urging them to go before, the husbands had been reluctant but on hearing this advice from a radio station, they took it more seriously and agreed to go for a test. As such the participants were all praises to Mama Fm for such kind of useful information and suggested that the radio station carries on with them.

In addition, all these messages are aired in the local language, making it easier for them to understand the messages more clearly and faster. Hence, because these messages are understood by the audience, they have been successful to a large extent in shaping people's perceptions, ideas and attitudes, as revealed by the women participants. This in a way is a kind of mobilization as in when more and more people

get to hear a certain message and start to practise it, then it brings the community together as a group of people advocating for the same cause.

As much as the station would like to operate in a certain manner, the high costs of operation (discussed later in this chapter) are pushing it towards a different direction. In 2007, says Sentamu, the station entered a contract with a consultancy firm (Concepts and Patterns) to market the radio station, so that companies may bring their adverts to run on Mama Fm, hence increase on its source of income. According to Suuna, the contract has of recent been dissolved with not much result seen. Currently, the radio station has a total of five advertisers with two of those advertisers' contracts soon coming to an end (interview done on 20th April, 2008). These advertisers are; Bekana Institute of Business and Vocational Studies and Angelina bookshop. He says that they were given advertising space at a subsidised rate because they did not want to lose them to other radio stations, as Mama Fm can not compete with the commercial radio stations in Uganda. The other 'advertisers' are churches i.e. Kisses Fire Centre, Eden Revival church and Spencon Ministries that buy 30 minutes worth of airtime on a monthly basis. They normally have their programs aired early in the morning from 5.00-5.30 or late in the evening from 11.30 to midnight. During this time, they 'preach' to the listeners of Mama Fm, says Charles Suuna.

5.4.5 Training Policy

Mama Fm carries out a training program for its staff and community volunteers. This training in radio productions and broadcasting is free and as a result, the staff members of Mama Fm have been exposed to better opportunities for jobs elsewhere, even in commercial radio stations (UMWA Report, 2004). Sentamu says that the station management does its best to motivate the volunteers by providing training opportunities in different aspects of broadcasting, and giving them as much room as possible for creativity. She further adds that it is not mandatory for volunteers to go to work daily as they hardly get any pay and yet have to find means of survival. The fact that the volunteers often leave Mama Fm after a short time of working there acts as a disincentive to the radio station especially because the station trains them in broadcasting skills. Sentamu says there is nothing much the station can do about it because Mama Fm does not pay them well enough for them to work there for long.

However, of recent, the station introduced a policy in which volunteers must sign a contract agreeing to work for the radio station for a certain period of time before they leave. This, she says will help to ensure that the staff they train, stay with them for a quality amount of time and apply the skills learnt at the radio station for the general good of the listeners and the station.

5.5 Sustainability

Basing on the reasons behind the establishment and operation of Mama Fm, it is vital that the radio station should be sustainable so that it can attain its desired goals. Stopping operation would mean incomplete work because from the findings about the status of rural women in Uganda (chapter one), a lot of work is still needed to reach out to them and empower them. Tabing (2002) claims that sustainability of a radio station should be easy basing on the following reasons;

- The operating cost is very low, mostly related to electrical consumption, spare parts, and maintenance and office supplies.
- Volunteers, who receive, if any, minimal honorarium, staff the station.
- Management is trained in how to raise money from local, national and international sources for example through donations other fundraising activities.
- Since a community radio serves the interests of the community, people easily assume responsibilities in the operation of the station.

However, judging from the findings of this research, in reality, the above is not as easy as it seems in theory. On 26th August 2007, Mama Fm celebrated six years of existence and held a big celebration for its listeners and staff. According to a report by UMWA (2004), for a radio station to have a major impact on its audience, it has to have been on air for at least five years with constant support before it can finally transform itself into a self sustaining body. By the time this research project was being undertaken, the station had already made five years; meaning that it has reached the stage of self sustainability. However in reality, not all is smooth for the radio station. Nonetheless, Margaret Sentamu is positive that the radio station is expanding and that its listener-ship keeps increasing. "Despite the fact that there has not been any scientific study yet to determine the present number of listeners, the increase can

be measured in terms of the numerous phone calls, physical visits and letters to Mama Fm from members of the public", says Sentamu. It is ironic that the reasons Tabing (ibid.) gives for easy sustainability of a community radio are the very reasons that are posing as challenges in the daily operation of Mama Fm as will be discussed in the following section;

5.5.1 Operating Costs

Sentamu says that due to the tight budget that Mama Fm operates within, the costs of running the radio station are extremely high. These include things like transport and maintenance costs, electricity bills and water bills, including employee salaries. This in turn leads to a lot of constraints on how to allocate the minimal available funds. Funding for community radio in Uganda appears to be an unresolved problem. While in the theory, it is assumed that the community donates most of the finances and materials to the community radio, in Uganda, the situation is different as the community instead expects free things from the radio station, says Sentamu. Communities served by community radio stations in Uganda live way below the poverty line (on less than 5 dollars a month); meaning they cannot afford to make any financial contributions to the station, argues Sentamu. Most of the participants in the focus group discussions lacked any gainful employment and much as they expressed their appreciation for the services they get from the radio station, they were unable to contribute to it financially. On the other hand, the interest that the listeners have in the radio station and the attachment they have to it as 'their own radio' is an opportunity for growth and sustainability as much as the station may not be getting any financial aid from the listeners (Wakabi, 2005).

Mama Fm relies solely on the services of donor agencies, whose help is unpredictable as it can suddenly come to an end because donors may get fatigued and can not support a community service project forever (UMWA Report, 2004). Sentamu says that donors have been the biggest source of funding for Mama Fm since it went on air. The initial donors for Mama Fm were NORAD and FOKUS, both of which are organisations in Norway. These organisations provided the initial capital investment for the radio station. Much as donors have greatly contributed to the running of Mama Fm, the fact that they cover only a portion of the operational costs and leave the rest

for Mama Fm to meet, creates a kind of gap that the station can not fill in its current state. Mama Fm being a community radio, does not get a substantial amount of income from advertisers like the commercial radio stations do, hence it depends entirely on donors and sympathisers. Furthermore, donors also interfere though not directly, in the running of the station. Before they give funds for a project, they must approve it; hence, some projects may fail to get funding because donors do not see their relevancy yet they could actually be beneficial to the radio station's audience. According to a report by UMWA (2004), most donors are not interested in supporting activities or in paying workers' salaries and yet most of the work at the radio station requires well-paid people to run its numerous departments and activities. White (1999) acknowledges the role that donors play is supporting such local initiatives like Mama Fm but she stresses that planning and implementation of social change must be done by the locals themselves, while the donors just supply support. She is against the idea of outsiders telling the locals what to do because the local people already know their needs and all they need is an opportunity to express them and be heard. Nonetheless, she is quick to observe that local knowledge biases may prevent certain aspects of change for instance in Muslim societies in Africa, women are often excluded in planning process. In such cases, she proposes that outsiders should do 'consciousness-raising efforts' in order to change these biases but these efforts should be done slowly and this is because "planning should always be a dialogue between local communities and outsiders" (White 1999:43).

Mama Fm also depends a lot on volunteers who require facilitation and motivation in order to continue providing quality work for the station. Sentamu says that the average facilitation fee that producers and presenters at the radio station get is Ugandan shillings 120,000 (approximately $66) a month. Charles Suuna, a presenter at Mama Fm says that the situation is difficult but he has left everything in the capable hands of God. He adds that he is creative and so he tries to earn income from outside the station but when the worst comes to the worst, he surrenders everything to God.

Sentamu says that Mama Fm would love to motivate their staff financially but because of the high running costs, this is next to impossible. Since 2001, Mama Fm and UMWA as a whole have four paid staff including a technician. The rest of the staff are therefore responsible for program work, fundraising, communication, public

relations, plan, advocacy, administration and at the same time, membership issues. This is an indication that in spite of UMWA having realised the need for fundraising for the station, it is evident that the staff of four can not manage on its own, hence the need for volunteers (UMWA Report, 2004). As a result of lack of motivation, most workers at Mama Fm do not stay for long. They normally leave whenever they get a better opportunity else where. Sentamu is aware of this and she says that such unstable manpower destructs planning and therefore makes it difficult for the station to fulfil its mission.

Due to the difficulties involved in fulfilling its mission, Sentamu said that the station is considering re-registering the radio station as a 50% commercial station so that it can increase it revenue from advertisers. At the time of carrying out this research project, Mama Fm was considering signing a contract with a consultancy firm to publicise it, in order to increase the level of the listener-ship further, so that eventually when it becomes part commercial, it can be able to attract advertisers. Sentamu says that it is uncertain to what degree this opening up of a community radio to advertisers will have in the change of its policies and guidelines in terms of operation but due to the financial constraints the station faces, she feels that this move may help the station to be self-sufficient. She further added that there was a lot of competition in the radio industry; meaning that funds must be budgeted for every year to remain on top as far as equipment, software and training is concerned. Since Uganda does not have a national and free service for radio surveys, there is need to invest a lot in case you need to know your station's ratings nationwide. Furthermore, advertisers do not give business to a station whose ratings it does not know and yet Sentamu believes that there is need for Mama Fm to advertise and to attract program sponsors if it is to be sustained.

For a community radio station that is under an umbrella organisation that depends on donors, its sustainability is quite unpredictable as the donors' funding is on a project-to-project basis and some of the funds it receives are on annual contract. UMWA receives less than 1% of its funds from membership subscription and external donors finance the remaining 99% (NORAD Report 7b/2003). In 2003, the total expenditure for UMWA was Uganda shillings 119,447,545.The contribution from Norway was

Uganda shillings 65,462,915 for Mama Fm and Uganda shillings 53,984,630 UG to take care of UMWA's administrative costs (ibid.).

Table 1: Monthly Requirements for Mama Fm

S/N	ITEMS	AMOUNT (USD)
1	Ground rent	200
2	Water bill	100
3	Electricity	500
4	Field for 2 standby generators	150
5	Frequency fees to Uganda Communication Commission	50
6	License to UBC	240
7	License fees to Kampala City Council	90
8	Volunteers facilitation (22) (Presenters) @ $300	6600
9	Station Manager's Salary (2)	1800
10	Producers (3) @ 500	1500
11	Technician (2) 500	1000
12	Researchers (3)	2400
13	Editors (2)	1200
14	Administrator	900
15	Insurance / Security	1000
16	Maintenance/Servicing machines	400
17	Supplies tapes / batteries/stationery etc	350
18	Transport	450
19	Maintenance of vehicle	150
20	Coordination vehicle (2)	1000
	TOTAL (MONTHLY)	**20080**

Source: Uganda Media Women's Association, (2004).

5.5.2 Government Policies

Margaret Sentamu argues, "other than the move by the government of Uganda to liberalise the media thus encouraging private owners to set up their own radio stations, nothing else has been done by the government to ensure the continuous operation of Mama Fm, despite the fact that it was started to fill up the gaps created by other fm stations". It seems as though when the liberalisation policy was

introduced in the early 90's in Uganda, there was neither enough time nor any thought for providing for the different broadcasters (UMWA Report, 2004). Mama Fm's hope lies in the draft broadcasting policy of 2004[44] which acknowledges that lack of clear policy guidelines has led to community radio stations operating like all the other commercial radio stations (pp:21). The Broadcasting Council is responsible for formulating and providing guidelines on the content of electronic media programmes and also for determining and setting the broadcasting license fees and it has been viewed by broadcasters, regulators and independent observers that once the broadcasting policy is implemented, the community broadcasting sector will be stimulated (Wakabi, 2005). The Broadcasting Council's policy recognises the need to facilitate the development of a strong community broadcasting sector by availing them frequencies, setting reasonable license fees for them and providing other forms of support to them (ibid.). The Council further proposes that broadcasting should be classified into three parts i.e. Public Service Broadcasting, Commercial broadcasting and Community broadcasting, with each of these categories paying a separate license fees. In addition, it gives government the responsibility of supporting programming that is educative and imparts curriculum-based skills and it also says that broadcasters should deliver developmental and educational programs at grassroots in response to community education needs as well as ensure that education is an integral part of programming for broadcasters (ibid.).

Although the above policies will benefit Mama Fm to a certain extent, there is still need for revision of some policies in this draft. For instance currently, the lifespan of a broadcaster's license of operation is one year and also licensing and frequency allocation responsibilities are each under a separate body i.e. Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) and the Broadcasting Council respectively. The convergence of these responsibilities under one body is assumed to create effectiveness and coordination in the manner in which stations are monitored and this will help to cut costs and time spent from moving to and from these two different organisations. The Broadcasting Council also proposes to determine how much local content should go on private stations. This has raised concern among community

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[44] The policy was introduced by the government in order to yield a broadcasting system based on access to and diversity of information, promotion of national unity, democratisation of the airwaves, and education of communities as well as strengthening of the moral fibre of society (Wakabi, 2005).

broadcasters in that government may not necessarily be a good judge of what audiences prefer to listen to or watch, and should therefore not impose arbitrary content (Wakabi, 2005). By the time of this research, these policies had not yet been implemented and there had not been any initiative by the government to sponsor any program or provide the station with any help whether financially or in material form to ensure its smooth operation. This is despite the fact that Mama Fm is totally committed to complementing the government by enabling the majority poor to realise their right to information and development; a duty that is meant to be for the government. It is only during times when the government wants to promote certain political issues that it comes in and promises to fund the station, only if it did what the government wants, noted Sentamu. Mama Fm has on occasion given the government free timeslots on its airwaves for the government to explain its policies and programs to the public but despite all this, the station has never received any funding from the government. In fact, says Sentamu, 'Mama Fm has been blacklisted for refusing to do what the government wants, meaning that any chance of it receiving any funds from the government is very minimal'.

Sentamu says that despite the fact that Mama Fm is a community radio, it is treated the same way by government as a commercial radio and this makes it very hard to run the radio station. The government has a policy that a radio station must not have a signal that covers the whole country. This has also contributed to the narrow/small reach of Mama Fm. This policy argues that each radio station should have a particular area of reach, so that each of the numerous stations in Uganda can have a share of the market, as well as airwaves. Sentamu says that until recently, most policies by the Broadcasting Council have been devoid of stakeholders' input (practitioner, promoters), resulting into insensitive regulations. On 8th January 2004, the Broadcasting Council shut down four radio stations, among which was Mama Fm for failure to pay their license fees[45].

The station was re-opened a week later after it paid the fees. Suuna says that it could have been re-opened earlier because it had the money to pay for the fees immediately

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[45] See http://radioafrica.oneworld.net/article/view/73528/1/)

but this is not what happened. He says that the Executive Director of Mama Fm had put in a complaint to the Broadcasting Council to either have Mama Fm's license fees scrapped or lowered on the basis that the station was a community radio. The complaints did not yield positive results because to date, Mama Fm still pays the same amount of license fees as commercial radio stations in Uganda.

Mama Fm is required to pay a certain amount of fees to various organisations annually and these put a lot of constraints on the radio's already tight budget. It is hoped that once the policies of the Broadcasting Council are implemented, such fees like broadcast license fees, frequency rental fees and trading licence fees should all be removed from community broadcasters. However, as long as the policies are not yet implemented, Mama Fm continues to make these payments, creating a strain to its already limited budget.

Table 2: Annual Payments by Mama Fm

Item	Amount (in Ugandan shillings)
Uganda Communication Commission	650,000
Uganda Broadcasting Council	3,000,000
Office of the President	3,600,000
Kampala City Council	605,000
National Broadcasting Association	200,000
National Institute of Journalists Union	200,000
Total	8, 255,000

Source: Uganda Media Women's Association, (2004).

The radio station is also burdened by the high costs of replacing radio equipment, which attracts import duty and airfreight charges. In the event of power cuts, the radio station has to rely on two generators that also need maintenance. This becomes very strenuous for a station that does not have a sound financial base. During power cuts for instance, the station consumes 80 litres of diesel, that total to 105,000 Ugandan shillings a day, making it 37, 800,000 Ugandan shillings a year (UMWA Report, 2004).

5.5.3 NGOs and Public Perception of Mama Fm

When UMWA set up Mama Fm, it hoped that NGOs would contribute to some of the administrative costs of the radio station, while in turn; they took advantage of the station's airtime to communicate development related messages to the public. Instead, says Sentamu, "Most NGOs expect a free service from Mama Fm, claiming that the station is their own". "Ironically, NGOs like Uganda Women Network (UWONET) and Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention (CDVP) are willing to pay commercial stations to air their messages for them", says Suuna. He adds that, "we have asked our boss time and again to lobby for these NGOs support but the situation has not changed." Sentamu, who has approached the NGOs but received negative responses, believes this is so because Mama Fm does not have statistics to show its ratings as an FM radio nationwide and therefore NGOs do not want to pay the station when they are not sure how many people will hear their messages. The radio station also faces a big challenge of trying to change people's attitudes that projects started and run by women can also be successful. Furthermore, many people are ignorant about community media and the potential they have of providing a distinct service to the communities that are normally not catered for by the commercial media. This is one of the biggest challenges of Mama Fm; i.e. trying to create awareness of the radio station so that it can be appreciated more by the public.

Mama Fm, in association with UMWA, started a publication called '*The Other Voice*' (TOV) which was a pull out that used to run every three months in six languages. Suuna says that unfortunately, the publication has not been produced for a year now because of limited finances. He says that it is unfortunate as the publication used to highlight the plight of the underprivileged in the print media so as to attract attention from NGOs and the public and also to solicit support for projects geared to helping the less privileged in society. UMWA first stopped producing the publication in the local languages i.e. Runyoro, Rutooro, Rukiga, Runyankore, Atesos and Luganda, before it eventually put a stop to the publication in English. Sentamu attributes this to the policy of donors who fund a project at a time so that when that time period expires, they expect the community radio to sustain it but with all the costs it has to meet, UMWA and Mama Fm can not sustain the publication and are now trying to solicit funds for it again. This indefinite suspension of TOV has slowed down the process of UMWA and Mama Fm in enlightening the literate public about the work

they do to change the status of the rural women in Uganda, hence making it even more difficult to solicit for funds and support from the women NGOs.

5.6 General Discussion

The data presented indicates that Mama Fm faces serious sustainability problems unless government comes up with an articulate policy. Presently the regulatory frameworks that work as policy for the broadcasting sector have no provisions for radio stations that are not profit- making. For instance, the current draft broadcasting policy is yet to distinguish between public and community broadcasting. Unfortunately, the underlying tones are that the two kinds of radio stations are similar. There is fear that if the policy is passed in its present form, it may be declared that public broadcasting takes precedence because it is expected to contribute to the public, other than the community good (UMWA Report, 2004). Such and many other aspects are threatening the future of Mama Fm and without a favourable regulatory framework with corresponding reductions in fees; the situation is not made any better.

The situation is further worsened by the increasing fatigue or demand from donors with regard to the government's lack of understanding/appreciation that the donors are just helping, but the government has a duty to provide and observe the right to information to all its citizens by creating an enabling environment for all in the fulfilment of other rights such as the right to participate or to equality (ibid.).

Nevertheless, for a radio station that is faced with a number of challenges, Mama Fm has come a long way and should be commended for its efforts. Margaret Sentamu attributes this to the commitment and resilience of the founders and some staff at the radio station. She says that because they all have a vision for the radio station, they are committed to seeing it succeed and she is positive that the radio station will one day become self-sufficient. She also attributes their continuity to the station's loyal listeners and that is why the station decided to award them with a party during the station's sixth anniversary. Despite the poor pay, Charles Suuna, a presenter at the station said that he enjoyed serving the community through a radio station that aims to better their lives and he is also encouraged by the enthusiasm of the listeners to the work that they, the presenters do. Sentamu says that she is very happy that women

can now bravely come to the radio's station and air out their views freely. This is what motivates Sentamu to continue working for the station. The section below highlights the positive contributions that Mama Fm has had on its listeners despite all the hardships it faces in its operations;

5.6.1 Women voices on air

Basing on the data presented, it is very difficult to ascertain this but judging from the responses from the focus group discussions, the station has done a lot for the women. Empowerment entails the involvement of people at the grassroots and Mama Fm has gone out of its way to reach out to these women in every possible way they can through the GSP, the listeners' clubs, the giving out of radios, among others. Uganda has a culture of silence and apathy among women but this is slowly being broken by the radio station. Women are now speaking out more by writing letters to producers or by simply going to the station and talking to the producers about what they would like to hear. 90% of people that go seeking for advice, help or clarification after listening to a program on Mama Fm are women (UMWA Report, 2004). This is a great achievement for a station that has to go through a lot of hurdles to be on air. All the women in the focus group discussion commended the station for giving them a voice and for equipping them with vital information and they all praised a development oriented program known as 'Ebyobufuzi' (Government policies) that was viewed as very informative and educative and has provided a lot of awareness to the women about government policies and plans that they would otherwise not have had in-depth knowledge about. This knowledge of these policies has given them a voice to air out their concerns on what they think about some of these government policies especially the Universal Primary Education, which they all thanked the government for but wished that the government would increase the quality of education facilities and increase teachers' salaries so that they could be motivated to teach their children.

5.6.2 Networks/Associations with other Projects

The collaboration that Mama Fm has with other projects of UMWA i.e. Get Smart Program and Public Awareness and Educational Campaigns has not only been beneficial to the station alone, but also to the marginalised women. Sentamu says that it is important for Mama Fm to work in close cooperation with UMWA projects as

this has helped to cut down the station's operation costs by tapping into the resources of UMWA; for instance their staff. It is unfortunate for Mama Fm that *The Other Voice* has not been running for a while especially since it had potential to highlight the rights of women and to make them visible in the Ugandan media. For instance, when Mama Fm broke the story on its airwaves of some female workers that were being mistreated by a factory in Uganda i.e. Tri Star factory, this story was later picked up by *The Other Voice* and then later on, it was run in other local newspapers. At times, information that is broadcast on Mama Fm is shared with other radio stations i.e. Uganda Broadcasting Radio (Wakabi, 2005).Mama Fm is also a member of the Association of World Community Radio Stations and is also affiliated to the first women radio station in the world i.e. Radio Orakel in Norway (ibid.) These associations provide a strong backbone for Mama Fm and a shoulder to lean on in case of difficulties. It is important for it to have support from other established organisations as this facilitates its sustainability to a certain extent.

5.6.3 Sense of belonging

Six years after its establishment, Mama Fm has given its listeners a sense of belonging. All the participants in the focus group expressed their gratitude to the founders of Mama Fm for coming up with an initiative that supports their cause. They all said they listened to the radio everyday for most of the day and they are very comfortable with the language the presenters use. They said the radio is a family radio and that they can listen to it with their children without fear that obscene language will be used. Those that are in the listeners' clubs claimed that they have met other women who have now become their friends and whom they can easily talk to as they share more or less the same problems.

5.6.4 Promotion of education

Margaret Sentamu says that through a special package program called 'Kirumutu' on the radio station, a total of eight girls had managed to get free education in various schools in Uganda. This program that highlights problems of children from poor families that can not afford school fees for them has helped reach out to organisations that are willing to help them, hence enabling them to continue with their education by supporting them. While some have secured scholarships, some have been able to

attend school at subsidised costs. Furthermore, through this program, a number of women have been able to get job opportunities from the community itself and also other possible solutions have been devised by participating target audiences for those in need.

5.6.5 Income generation

The program, 'Katukyogereko' (Let's talk about it), has had an impact on the listeners of Mama Fm. The participants in the focus group said this program had exposed them to new and various ways of coming up with their own business ideas. Much as they may not have the money to start, they claimed that they were now equipped with the knowledge and can apply it whenever they get the means. Also a number of people usually call in during this program, expressing their interest to start their own business ventures.

5.6.6 Legal and Human Rights Knowledge

Mama Fm listeners have benefited from the knowledge the radio station has provided to them about their rights. This knowledge is supplied to the audience through the same program, 'Katukyogereko' through the community policing theme. The audience has been taught a lot about the handling of civil and criminal cases and many housewives have started making use of this knowledge, which they never had access to before. Ssentamu gives an example of local leaders in communities that call in at the station expressing their gratitude for the knowledge they received about how to apply the law.

She also gives another example of a girl that was raped by her boyfriend who through telling her story in one of the listening clubs, was able to get assistance from an organization called 'Joyce Fertility Centre' that gave her free medical check-up for STDs and also offered her counselling services. The station has on several occasions highlighted rape and defilement cases from an organization called 'Hope After Rape' and this has enabled more women in the same situation to come out and talk about it, and also to know where to go in case they needed help. These consistent programs on rape and defilement have also been beneficial to Joyce Fertility Centre that has

managed to acquire donor support, which has enabled it to start a fertility clinic with the latest technology of test tube babies. (UMWA Report, 2004)

5.6.7 Listeners helping each other

Through the various interactive programs on Mama Fm and the listeners' clubs, the station's listeners have managed to learn from each other and also to benefit from each other. Some of the participants in the focus group discussions mentioned how much they have spread what they learn during the programs to other members of the community that may have missed the programs. Some listeners, like Dr. Samson Kironde Kigozi went out of their way to offer four scholarships to students to study diploma courses at the Uganda Christian University, says Ssentamu. She further gives an example of another listener, Rev. Francis Kigozi, a community worker at Kiziba Child Project, who offered to take care of street children, following a program he heard about them on the radio station. Another listener, an elderly blind woman from Mukono town has helped six youth to get employed in her garden for a small income and she has also been helping to pay school fees for a girl, now in senior four, since she was in primary seven (UMWA Report, 2004).

Conclusion

This chapter has been an analysis of the data on the activities of Mama Fm. The chapter was divided into four parts i.e. access, participation, self-management and sustainability, all of which are vital elements for a community radio if it is to achieve its goals (Tabing, 2002). The chapter revealed that Mama Fm is involved in a number of activities although it is still struggling with being accessible, involving its listeners fully in all activities of the station and also it is struggling with issues of sustainability that have been caused mainly by lack of a stable source of income. The station has nevertheless derived alternative ways of dealing with its limitations such as depending a lot on volunteer services, networking with UMWA and other organisations, starting listeners clubs and appealing to the government for changes in some of its broadcast policies, among others. These measures have to a great extent contributed to the achievements of Mama Fm to date. The data revealed that the women founders are very committed to ensuring that Mama Fm continues operation. This commitment, coupled with the measures that the station has taken so far to work on its limitations is

a sign that the gradual process Mama Fm started of reaching out to the rural women of Uganda in order to empower them is till on going.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This research set out to examine the effectiveness of community media in empowering rural women in Uganda. Mama Fm radio station was used as a case study in order to obtain answers to the research questions that were outlined in chapter one. The research employed two theories and a number of methodological tools in order to answer these questions. Using those methodological tools, the data that was collected was analysed using the theories as a guide. Both the empowerment and development theory stress the need for grassroots communities to be involved in their own development process so as to attain effective results. The empowerment theory argues that empowerment involves the enlightening of individuals with information that is vital for their needs. Armed with this information, the communities can then apply it in their daily lives to attain development. Both suggest that there should be a strong mechanism to ensure the flow of information and the involving of communities in the process of informing them and this mechanism should be accessible to these communities. A lot of emphasis is placed on the role that participation of communities in the development process plays in bringing about positive change amongst members of these communities. Furthermore, because change is a slow process that takes place over a gradual process, it is very important that the mechanism that is responsible for bringing about this change is strong enough to stay in operation for long enough so as to be able to see significant change in members of the community. It was from these arguments from the theories that the analysis of the activities of Mama Fm was made according to the four aspects of access, participation, self-management and sustainability.

The research started off by giving a general overview of the situation of rural women in Uganda before it highlighted how UMWA has come up with an aim of making their lives better through the provision of informative and educative knowledge to them by starting up a radio station, Mama Fm that has been the central focus of this research. At this point, the research shifts to answer the research questions it sought to answer and these are as follows;

- How has Mama Fm, as a community radio ensured the empowerment of rural women in Uganda?

- What kind of programs are aired on Mama Fm and how relevant are they to its target audience?

- As part of an umbrella organisation (UMWA), what other projects is Mama Fm involved in and what is their significance to rural women in Uganda?

- In what ways have the listeners of Mama Fm benefited from the activities and projects of the radio station?

- To what extent are the rural women involved in the planning and production of the program content on Mama Fm?

6.2 Summary

The chapter of this research that highlighted the status of rural women in Uganda revealed that the problem of illiteracy, poverty levels, unpaid employment, early marriages among others is still rampant in the Ugandan society and this is what is preventing rural women to be empowered. A lot of this is blamed on the patriarchal nature of the Ugandan society. As a community radio, Mama Fm on its own can not be expected to bring about a dramatic change in the lives of these women in a short time. The station has been in operation for only six years and this makes it difficult to gauge its performance in empowering the rural women of Uganda. More so, empowerment is a gradual process that takes time to be achieved. Nevertheless, the radio station has through its activities as has been revealed in the preceding chapter that Mama Fm has come a long way from the time of its conception by a group of Ugandan female journalists to a community radio station that it is to date. The role it plays in making information available to rural women in Uganda through the variety of its programs should be commended. The programming on Mama Fm touches on several aspects of life such as health, human rights, politics, business, agriculture, among others. Equipped with this information, the rural women listeners of Mama Fm are now in a better position to make informed decisions, stand up for themselves and also contribute to national debates. This was revealed during the focus group discussions when the participants claimed they had got a lot of information in regards to their health, the country's political situation, their role as wives and mothers at

home, among others. All the women expressed their interest in the radio's programs and they all said they listened to the radio station everyday.

The networking of Mama Fm with UMWA has helped the station to cut down on some of its operational costs by sharing resources like workers. This networking has also broadened the station's operations from just programming to its involvement in other projects like the GSP that has helped reach women in areas where the radio's signal does not reach. By going to these women directly, Mama Fm shows that they care for them and are willing to go the extra mile to take for them information about new government plans and policies and giving them a platform to share their views on these policies. This network with UMWA has also strengthened the feed back process of the radio station, which is very vital for communication for development as was revealed in the theory part of this section that communication must be a two-way process if it is to be effective.

When it comes to the issue of participation, more and more women's voices are being heard on the air waves of Mama Fm because most of the programs as earlier seen are interactive. However, participation is supposed to be all inclusive in that it should be encouraged right from the implementation to the evaluation stage of Mama Fm's activities. As far as participation on air and evaluation of Mama's programs is concerned, the station has endeavoured to include its listeners. On the other hand however, more effort is needed in involving its listeners in the implementation stage of their programs. The level of participation at this stage could be low due to the high illiteracy levels of the women listeners and also their low income levels that make it difficult for them to contribute meaningfully to the implementation of that stations programs and activities. Coupled with this is the issue of Mama Fm's constrained budget that does not leave enough funds for involving its listeners in programming and production of content. It would be of much significance if the modalities of the program could be discussed and agreed upon by the target audience, after which the audience could develop drama skits out of the causes, effects and possible solutions to their problems. Nevertheless, as seen in the previous chapter, the idea of starting up the listeners' clubs came from one of the listeners of the station and it was taken up by the management and implemented. It is through these clubs that listeners are encouraged to express their views about the station, hence participating in the

evaluation process. In addition, these clubs have brought the listeners of the radio station together and have provided them with a platform to interact with each other and to work together as a group to resolve some of their common issues.

For a radio station that has been on air for six years, Mama Fm should be commended for its efforts in reaching out to the rural women of Uganda. Although it is not easy to measure the effectiveness of Mama Fm in the empowerment of rural women in Uganda because empowerment is a gradual process that takes time to be attained and neither can it be measured in numerical terms, judging from the challenges Mama Fm faces in its operation, the fact that it has been able to do what it has done for the women is an achievement in itself. It is still too early to judge its performance but again there is still potential for it to achieve much more, given more time.

6.3 Limitations

The radio station's contribution to the empowerment of women can not be ignored as revealed in the findings. However with unstable finances, it is difficult to tell how much longer Mama Fm can continue with its operations. Due to financial difficulties, the station has to deal with problems in planning, budgeting as well as maintaining a strong staff. Relying a lot on volunteers has cost the station a lot of money and time as these are trained in electronic media skills and when they get paying jobs, they leave the station and another group of volunteers is recruited and the cycle goes on. As long as Mama Fm does not have a stable source of income, its activities will continue to be affected negatively and its future remains unclear. Mama Fm has the option of getting money from advertisers, donors or from government. However all of these sources of income normally come with consequences that may be detrimental to the station's operations. For the case of advertisers, the station first needs to invest into a survey to establish the number of its listeners and then these listeners must be very many to attract big advertisers that will pay the radio station large sums of money for advertising space. Furthermore, soliciting for advertisers, may put Mama Fm into competition with other commercial radio stations that are looking for the same advertisers and in the process, the station may divert from its original mission.

Mama Fm has largely been funded by donors with initial support from FOKUS and NORAD and technical support mainly from NCA and Radio Orakel of Norway. However, this raises questions of its independence as a community radio i.e. whether it is truly community owned and (is run) with the full participation of the community, which it serves. Furthermore, donors tend to be impatient with initiatives that do not become self-sustaining in two years (Wakabi, 2005). The report further states that most donors have their mandates over short period of time and once they are fulfilled, they move on to another sector. This uncertain funding makes it difficult for Mama Fm to make long term plans that could be beneficial to its listeners.

Government can support Mama Fm through the implementation of the draft broadcasting policy in which it intends to differentiate the different forms of broadcasters in Uganda so as to charge them different license fees, with community radios paying the least. By the time community radio was established these regulations that were meant for commercial radio were there and so community radio had to be regulated under the same rules. Being accorded the same status as commercial radios however, puts heavy financial obligations on community radio, making the future of such stations uncertain. Since the draft broadcasting policy intends to highlight the issues of different forms of broadcasting in Uganda, its implementation should be an incentive to Mama Fm as its license fees will be lowered. Nonetheless, this will not cause significant change, basing on all the costs the station incurs monthly and therefore the government can fully subsidise Mama Fm so as to help finance their activities. However, this also raises questions as to whether the government would not interfere with the editorial independence of Mama Fm and turn it into its own mouth piece.

Lack of support from women NGOs has also created difficulties for the operation of Mama Fm. It is difficult to comprehend why organisations that work towards bettering the lives of women in Uganda do not have a desire to partner with a community radio for women. This makes it seem that each of them is working towards a different course of action and yet that is not the case. If Mama Fm got support from these organisations, it would have a shoulder to fall back on in case funding from donors stopped abruptly as these organisations would be providing a source of income to the station if they entered an agreement to buy space from the

station to air their views. If this kind of situation continues, with no support from women NGOs, government and uncertain funding from donors, Mama Fm may increasingly find it difficult to operate and could even close, thus endangering the process of rural women empowerment.

6.4 Recommendations

For the nature of work that Mama Fm is involved in, a lot is still needed before it achieves its goals as the situation of rural women in Uganda still needs to be improved to a large extent (refer to the status of rural women in Uganda, chapter one). It is therefore important that Mama Fm continues its operation so as to continue with the empowerment process it started. Below are some suggestions of what can be done to ensure that Mama Fm continues its operation effectively;

6.4.1 Mama Fm

At the time of this research, Mama Fm and Kagadi Kibaale community radios were involved in an initiative to form an association for community broadcasters in Uganda. Once this association is established, it should be strengthened. Mama Fm should use it as a backbone for lobbying for government support and it could also be used to strengthen the mechanism for joint production and exchange of content. Together with other community radios in Uganda, Mama Fm would be in a better position to approach government and express its needs as a special kind of broadcaster that requires unique provisions and regulations. Furthermore, as a group, they can engage government, the civil society and the public into the understanding that community media target the disempowered communities for purposes of developing them.

The station should not give up trying to lobby for support from women NGOs in Uganda. They should persist in presenting their reason for existence and the need for them to partner with these organisations if both the radio station and the NGOs are to meet their desired goals.

Mama Fm should reconsider its move to becoming 50% commercial. Despite the fact that this will increase their chances of self sustainability, it may have an impact on the

way in which it operates as it may have to bend some of its policies to accommodate the demands of the advertisers. Such a move by Mama Fm is bound to lead the station astray from its initial objective of being 'a voice for the voiceless.' The claim for Mama Fm to go partly commercial raises the question of how it can maintain its editorial independence anymore and whether it can still be referred to as a community media anymore. Already, some officials of the broadcasting council have doubts as to whether Mama Fm is indeed a community radio. An official of the council (cit. in Wakabi, 2005) says that Mama Fm is a "hybrid, seemingly community but whose programming and outlook are commercial." With such doubts about it already, the station can not afford to risk being labelled commercial by the draft broadcasting policy that might soon be implemented. This will mean that it will lose out of the promised incentives to community media and will affect its operations in the long run as it will now be involved in a battle with other commercial media in Uganda for the audience and advertisers.

There is need for Mama Fm to create a program for announcements in their programming. It was expressed by the participants in the focus group discussion that they normally switched to other radio stations to hear announcements from members of the public especially about death. In the process, the listeners end up missing some vital programs on Mama Fm as they try to listen to announcements from other stations. The listeners also urged Mama Fm to enable them make their announcements if any for free. The audience is a vital component for the survival of any broadcaster and therefore Mama Fm should consider putting this in place so as not to lose its listeners.

Furthermore, Mama Fm should invest in carrying out a survey to ascertain the number of its listeners. At the time of this research, Mama Fm did not have any statistics of its listener-ship. Margaret Sentamu said that she can tell from the number of people that call in during programs and those that visit their programs that their listener-ship is big. However, if Mama Fm is to solicit for more support from government, donors and NGOs in Uganda, there is need for the station to have up to date statistics on their listeners. This will provide good ground for them to reason that a lot of people are listening to them and therefore they need support to continue operating.

As a community radio started by women for the benefit of women, it would be more meaningful for the radio station to have females as presenters to reach out to the largely female audience. Whereas the participants in the focus group discussions had no problem with the station having more male presenters, listening to Mama Fm and hearing the voice of one male after another for almost the whole day, makes one wonder as to whether this is a radio for women. Hence, having more female presenter will increase the credibility of the radio station as a radio for women.

6.4.2 Government

Government should pass the broadcasting policy and make guidelines on what a community broadcaster is and should clearly spell out the incentives it plans to give the sector. The draft policy talks about the regulator ensuring the structure and mandate that conforms to internationally accepted best practices, ensuring that community media are well managed, financially stable and innovative, and yet the policy does not show how exactly it will enforce this. It should also revisit its policy framework to make sure that it is sensitive to the different types of broadcasting that exist in Uganda. If the government consulted development communication practitioners and policy analysts in all stages of policy formulation, there would be an assurance that the policies arrived at are actually addressing the needs of the people and also that the policies are well coordinated and not in contradiction with each other.

Furthermore, the government should put in place a mechanism where corporate broadcasting subsidizes community radios so that operational costs are not too heavy for community radios to bear. The draft broadcasting policy recognises the need to encourage and facilitate the development of a strong community broadcasting sector. Once this policy is implemented, community radio initiatives should be exempted from high license fees and taxes and frequencies should be made available for community radio initiatives. By creating a favourable environment of operation for the community media in Uganda, the government will enable them to establish themselves and be self reliant.

It is also important for policy makers to take time and learn more about community media and how beneficial they are to the country as a whole. The concept of community radio should be popularised and a positive framework should be put in place in order to strengthen it as a tool for socio-cultural empowerment. This can only be done if the policy makers as well as the public know what community media are. At the time of this research, there was no legal definition of community radio in Uganda and therefore difficult to tell who are and who are not community media. The draft broadcasting policy defines community broadcasting as "broadcasting, which is for, by and about the community, whose management and ownership is representative of the community, which pursues a social development agenda, and which is not for profit." (Wakabi, 2005). Once the draft policy is implemented and community radios in Uganda are identified and recognised as such, hopefully this will prompt the government to set special provisions for community media operations, separate from those of the commercial media. Community radio is a channel through which government can eradicate poverty in Uganda, as it addresses the information needs of many people. Supportive training and sustainability mechanisms should be put in place to assist community broadcasters so that more are establishes in areas that are under-served.

Regulators should permit community broadcasters to cover wider areas than districts, or under 50kms as proposed in the draft broadcasting policy. However, the attempt for the community media to cover a wider area is directed a lot of times by the need to reach out to larger audiences and hence become more attractive to funders and advertisers, rather than to serve a bigger community. Therefore expansion of reach should be done with caution without departing from the original mission of the stations.

6.4.3 Donors

Donors should review their funding policies to cater for the sustainability of such a project like a community radio station that depends almost entirely on them. The funding should be able to sustain a project that they decided to support and it should not stop unless a solution is found for sustaining that project. Donors should work hand in hand with Mama Fm to draw a plan on how a certain project can be sustained

in case the funding stopped. Furthermore, there is a need for a regulator for the community broadcasting sector and this regulator should be adequately funded so that it is in a better position to protect community radios from arbitrary interference with their budgets. This is because it is vital that community media have a source of funding which does not go against the interest of the community, otherwise it will mean that they are not community media anymore.

6.4.4 Research

There is need for more research into the field of community media in Uganda. Such research will highlight the potential these media have in bringing about positive change in the lives of the marginalised in Uganda. This will have an effect on propelling the government to assist these media so that they can be able to operate a long side community media. The research should be documented and made available to policy makers and the general public.

Conclusion

It can be deducted from the findings of this research that while Mama Fm is playing its role in reaching out to the rural women in Uganda, it is doing so under a number of constraints. These constraints have had an impact of the station's performance negatively but again, Mama Fm's persistence in an environment that is not very favourable is a sign that it has a chance of becoming self-sufficient. The findings have indicated that its listeners have benefited and continue to benefit from the station especially when it comes to informing and educating them about issues that are of concern to them. This is a big step in the empowerment process as it involves people's awareness of the available choices they have to make decisions concerning their lives. Nevertheless, Mama Fm can not only depend on support from its listeners as it needs finances to continue operation. As long as the station does not have a viable and consistent source of income, it is bound to stop operation. However, hope for it lies in the draft broadcasting policy that has promised to support community broadcasters in Uganda. Once this policy is passed and implemented, the chances of Mama Fm staying on air and continuing its work of empowering rural women will continue, otherwise for now, its future is not certain.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Interview Guide for the Executive Director of Mama Fm

1. On 26th august this year, you will be celebrating six years of Mama Fm's existence, what can you say has been the greatest achievement of Mama Fm since its birth?

2. What are the challenges you face in your daily operations?

3. How has Mama Fm survived operation a long side other commercial Fm stations in Uganda?

4. I read that you depend on donors for your survival. Who are these donors and what; if any kinds of influence do they have in the day to day running of the Fm radio station?

5. Mama Fm is a station set up to address the plight of the underprivileged in Uganda, especially the rural women, how has it or how does it address the issue of domestic violence against women, which has been pointed out by recent reports as one of the biggest hindrances to women empowerment?

6. Mama Fm is stationed in Kampala and yet the majority of its target audience are women that live outside Kampala, how does the station ensure that all its target audience is reached?

7. Listening to Mama Fm, it is quite easy to observe that the majority of programs are presented by males. Why is this so, considering that Mama Fm was set up by a women's organisation to address the needs of women?

8. Most of the programs on Mama Fm are aired in Luganda. How does mama fm ensure that members of its target audience who are not Baganda understand the programs being aired?

9. To what extent has the government of Uganda been supportive to the existence and operation of mama fm?

10. How and who decides what kind of programs to air on the radio station?

11. For a community media to be effective there must be a high degree of participation from the audience. How has Mama Fm ensured that its audiences participate during the airing of the programs? Do the audiences have a say in the kind of programs that are run on the fm station?

12. How would you rate the level of your listener ship compared to that of other radio stations in Uganda and why?

13. What in your opinion is the biggest hindrance to the empowerment of rural women in Uganda and how has Mama Fm addressed that problem?

14. Where do you see Mama Fm five years from now?

15. Much as radio is the cheapest medium of communication in Uganda, some people may not have it, how do you reach of plan to reach such groups of people especially since they require your service?

16. Other than programming/broadcasting, in what other ways has Mama Fm tried to reach out to the rural women in Uganda and addressed their needs?

17. I would like to talk to a few of your listeners to get their view about Mama Fm and how much they have learnt from it since they began listening to it. What is the best way for me to get in touch with them?

Appendix 2: Interview Guide for Focus Group Discussions

1. Could you tell me about yourself; your age, marital status, educational background, source of income, income per month?

2. When and how did you become aware of Mama Fm's existence?

3. When did you start listening to it?

4. How often do you listen to Mama Fm?

5. What is your favourite program on Mama Fm and why?

6. Why do you think the information you receive from this radio station is important to you? What have you learnt by listening to Mama Fm?

7. Have the programs had any impact on you as regards your understanding of some issues relevant to you that were not clear before?

8. Do you listen to other radio stations? If so, what differences do you notice between theirs and Mama Fm's programs?

9. Does Mama Fm meet your expectations in terms of the information it avails to you on issues concerning your health, finances, agriculture, government policies and laws?

10. Where else, other than Mama Fm, do you receive such basic information about improving your day to day living?

11. How easy is it for you to put in practice the information you receive from Mama Fm?

12. Do you have any say in deciding the programs that are broadcast on Mama Fm?

13. How often, if so, do you participate in the programs that are aired on Mama Fm in terms of calling in, writing letters or visiting the station itself and airing out your views?

14. Most programs on Mama Fm are presented by men and yet Mama Fm is a radio for women. Would you prefer that more programs are presented by women or it does not matter to you who the presenters are?

15. What more would you like Mama Fm to do for you that it is not doing at the moment?

Appendix 3: Interview Guide for Presenter of Mama Fm

1. What motivates you to work for Mama Fm?

2. How and when were the listeners' clubs formed? How are they organised? How many are they? How often do they meet? What issues are discussed during these meetings?

3. How does Mama Fm get tips on the news that it broadcasts?

4. What do you understand by news that has a woman angle to it?

5. What is the Rural Outreach Program about?

6. Is 'The Other Voice' still in operation?

7. On what basis are the books on the program 'akatabo' chosen?

Appendix 4: List of Interviewees

1. Margaret Sentamu-Executive Director of Mama Fm
2. Charles Suuna-Presenter and Coordinator of the listeners' clubs