Using Radio to Drive Development in Southern Africa

Report on the Radio Platform for Community Development (RPCD)

October 2013

Supported by

Panos Institute
Southern Africa
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORSAMA</td>
<td>Community Radio Stations Association of Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORCOM</td>
<td>National Forum of Community Radio Stations in Mozambique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACRA</td>
<td>Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSISA</td>
<td>Open Initiative for Southern Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSAf</td>
<td>Panos Institute Southern Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLC</td>
<td>Radio listening clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPCD</td>
<td>Radio Platform for Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern Africa Development Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZaCoMeF</td>
<td>Zambia Community Media Forum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

The successful implementation of the Radio Platform for Community Development (RPCD) project is a result of the collaborative efforts of different stakeholders who committed their time and resources to empower poor and marginalised communities to use radio as a platform for communicating development.

PSAf would like to thank the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) for providing funding for the implementation of the project and production of this report. PSAf would also like to thank the 15 radio stations in Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique that accepted to work with PSAf on the project. These are Radio Dondo, Radio Catandica, Radio Xinavane, Radio Homoine and Radio Rurumwana in Mozambique; Mzimba; Nkhotakoka; Dzimwe; Mudzi Wathu; and Nyathepa Community Radio Stations in Malawi, as well as Breeze FM; Itezhitezhi FM; Kasempa FM Radio; Kariba FM and Zambezi Radio in Zambia.

Most importantly, PSAf is greatly indebted to the hundreds of community members and their leaders in the three countries who have embraced the organisation’s approaches as powerful tools for discussing development issues.

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© Panos Institute Southern Africa, 2013
Panos Institute Southern Africa (PSAf) views radio as a key platform through which millions of poor and marginalised citizens of Southern Africa can express themselves and engage with different stakeholders to resolve the region’s development challenges, and propel themselves out of poverty.

Working with communities and other stakeholders in Southern Africa, PSAf has established that radio is one of the most widely preferred mediums for information sharing among the region’s rural poor. However, there are numerous challenges that are hampering radio broadcasting in the region, thereby limiting citizens’ access to spaces and platforms for information sharing.

Over the last two decades, PSAf has used a number of interactive methodologies to facilitate engagement between communities and their duty bearers, and there are many positive stories from this engagement. Although poverty still reigns supreme in the region, it is important to note that the creation of these platforms for engagement has enabled the region’s poor and marginalised to be more involved in driving the region’s development – creating employment and fighting poverty.

For PSAf, the focus has been on using innovative communication tools like the radio listening clubs (RLC) to tap into this local knowledge and ensure that it is used to drive development. The radio listening club is a unique and proven PSAf methodology that empowers the often marginalized and neglected communities to participate in the development of community radio content and allows for these communities to influence and determine the topics for discussion and debate on radio. Using the RLC has enabled PSAf to create an interface between citizens and duty bearers, allowing for informed and focused discussions on development. This approach has also contributed to the transformation of community members from being mere listeners to become creators and disseminators of content.

In 2013, PSAf used the RLC approach as a pillar of the Radio Platform for Community Development (RPCD), which the organisation implemented in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. The project was funded by the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa to create a radio platform through which the poor and marginalised can participate in development debate. Under the RPCD project, PSAf supported 15 radio stations in the three countries to work with radio listening clubs as a platforms for gathering community content.

Through the RLC approach as used in the RPCD, PSAf created an interface between the media, duty bearers and poor and marginalised communities to identify and implement solutions to their development challenges.
The project worked with communities through radio listening clubs to enhance the engagement and inclusion of rural and the marginalized communities, who are often excluded in the urban centered mass media from participating in issues that pertain to both their community and national development. The project promoted the production of community-centred content through the participatory radio listening club methodology.

This report provides a summary of how PSAf facilitated the use of radio as a platform for the rural poor to participate in dialogue and set the agenda for their own development interventions. The report also highlights key achievements recorded under the project, lessons learnt and makes recommendations on how the impact recorded under the project can be sustained. Specifically, this report answers the following objectives:

1. Provides a synopsis of the activities carried out under the RPCD project.
2. Documents and showcases the impact of the RPCD on communities, community radio stations and community radio personnel.
3. Highlights challenges and lessons learnt.
4. Makes recommendations on the sustainability of the project.

As demonstrated in this report, community radio and radio listening clubs present an effective platform for community members to interact with different stakeholders in their efforts to drive sustainable development.

Lilian Kiefer  
*Executive Director*
Although the number of community radio initiatives has grown significantly in Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique, there is still limited use of their potential to increase engagement between citizens and their leaders. In the far flung areas of these countries, engagement between the poor and duty bearers is almost non-existent. In cases where debates and discussions take place, they hardly filter down to local communities and when they do, it is largely in a top-down approach. The need, therefore, for an initiative to amplify the voices of the poor and marginalised in development, democratisation and poverty reduction strategies and processes in Southern Africa cannot be overemphasized.

To galvanise the potential of community radio in advancing inclusive participation and engagement of the rural and marginalised poor in developmental debate and dialogue, PSAf implemented the Radio Platform for Community Development (RPCD) Project which was funded by the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA). The project aimed at enhancing the capacity of community radio stations to operate as agents of change for the rural poor and marginalised people.

The specific objectives were as follows:

1. To build the capacity of community radio stations in developing local content through radio listening clubs;
2. To interface the rural and marginalized groups with policy makers through the community radio platform; and
3. To facilitate networking and information sharing among community radio stations and initiatives both at national and regional levels.

The project worked with a sample of 15 community radio stations – five per country – in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. In implementing the RPCD project, PSAf used the Radio Listening Club (RLC) approach, which is a unique and proven methodology that empowers the often marginalised and neglected communities to participate in the development of community radio content. Participating in RLC discussions enables the communities to influence and determine the topics for discussion and debate on radio.

The following key interventions were done:

1. **Mapping and Community Mobilisation:** PSAf conducted a mapping exercise in the areas where the clubs were to be set up or strengthen. This enabled the project to establish the major
development issues in the different areas identified for the project. After the mapping, meetings were arranged with different stakeholders to facilitate explanation of the RLC methodology and foster community understanding.

2. **Setting up and strengthening of Radio Listening Clubs:** Following the mapping and mobilisation, PSAf supported the setting up of RLCs in the three countries using already existing community structures like cooperatives, home based care clubs, safe motherhood clubs and cooperatives. Existing clubs were also strengthened with equipment and programming support. This enabled both the radio stations and the communities to continue interacting way beyond the time limit of the project. The RLC methodology also enabled radio stations participating in the project to develop a sustainable, cheaper and easier way of conducting audience surveys, and develop lasting partnerships that will go beyond the time frame of the project.

3. **Programming support:** PSAf provided programming support to 15 rural based community radio stations in Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique for them to produce content and programmes on issues such as health, education, agriculture, good governance, accountability, food security, environment, and climate change, among others. The project activities were focused on capacity building and networking for radio listening clubs and community radio stations and their personnel to produce and share issue based content.

4. **Training and capacity building:** PSAf conducted trainings for community radio station personnel and community members on how they could maximise the use of the RLC methodology to drive local development. For community radio personnel the trainings focused on how the local radio stations could be used as platforms for citizen participation at community level. The training of community members sought to empower them with skills and techniques to use their RLC discussions to engage with different stakeholders though radio. These interventions enhanced the capacity of the participating radio stations and the communities they cover to conduct issue identification and evidence-based advocacy as well as engagement of duty-bearers.

5. **Mainstreaming gender:** In line with PSAf’s commitment to ensure that issues of gender are mainstreamed into the programming of community radio stations, efforts were made to ensure a balanced representation of men and women in the capacity building initiatives. PSAf in partnership with the participating community radio stations facilitated a series of interactive radio programmes for each station, ensuring that policy makers and government experts attend the discussions.

6. **Equipment and technical support:** In order for community members to fully participate in interactive programmes, PSAf provided basic equipment comprising radio sets and voice
recorders to enable the club members to listen to selected programmes collectively, discuss the issues and provide collective feedback through the radio station. This was meant to cater for those community members who do not own radio sets, and also to instil the spirit of collective listenership among the community members.

7. Networking and content sharing: The project supported networking and content sharing among the participating radio stations. Networking was also facilitated among communities working with the different radio stations.

Achievements

Although the implementation time and resource envelope were limited, the RPCD project achieved its objective of empowering communities to use radio as a platform for identifying developmental issues in their communities, and engaging duty bearers in developmental debate. The project assisted the participating radio stations to establish a stronger presence in their communities through the RLCs, enhance their interaction with audiences and improve content development and programming that responds to community development and information needs. Through the project, PSAf promoted the production of community-centred development content using the radio listening club approach. This resulted in increased engagement and inclusion of the rural poor and the marginalised communities in the development discourse through increased capacity of community media to effectively engage communities. The community centered programming also enabled the radio stations to interface with communities and facilitate networking and community development information sharing among community radio stations and initiatives both at national and regional levels.

Among others, the project achieved the following:

i. Community radio stations were empowered to develop local content through radio listening clubs and other participatory methodologies
ii. Platforms created for community members to set the agenda for radio content development through RLCs.
iii. Rural communities empowered to use RLCs to spearhead cultural development.
iv. Rural people engaged in dialogue with policy makers through community radio platforms
v. RLCs enhanced public accountability of agriculture and education resources
vi. Community voices were amplified to engage with decision makers on various matters affecting their daily lives.
vii. Community radio stations engaged in increased networking and information sharing with each other facilitated cross learning.
viii. Rural communities transformed from being mere consumers of content to become creators of content.
Executive Summary

PSAf’s approach in this project was in a way that ensured that the participating community radio stations/initiatives owned and drove the process, thus laying a solid foundation for continuity even after the project phases out. The RLC methodology also enabled radio stations to develop a sustainable, cheaper and easier way of conducting audience surveys, a community broadcasting tool that is lacking in most of community radio stations in the three countries.

In order to strengthen the foundation and base upon which the RLC can become stronger and endure over a longer period, it will be crucial for community radio stations to receive on-going onsite training in citizen engagement and participatory methodologies to continue supporting and collaborating with RLCs in such high staff turn-over environment. It is also crucial that community radio stations find strategies of sustaining the volunteer energy that they thrive on without weakening community ownership of the stations.

The RPCD was designed to empower poor and marginalised groups like young women to express themselves on development issues.
1.1. Context of the Project

Over the last decade, community radio has become a dominant platform for communication across Southern Africa, with many community radio initiatives being established across the region. The PSAf radio listening club approach has proven to be one of the best models for genuine citizen engagement, creating platforms where communities receive information and engage with their duty-bearers to demand accountability proved effective and was highly appreciated by community members.

Engagement between the citizens and their leaders to shape the agendas on democracy (including decentralisation), development and poverty reduction strategies is very limited and almost non-existent in far flung areas.

There is therefore need to identify ways in which local communities can be more involved in shaping their development. In brief, the context in each of the participating countries was as follows:
1.1.1. Malawi

In Malawi there is limited engagement between citizens and their duty bearers on development issues because most of the Malawi population lives in the rural areas with limited access to channels and platforms for communication and engagement. The slow growth of the community media sector in the country exacerbated the problem because the media in Malawi has limited capacity to facilitate engagement between citizens and different stakeholders.

For a long time, there were only five registered and operational community radio stations by geographical coverage in Malawi. This number increased in June 2013 when the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) announced that it had issued broadcasting licences to an additional 19 radio stations and 11 television stations, eight of which are geographical community radio stations based in Chikhwawa, Mangochi, Nkhata Bay, Karonga, Neno, Dedza, Mulanje, Likoma, and Rumphi. The issuance of the new licences followed “a policy directive from the Ministry of Information to licence more operators in order to boost broadcasting services in the country, thereby promoting Malawi to be a well-informed Nation”1

The implementation of the RPCD in Malawi was inspired by the fact that while the number of community radio initiatives is increasing, the quality of programming is still poor. The five stations participating in the project serve some of the country’s poorest communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of radio station</th>
<th>Operational</th>
<th>Not Operational</th>
<th>Total in Malawi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public (National)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private (National)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community of interest (Regional)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community of interest (National)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical community</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Regional</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Snapshot of radio licensing in Malawi (Source: Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority, MACRA²). The grouping of the different radio stations follows the classifications used by the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority.

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1.1.2. Zambia

Zambia has over the last ten years recorded an increase in the number of community radio stations. Although the country now boasts of more than 50 community radio stations, a study conducted by the Zambia Community Media Forum in 2013 established that this increase in the number of community radio stations has not been matched with commensurate capacity building to enable them to effectively foster development. Content development remains poor among community radio stations, with most of them relying on foreign content – both music and news.

Among other reasons, the limited local content is mostly because community radio stations lack adequate capacity and skills to play their role as platforms for engagement. This has largely disenfranchised more 60% of Zambias poor who live in the rural areas. In most cases, community radio stations are the only platform through which citizens can engage with the authorities, and their limited capacity means the poor of society are deprived of platforms for citizen engagement, to participate in development processes such as fostering accountability of public resources at community level.

Because of their location at the grass-root level, community radio stations are in a position to disseminate content that resonates well with the experiences of the poor and marginalised, providing a reliable platform for them to access and share information on issues affecting them. This positions them well to contribute to decision making and implementation of policies.

In implementing the RPCD project, PSAf worked with five radio stations in Zambia namely Breeze FM in Eastern Province; Itezhitezhi Community Radio in Central Province; Kasempa Community Radio in North Western Province; Kariba FM Radio Trust and Zambezi FM Radio both in the Southern Province.

In Zambia, the project addressed issues of accountability and transparency in the governance processes, focusing on strengthening the engagement between citizens and their duty bearers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of radio station</th>
<th>Total number in Zambia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community (including religious stations)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction permits</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awaiting security clearance</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defunct</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Snap short of Radio Stations in Zambia (Source: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services, April 2013).
1.1.3. Mozambique

The Mozambique media sector has experienced steady growth, as evidenced by the emergence of a number of community radio stations. Community radio has become a key alternative for information access and sharing by the majority of the country’s poor and marginalised citizens, who are still battling with high levels of poverty and illiteracy.

Although statistics from the Information Bureau indicate that the country has more than 100 registered community radio stations, most of the registered radio stations are not functional. Where the stations are functioning, the programming leaves a lot to be desired due to the weak capacity of personnel, poor equipment and other challenges. Both the mainstream and community media have limited capacity to tackle developmental issues like good governance, environment, natural resource, health, among others. The country's media policies are also not favourable for the growth and development of a vibrant media sector. This situation has been compounded by the fact that the country’s civil society is weak. Mozambique’s economic growth model also reinforces the already widespread social inequalities. While community radios provide a window of opportunity to address the problems of poverty and illiteracy, inadequate capacity for programming and community engagement poses a challenge.

This therefore calls for enhanced citizens’ participation in developmental processes, by creating platforms for dialogue to ensure that the poor and the marginalised have a say on the development and implementation of development in order for their needs to be included in the response programmes. In Mozambique, PSAf worked with five community radio stations, namely Radio Dondo in Manica, Radio Catandica, Radio Xinavane in Maputo, Radio Homoine in Sofala and Radio Rurumwana in Niassa. The project focused on promoting good governance and reducing the inequality gap, strengthening citizens’ demand for accountability and transparency in the management of resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of radio station</th>
<th>Total number in Mozambique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community (including religious stations)</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awaiting clearance</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Snap short of Radio Stations in Mozambique. Source: Information Bureau Database, 2013
In implementing the RPCD project, PSAf used the RLC approach, which is a unique and proven methodology that empowers the often marginalised and neglected communities to participate in the development of community radio content and allows for these communities to influence and determine the topics for discussion and debate on radio. RLCs do this through regular, structured discussions where they come together, listen to radio programmes, discuss issues and engage with experts or duty bearers through the radio station.

PSAf provided technical and programming support to the participating radio stations for them to produce content and programmes on issues such as health, education, agriculture and food security, environment, and climate change, among others. The project also facilitated exchange programmes between the participating community radio stations.

The use of the RLC methodology ensured that:

1. Community members were fully equipped to use radio as a platform through which they can access information and express their views on local, national and at times international development issues.

2. Capacity building and networking was facilitated for radio listening clubs and community radio stations and their personnel.

3. The RLCs recorded their discussions, which were given to the community radio to air or use as materials for the development of radio programmes.

4. The radio stations then invited policy makers and development experts from government to react to the issues raised by the communities and offer solutions.

PSAf’s approach in this project was to ensure that the project is community-driven and that community radios and the communities own the intervention.

2.1. Capacity building for community media personnel

PSAf conducted:

1. **Thematic Trainings:** Three trainings were conducted in each country to empower community
radio personnel to use their radio stations as platforms for development discourse at community level.

2. **National Orientation Meetings:** The project conducted three national orientation meetings (one per country) targeting station managers and studio managers of each of the identified stations as part of introduction to the project.

3. **Programming support:** The project provided programming support to the community radio stations to enhance their participating radio stations to use participatory methodologies that encourage citizen engagement, enabling the communities to conduct issue identification and evidence-based advocacy as well as engagement of duty-bearers.

In line with PSAf’s commitment to ensure that issues of gender are mainstreamed into the programming of community radio stations, efforts were made to ensure a balanced representation of men and women in the capacity building initiatives. However, as can be seen in Table 4 below, some workshops had more men than women attending, while some had more women than men. The gender disparities could be attributed to a wide range of factors, chief among them the dominance of men in positions of influence at community radio station. In Malawi however, there were more women than men at the workshops after PSAf took deliberate measures to encourage more women to participate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Trainings</th>
<th>No of Beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4: Distribution of capacity building activities by country**
The capacity building was at three levels, namely thematic training, community radio station management and using the RLC methodology. Altogether more than 120 senior community radio officials, including station managers, producers and senior reports were training in how to transform community radio into platforms for community debate and discussion. These senior journalists were also taught the importance of developing diverse and locally-relevant materials for their community.

![Figure 1: Focus of RPCD capacity building activities](image)

### 2.2. Technical support to RLCs and local radio

All the participating radio stations were supported to use the radio listening club methodology to drive development discourse.

1. PSAf conducted on-site, hands-on trainings for each of the radio stations to train them on setting up and managing radio listening clubs, ensuring that marginalised groups compose the RLCs; and take advantage of the presence of social media through the presence of the internet and data-enabled mobile phones. RLCs are an effective communication tool to magnify the voices of the marginalised, especially when the listeners participate actively in the whole process, raise issues, discuss them, explore options, and seek external support. Through the

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3 In some cases, the same journalists participated in each of the three different trainings.
RLCs, communities can raise awareness of the development issues affecting their communities and debate them.

2. In each of the participating countries, PSAf supported the participating stations to establish RLCs, and also provided technical and programming support to existing ones. New RLCs were established using already existing community structures like cooperatives, farmers clubs, community action groups, among others.

3. The technical support comprised of a digital voice recorder and a radio set per club. This was to enable the clubs to record their discussions, and also use the radio sets to listen and review the programmes aired on the local radio station.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No. of participating stations</th>
<th>No. of participating RLCs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: RPCD outreach to RLCs per country

Participants at the RPCD training in Maputo, Mozambique in May, 2013.
2.3. Content Development

PSAf in partnership with the participating community radio stations facilitated a series of interactive radio programmes for each station, ensuring that policy makers and government experts attend the discussions. The stations also facilitated the recording of radio listening clubs discussions which were in turn aired on the radio stations. This resulted in community members playing a very active role in content development.

In order for community members to fully participate in these interactive programmes, PSAf provided basic equipment comprising one radio set per club to enable the club members to listen to selected programmes collectively, discuss the issues and provide collective feedback through the radio station. This was meant to cater for those community members who do not own radio sets, and also to instil the spirit of collective listenership among the community members.

2.4. Networking and content sharing

The project supported networking among the participating radio stations, as well as among communities working with the different radio stations. The networking enabled the radio stations and communities to share information and experiences on different development challenges that they face. In Mozambique and Zambia, PSAf worked with existing bodies the National Forum of Community Radios in Mozambique (FORCOM) and the Zambia Community Media Forum (ZaCoMeF), respectively, to facilitate networking of community radio stations, while in Malawi the organisation facilitated the establishment of a new umbrella body, the Community Radio Stations Association of Malawi (CORSAMA).
3 Summary of Key achievements and impact

The RPCD project empowered citizens to use radio as a medium for influencing development discourse in the three countries participating in the project. Through the project, community members in marginalised districts of the three countries participating in the project believe the use of radio has enabled them to break new ground in terms of addressing development challenges in their communities.

As detailed in this report, the RPCD project led to increased community driven programming and facilitated serious engagement between citizens and duty bearers to engage in debate on issues of democracy (including decentralisation), development and poverty reduction.

3.1. Community radio stations empowered to develop local content through radio listening clubs

The first objective of the project focused on building the capacity of community radio stations to develop content using RLCs. The establishment and strengthening of RLCs enhanced the radio stations production of development oriented content which was most influenced by the community’s views and expectations.

Figure 2: Recording of programmes by RPCD supported clubs per country
In all the radio stations participating in the project, there has been a marked improvement in local programming, due to the increased involvement of community members in the station’s programming.

3.1.1. Community members drive content development through RLCs

The use of the RLC approach has positioned community members in the countries participating in the RPCD to drive content development for their local radio stations. In the past the community members would just consume whatever content they got from the stations with limited room for feedback, but the establishment of RLCs under the RPCD and other PSAf interventions has enabled the community members to drive radio programming.

The RLCs meet at least once every week. With PSAf supporting five clubs per station, that means every week there are 25 RLC discussions taking place in each country, which translates to 75 weekly recordings in the three countries.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of participating Stations</th>
<th>No. of supported RLCs per station</th>
<th>No. of discussions per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 6: Overview of distribution of RLCs and weekly recordings per country

“As a radio station, this is one of the most effective exercises that we have undertaken to disseminate messages, studies and expert advice on key topics to our listeners. The people that listen to these programs would never have had an opportunity to meet and discuss with the experts on different issues captured in these rich and well packaged programs. We have also learnt that people are still ignorant of some important information that may be most people have taken for granted. Some questions that club members have asked have exposed a worrying low level of understanding of issues of democracy, governance, HIV and AIDS among local Malawians.” Radio Producer, Malawi.

3.1.2. Rural communities use RLCs to spearhead cultural development

The use of the RLC approach in the three countries also enabled the community members to participate in the development of their respective cultures, and reviewing certain practices they may find to be out of sync with the changing world. The RLCs have become conduits through which community members engage in debate on certain cultural practices and identify ways of improving areas they feel could be retrogressive or a violation of the rights of some sections of the community. The use of local languages in programming has increased the community members’ confidence in the stations as conduits for the exchange of development information.

For example, some RLCs in Mozambique have used their meetings to challenge certain cultural practices they felt were hindering development in the area. Among them is a practice in the Shangani culture relating to marrying a deceased spouse.

“As soon as the club was established, we realised it presented us with a platform to discuss issues that have been bothering us for a long time as a community, issues bordering on cultural practices like the payment of bride price for a deceased spouse, where one is required to pay all outstanding brideprice before his wife is buried. Now we have a way of taking our views to the authorities, we just record our discussions and take them to the radio station.
After some time, you will hear the authorities responding,” said a member of Inhacutse RLC in Mozambique.

In Kasempa, North Western Zambia, the RLC discussions added a new perspective on issues of land ownership, which according to the local culture was predominantly viewed as a preserve for men. After the discussions which showed that women could also own land, the council recorded a high number of female applicants applying to acquire.

As members of the RLCs, traditional leaders in the different communities have committed themselves to work with their subjects in exchanging information which would in turn be used to drive development and make the RLC and local radio stations conduits for cultural development.

This has increased participation of the rural and marginalised in content production and feedback provision, and strengthened the relationship between the stations and their communities, and in the process positioned the stations to contribute to the cultural development of their respective communities.

An example is in Mzimba district where the radio station is now at the centre of preserving the local language and the local culture. This has reinforced the relationship between the station and the local communities.
“The establishment of radio listening clubs has enabled us as a station to reach out to many people across the district. We have recorded an increase in the level of interaction between the station and the community. We have now introduced a policy to ensure that 60% of our programming content is in the local Tumbuka and Ngoni languages. This has brought the communities closer to the station, and enabled the station to be at the centre of the cultural development of the district.” Mr Jere, programmes manager, Mzimba Radio.

This approach has increased the quantity of programmes featuring the voices of the rural and marginalised groups, and enabled the station to attract new listeners while retaining the existing one.

3.2. **Rural people engage in dialogue with policy makers through community radio platforms**

The second objective of the project focused on amplifying the voices of poor and marginalised citizens in order for them to interface with policy makers. As evidenced by the examples and anecdotes below, the project amplified the voices of the poor and marginalised, enabling them to use radio to engage with decision makers in a more effective way.

3.2.1. **RLCs enhance domestic accountability in agriculture, education**

Through the use of radio listening clubs, the RPCD project empowered citizens in the three countries to monitor the allocation and use of resources meant for development, and holding the authorities accountable. This aspect of the project anchored on improving transparency and accountability in the management and utilisation of public resources meant for agriculture and education. In Zambia, RLC members participating in the RPCD used radio as a platform through which they tracked the use of budgets meant for education and agriculture, and engaged the district agricultural and educational office on any irregularities that they identified. This resulted in the RLCs becoming alternative platforms for empowering community members with knowledge to engage in progressive, evidence based dialogue to demand for accountability and transparency in the management of resources meant for agriculture and education. This resulted in accountability and transparency in the management of resources meant for local development, especially in the educational and agriculture sectors.

In Zambia, Kasempa and Itezhi Tezhi community radio stations aired more than 30 discussions focusing on education and school governance, and a similar number on the governance of natural resources. Some of the issues discussed at community level through the RLC platform are captured as news items on the radio stations.
Summary of Key achievements and impact

Following the sensitisation and training on accountability and transparency, districts around the participating stations have each appointed a focal person to support monitoring and backstopping services, using notice boards.

Some community members and particularly those in the school parent teacher associations (PTAs) have taken keen interest in learning about school governance, and we have had a number of people in positions of authority in the community confirming to us that the RLC discussions are making them more aware of the use of funds allocated to the school. Of late we have recorded an increase in the number of community members calling in and seeking clarity on issues relating to the use of funds meant for agriculture and education. Luckson Hamooya, Itezhi Tezhi Community Radio Station.

In rural Mozambique and Zambia, community members also used the platform to monitor the governance of natural resources, especially forests and minerals. Hundreds of rural households had been displaced to pave way for mining activities, but the sensitisation of the communities and their participation in content generation resulted in a turnaround of the situation. Through their weekly discussions, the community members used the RLC to demand for transparency in the distribution of proceeds from the extraction of minerals, wood and other natural resources. Traditional leaders and citizens believe that the RLC approach has made it easy for them to raise alarm and also to take action where they feel development processes would be deviating from their expectations. In Mozambique, radio programmes resulted in some mining companies being compelled to compensate locals who would have been displaced to pave way for mining activities. Some senior government officials were either dismissed or reassigned due to concerns raised in the RLCs. The radio stations participating in the project used the support to help community members interrogate existing policies aimed at alleviating poverty and the many ills affecting their communities. The project enabled the participating radio stations to transform themselves into discussion platforms where various government policies were discussed, debated and fine-tuned by members of the very communities the policies target.

While in the past residents would have to wait for them to go to a rally or a meeting with the MP, councillor, chief or any other chief, the RLCs have enabled the community members to take their messages to their leaders even without a physical meeting. Traditional leaders are also seeing the benefits of using radio to communicate with their subjects on different development activities, and sharing information on how the citizens can track the processes.

“In the past, it used to be difficult to mobilise the community or to share information on issues like funerals. The establishment of the radio listening club has enabled us to exchange information at different levels within the community, and also to interact with other
communities. We are able to record our discussions as a club, and share the information with other villages through the radio.” Chief Mzukuzuku, of Embangweni, Mzimba District, Malawi.

After undergoing training on the RLC methodology, radio listeners in Siavonga, Zambia embarked on a mission to mobilise other community members to ensure that their concerns attract the attention of duty bearers.

“I work for the council (fire brigade). I have received a lot of information here and I will not sit on it, but will share with my colleagues at the council. I will first go to my section, and then take it to the entire council. I will then request for a platform to share this information and influence information exchange in the local authority.” Radio Champion, Siavonga.
3.2.2. Community voices amplified to engage with decision makers

The establishment of radio listening clubs has presented a platform through which citizens’ voices were amplified to influence sustainable development in their community. Through their discussions and recordings, the community members have been empowered to engage with different stakeholders and raise their concerns on development issues at the community level, demanding for accountability and transparency from their duty bearers.

As a result of community members coming together and raising development issues, the different participating communities used the power of their voice to influence the direction of development in their areas.

In the excerpt below, Nyambe Muyumbana, the station manager for Kasempa Radio in North Western Zambia explains how the station has been working with RLCs to amplify community voices:

“Our approach towards RLCs is that our listeners are the masters of our programing. Therefore what we have been doing is that we have two revolving recorders which are shared amongst the clubs to record issues which they feel needs to be addressed by their leaders. We then follow up the recorders and bring the materials for professional touch. After that we have a two pronged approach; (a) We may air the entire radio program and later get the feedback from the concerned leaders and make it a second episode. After airing the leaders’ responses we then go back to the RLC to find out whether they are happy with the responses and then broadcast their views too and continue that two way feedback until a solution is found; or (b) We bring the concerned leader in the studio for a live phone in program but start playing the views of the RLC which the concerned leader will address after listening to them. This approach allows the RLC to phone in and give feedback on the leader's responses there and then.”
A good case study of the effectiveness of this approach was recorded in Kasempa where the local council managed to sink two boreholes in the Njenga area following community demands through RLCs, as well as the construction of Mukunashi road.

Also in Kasempa, the district commissioner and local Member of Parliament have increased the frequency of their visits to the communities due to the increasing demand from the community members through the RLCs.

Although some of the stations had some loose structures known as radio action groups, the establishment of RLCs enabled them to take community participation in programming to another level.

“Through these clubs, we are now able to get quality content from the communities. We have had a number of cases where community members have shared information on key developments with us through the RLC. An example was the recent death of a chief which was first broadcast on Mzimba after the story was brought in by one of the RLC leaders. As a station, we were the first to break that story and inform the whole nation because of our alert RLC members,” James Kumwenda, Mzimba Community Radio station, Malawi.

In Zambia, PSAf also supported Kariba FM Radio Trust in Siavonga district to establish RLCs using already existing structures like farmers clubs, safe motherhood action groups and cooperatives. These are already working with the station as Radio Champions. Since its establishment, the station has been working with community volunteers known as Radio Champions.

In Mzimba, members of Embangweni community radio station now use the local radio as platform through which the residents keep checks on the area MP.

“Through the radio station, we are now able to keep checks on our area Member of Parliament. In order to have an alternative view, we also always include the voice of the shadow Member of Parliament who is also positioning himself for election during the next elections. This way, we are able to have a balanced debate between political opponents in the constituency,” said a member of the Embangweni RLC in Mzimba East constituency, Malawi.
The three countries were chosen because it was identified that people in rural areas in these countries were not being accorded the opportunity to speak out on issues that affect them, such as child marriage, child trafficking, and drug abuse. Women make up the majority of people who are marginalised, therefore the project is making a deliberate effort to address the challenges that women face in accessing development information.

“We have been greatly inspired by the diversity of questions asked, it has made us and the experts understand the level of knowledge that different communities have on different areas as far as the issues are concerned. We have also been greatly encouraged by the passion that people have in wanting to know more about different issues concerning development in the country. Listening to the wise questions asked by people made us realize that the clubs took this exercise seriously and were passionate in achieving the intended goal.” Radio Producer, Malawi

3.3. Networking and information sharing facilitated among community radio stations

Networking initiatives supported under the RPCD project have resulted in increased networking, learning and knowledge sharing among community radio stations, and among communities with certain localities. Support provided to national umbrella bodies has also strengthened networking and mentoring for community radio stations, enabling them to have an organised approach for representing interests of community media at national and regional level.
Through PSAf support under the RPCD, radio stations in Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique are now able to network to develop and share content at different levels. This has resulted in the community radio stations initiating and strengthening joint-actions on matters relating to community media in the three countries.

A major highlight in this aspect was the role of PSAf in facilitating the establishment of the Community Radio Stations Association of Malawi (CORSAMA). Work towards the establishment of CORSAMA started in April 2013 when PSAf brought the different radio stations together under the RPCD project. This culminated in the association’s inaugural General Meeting held in Lilongwe on 13 September 2013, bringing together representatives of community radio stations, community media support organisations and representatives of the regulators.

In Zambia, the project supported the Zambia Community Media Forum to strengthen its systems as an umbrella body for community media organisations. This would enable radio stations under the project to serve as platforms for information sharing and constructive debate.
4 Challenges and Lessons Learnt

4.1. Challenges

Although the project generally achieved all of its objectives, PSAf and the participating radio stations had to overcome a number of challenges in order to achieve these intended results.

The following are some of the key challenges experienced during the implementation of the RPCD project.

1. **Poor connectivity**: The weak and unreliable mobile phone signal in almost all the project sites affected communication between PSAf and the radio stations, and between the radio stations and the radio listening clubs. It would take long to share information that would ideally be immediately available. For example, getting feedback from the RLC through the radio stations would at time take up to one week, as the station would take long before they access the message sent through email (accessed using a mobile phone modem). Some RLCs are located in areas where the mobile phone signal is completely unavailable, resulting in the radio station not being able to keep regular contacts with them.

2. **Limited technical capacity to use new media platforms**: The limited technical capacity of community radio personnel and RLC members greatly slowed the achievement of some of the project’s outputs that depended on the use of ICTs. For example, a number of community members and radio station staff members had internet enabled phones, but very few could use them for content sharing. This hindered the content sharing aspect of the project, which greatly relied on the use of information and communication technologies.

3. **Transport and mobility**: In some cases, the only available mode of transport for the community radio station were motorbikes or even bicycles. On a number of occasions during the implementation of the project, the bikes would be down due to various mechanical faults, and this usually resulted in some stations not being able to regularly interact with RLCs. This proved to be a major setback in the implementation of activities, as in caused unnecessarily slow communication between the stations and their RLCs, and between the stations and PSAf.

4. **Accessibility of some areas**: The RPCD project sites were mostly in rural areas, some of which were far flung and difficult to access. This became worse during the rainy season when some areas would be difficult to access due to flooded rivers or water logged roads. Some community members have to walk long distances to get to where their club meets in order to participate in the dialogue.

5. **High costs of engaging experts**: There was a challenge of engaging experts in the Interactive Radio Programmes due to less attractive payment to them. The project encouraged the experts...
to appear in the programmes mostly for free, but some of them expected to get something in return which the stations (and PSAf) could not offer. In some cases, the experts would request for allowances and fuel reimbursements when they came for programmes to respond to issues raised by the communities during RLC discussions.

6. Lack of enthusiasm in some RLCs: Some of the RLC groups showed less enthusiasm during the course of the project. This resulted in some planned community panel discussions not taking place.

7. Lack of understanding of the RLC concept by some clubs: Some community members demonstrated lack of understanding of the RLC concept. Despite spending time with them during the orientation meetings and explaining to them how the program should be, some of them did not fully grasp what needs to be done in terms of how they should discuss, what questions they should be asked and how they should be asked. Some groups asked questions not related to their topic of discussion for that week. Some members virtually run dry and ask disappointingly few questions.

8. Limited capacity of community radio personnel: Community radio stations rely mostly on the voluntary energies of concerned community members. However, in most cases these community members lack the basic programming and journalistic skills, which raises a need for onsite capacity building.

4.2. Lessons Learnt

During the implementation of this project, PSAf has learnt a number of lessons as follows:

1) Linkages between radio stations and traditional authorities leads to effective citizens’ participation in governance processes at national level: The local radio stations serve as a link between the different groups in society, despite their different limitations in playing this role.

2) Technical support: Both the radio stations and community members (RLCs) require a lot of technical support in the form of equipment and directions of use in order for them to effectively generate and share content.

3) Transport for the local radio: Rural based community radio stations usually cover vast geographical areas. With already limited resources, the need to travel long distances in order to touchbase with the communities puts a further strain on the short staffed and ill equipped radio stations. Unfortunately, mobile phone connectivity is poor in some of the districts, making physical visits and the radio announcements the only ways of interacting with the community. Implementing partners working with community radio stations should consider providing transportation support in the form of motor bikes to enable the stations to cover much ground.

4) Local language programming: Community members feel a great sense of ownership when programmes are in their local languages than when the programmes are in English or any other
language. Broadcasting in the local language also enables community members to develop a sense of identity expressed through the radio station.

5) **Diversity of issues**: It is important for the RLC discussions and radio programmes to cover a variety of issues in order to inspire increased participation by community members, and enable the radio stations and thematic experts to determine the level of knowledge that different communities have on different issues.
5.1. Conclusion

Although the implementation time and resource envelope was limited, the RPCD project has achieved its objective of empowering communities to use radio as a platform for identifying developmental issues in their communities, and engaging duty bearers in debate. The communities in the three countries participating in the project have discovered the potential of using their respective radio stations as platforms for development discourse, thus providing a springboard for further community driven development discussions.

The project has helped the participating radio stations to establish a stronger presence in their communities through the RLCs, enhance their interaction with audiences and improve content development and programming that responds to community development and information needs. The majority of people in Southern Africa continue to be on the margins of development processes, and radio is one medium with the capacity to amplify their voices and bring out their views on the kind of development they desire for themselves. In addition, there are still huge gaps in the media’s coverage of issues in a gender balanced manner. Women across Southern Africa currently have limited access to opportunities, communication, and information channels to enable them play a role in development.

From the interaction with community members under the RPCD, it can be concluded that the RLC concept is still not adequately understood by community media personnel. This is partly because community radio staff are mostly volunteers who are always on the move, leaving the stations with limited room to retain the knowledge they would have gathered.

The hunger for information on a range of development issues resulted in the community members occasionally veering off topic, discussing issues that may not be related to the topic of discussion in that week.

5.2. Recommendations for project sustainability

PSAf’s approach in this project was in a way that would ensure that the participating community radio stations/initiatives own and drive the process, thus laying a solid foundation for continuity even after the project phases out. The strengthened RLCs will allow both the radio station and the community to continue interacting way beyond the time limit of the project. The RLC methodology
also enables radio stations develop a sustainable, cheaper and easier way of conducting audience surveys, a thing that is lacking in most of community radio stations in the three countries.

The capacity building provided to community members and their local radio stations presents a good springboard for sustain development discourse in the three countries and the rest of the Southern Africa region. With a good foundation, an RLC can be a long term structure even without regular support from an implementing partner like PSAf or OSISA.

The setting up of RLCs – mostly using already existing community structures like cooperatives, home based care clubs, safe motherhood clubs, cooperatives, among others – therefore enabled both the radio station and the community to continue interacting way beyond the time limit of the project. The radio listening club methodology will also allow radio stations develop a sustainable, cheaper and easier way of conducting audience surveys, and develop lasting partnerships that will go beyond the time frame of the project.

In order to strengthen the foundation and base upon which the RLC can become stronger and endure over a longer period, this report makes the following recommendations:

1) **Establishment of linkages with traditional leaders:** In a number of instances, the advisors (indunas) to the local traditional chiefs are key members of the RLC leadership. This creates the much needed link between the community members and the traditional leadership through the local radio, which should be strategically harnessed.

2) **Technical support to the radio station and community members:** In most cases, community radio stations fail to adequately document voices of the poor and marginalised in their communities because of limited equipment. It is thus essential to provide more recording equipment for the community radio stations and the communities they serve. Providing equipment like radios and recorders will also enable the community members to effectively interact with different stakeholders through the radio platform. The provision of equipment should be done using existing community structures in order to enhance community ownership.

3) **Capacity building for community radio personnel and community members:** Enhancing the capacity of community members and community radio station personnel would help ensure they continue using the skills and equipment effectively even after the end of the project.

4) **Onsite Training and Capacity building:** In order for community members and radio stations' personnel to effectively and consistently use the RLC approach to generate, share and access content, they need constant capacity building. This training should be on site in order for them to apply the skills and techniques to their situation. Onsite training will also enable the radio stations to tap into the voluntary energy of their community members.
5) **Language:** There is need to build the capacity of community radio broadcasters to broadcast more in the local languages. Most journalism and in-service training in the region is done in English or Portuguese, and this usually results in the journalists and producers struggling to interpret some issues into the local language. There is therefore need to have targeted interventions to train radio personnel on local language broadcasting, which they will in turn transfer to the community members through the RLCs.
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Vision: A Southern African community that drives its own development