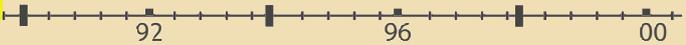


A graphic of concentric white and yellow arcs representing radio waves emanating from a central point.

COMMUNITY
RADIO

**THE
PEOPLE'S VOICE**



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FOREWORD

This publication contains guidelines to take you through the map of setting up, managing and sustaining community radio. It also outlines the role community radio has and continues to play in South African society. What is community radio? Until now, many people outside the sector knew very little about this very important communication for development tool. From the name 'community' derives the democratic processes involved in setting up this type of radio station. It is community demand driven, community centred and targeted.

This handbook takes an in-depth look at what constitutes community radio in the South African context. However, though given in the South African context, the principles of community radio are the same but driven by different geographical and community needs. Three very important attributes of a community radio are that it is participatory, uses local languages and that it is non-profit making.

The right to information and communication is a human right and universal. One cannot separate media from society or communities. It reflects people's values, ideas, attitudes, needs, culture and practices of any society and community. This handbook talks about the important and strategic role of community radio as a tool in social and economic development transformations. In South Africa, community radio has continued to play a major role in both the pre- and post-apartheid era. It addresses the gap that is and has been there between public, private and commercial broadcasters without necessarily competing for airwaves and audiences with the latter. It addresses immediate community issues in local languages and it is definitely not sub-standard to mainstream media.

South African media legislation is favourable to the community radio sector. The country has a large number of community radio stations operating in the country, with broadcasting licences ranging from one to four years issued by the regulator ICASA.

This handbook also provides guidelines on sustainability activities on which stations could embark. This is crucial to the development of the sector and continuity of the services offered by the stations to their communities.

This publication will, I hope, give guidelines to all community radio practitioners not only on the definition of community radio but also how to set up, manage and sustain community radio as well as understand the role community radio plays in social and economic development.

This handbook is a true reflection of the community radio sector in South Africa and we request members and partners to use it as a basis to make recommendations based on their own experiences and processes. The intention is to compile these recommendations and processes and develop them into a regional community radio handbook.

I would like to sincerely thank ABC Ulwazi, which developed the handbook in collaboration with all its partners.

Michelle Ntab
Regional Director
AMARC Africa

EDITOR'S PREFACE

In 1993, ABC Ulwazi was a small research unit based at the University of the Witwatersrand. It was then known simply as ABC – the Applied Broadcasting Centre – and was most concerned about the democratisation of broadcasting in South Africa. I had been on the steering committee of the `Jabulani! Freedom of the Airwaves´ conference in Doorn, the Netherlands, in 1990, and had participated in all the think-tanks that evolved from the Dutch conference, attended by the Film and Allied Workers Union (FAWU), the Campaign for Independent Broadcasting (CIB), and the Campaign for Open Media (COM).

By 1996, all the thinking had to take into account the fact that community radio licences were being granted but that there was still a desperate need for training. So it was that ABC began a small three-person training unit with freelance trainers from the Netherlands and Denmark and some local trainers.

By 1997, we were established as an NGO with a fine training studio funded by The Ford Foundation. With funding from the Stem van Afrika Foundation and the Open Society Foundation, we were able to start running formal courses in Presentation Techniques, News and Actuality, Producing Educational Radio Programmes and Managing a Community Radio Station. Dozens of students from community stations passed through our training studio, all of whom were recipients of full bursaries.

When the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established, ABC ran two courses – one just before the TRC started its work and another just after the hearings were completed. The subject of these courses was the relationship of human rights and the media, and how the media could support the language of human rights that had arisen from the work of the TRC. From then, ABC has firmly put itself in the forefront of training the community radio sector in all aspects of human rights.

By 1998, the opportunity arose to merge with Ulwazi Radio Productions to form ABC Ulwazi. The word *ulwazi* means `knowledge´ in isiZulu, and the merger was indeed a wise move, because the community radio sector needed educational and developmental programming as well. This marked a shift in our NGO, with more emphasis on programme production and the training associated with programmes. A programme on domestic violence would, for example, be supported by a three-day course offered by experts on the subject. This meant that community radio staff could `own´ the programme and could localise the subject in terms of language and context. Not even the most well-produced programmes can speak for themselves – they need the mediation of committed and knowledgeable broadcasters.

In 2002, we moved into our current premises with state-of-the-art production studios and edit suites, a broadcast training studio, eight voice booths and two lecture rooms. By now we were deeply involved in all aspects of the sector and began to address the problems of sustainability and income generation.

At present, ABC Ulwazi is engaged in training, production and consultation in the community radio sector in South Africa, and in the SADC region as a whole. This book is the result of our work over the past 10 years and we share our experiences with you in a belief that a strong community radio sector is essential for the growth of civil society and democracy.

I wish to thank everyone who took time from their busy schedules to contribute to this book: Shelley Knipe for Chapter 3, Karen Williams for Chapter 4, Romie Singh for Chapter 5 and Thato Nkalai for Chapter 6. I am responsible for the first two chapters. I would also like to thank Michelle Ntab of AMARC for her participation, for the French translation and distributing the book in Africa. Thanks to our editors, Zann Hoad and Amanda Holt, for their careful and inspiring support and advice. The final thanks must, however, go to The Ford Foundation for their funding of this book as part of the three-year `Sustainability in Community Radio´ project.

John van Zyl
Managing Director
ABC Ulwazi

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HOW YOU CAN USE THIS GUIDE EFFECTIVELY

ABC Ulwazi's involvement in training and the development of community radio stations in the last six years has made us fully aware of the power and place of community radio in South Africa today.

WHAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT...

We feel strongly that community radio should be seen as a powerful ally and resource in the consolidation of democracy. 'Community Radio: The People's Voice' developed out of our deep concern to make the sector as professional and as sustainable as possible.

This book develops a new perspective on community radio in South Africa, 10 years after the first democratic elections. However, we believe that many of the arguments and discussions here will be of use to any community radio sector in Africa, India and elsewhere.

Professionalism, sustainability and a culture of human rights are vital to the success of the community radio sector. Here, we make the important link between professionalism in broadcasting and the sustainability of the community radio sector, as well as the culture of human rights that sees community radio as the voice of civil society. We believe that these are not mutually exclusive, but are, in fact, part of the same process.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS BOOK?

'Community Radio: The People's Voice' is for all those involved in the community radio sector. This includes:

- station managers
- members of the board or trustees
- staff in production, marketing and sales
- volunteers
- journalists
- media academics
- trainers and trainees in community radio
- funders
- Stakeholders such as the National Community Radio Forum (NCRF), World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), various government departments (such as the Department of Communications) and the independent institutions, such as the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA).

HOW CAN THIS BOOK HELP YOU?

To make this book as user-friendly as possible and relevant to everyone in the community radio sector, we have filled it with hands-on examples, checklists, guidelines, activities and discussions gleaned from our experience in community radio.

DON'T UNDERSSELL OR UNDERESTIMATE THE POTENTIAL OF COMMUNITY RADIO!

The first two chapters of this book will help those dedicated to the development and sustainability of community radio. You are the people who have committed yourselves to making the sector not just survive, but also grow and take its place as the voice of every citizen. These chapters give support to both boards and management to help develop the full potential of community radio.

In all the training programmes we have run at ABC Ulwazi since 1997, we have seen how managements struggle to survive. We all know that it is a huge task just to keep the station going on a day-to-day basis. All too often management just does not have the time to think about the different opportunities and options open to their station.

But these chapters are also especially relevant to people outside the sector, like journalists, trainers, and funders, and, of course, policymakers. Included here are also some ideas about how ICASA might assist the sector by changing some of the regulations.

Chapters three to five are aimed at trainers and practitioners, and deal with the four basic components of community radio: management, marketing, news/ actuality and production. These will help challenge, develop and refine your departments as they exist today.

PRACTICAL AND REALISTIC TIPS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The final chapter on sustainability outlines the process from dependency to sustainability. It gives comprehensive advice on how to write up a business plan and generate income for your station. This all makes the goal of being self-sustaining so much more attainable.

HOW DO I USE THIS BOOK?

Each chapter begins with a **ABOUT THIS CHAPTER ...** block and ends with a  section, so that you can easily skim to see if the particular chapter is what you're interested in.

We have also used the following icons:

LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR!

Here we explain things simply. We use personal stories, examples and comparisons to make the information clearer.

NOKUPHILA FM UPDATE.

These sections help give you 'real life' examples. Nokuphila FM is an imaginary community radio station. These stories come from our real experiences in community radio.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Here, we want you to think about important issues before we discuss them in the chapter. These sections, with the Activity section below, will work well in a training environment. The facilitator can get participants to discuss these in groups or pairs.





ACTIVITY

Work through these practical activities, and you will get a better understanding of how to apply the information in this book.

HANDY HINT!

Here's a quick recommendation to put in place at your station if you are not doing it already!



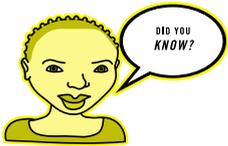
CHECKLIST

These detailed and easy-to-use lists are here for you to check that you are covering all areas in that particular task.



KEEP IT LEGAL!

This section refers you to specific legal requirements set up by ICASA or government that you need to be aware of.



DID YOU KNOW?

This contains interesting background or research linked to your field.

FAST FORWARD

REWIND

To help you move between chapters, we have used the fast forward and rewind icons. These help you find more information elsewhere in the book. We have also used the fast forward icon to refer you to our website (www.abculwazi.org.za) where you can find more detailed information.

DIFFICULT WORD BOXES

We have made this book as reader-friendly and as useful as possible by putting difficult words and their meaning in boxes on each page.

We have underlined the difficult word in the text. (In the community radio field we often use jargon that many of us take for granted). These difficult words then are linked to a short glossary box on the left-hand side, just like this: jargon.

jargon

professional slang, understood by people in a particular field

LIST OF CONTACTS TO HELP YOU

On page 107 we give you full contact details for organisations that you may need to contact in your work. In the text, if the contact details for that organisation appear at the end of the book we've *italicised* its name and used this icon: >>>