

HANDBOOK ON PROMOTING DEMOCRACY USING RADIO

IN

RURAL COMMUNITIES OF CAMEROON

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INTRODUCTION

Managing live programs on radio has at no time been an easy business, be it reporting an event or broadcasting a program live. This is because, radio as an instrument for human communication is entirely about talking, that is, using words and human voices to communicate. It is even more difficult when it comes to managing talking on interactive programs. Thousands and even millions of anonymous people out there are listening. They are people whose views and intentions we can hardly know and control in advance. They are free to pop in at any time using the telephone, and “talk out” their points of view, ideas and knowledge on the topic under discussion. An interactive program (talk show) on radio is about discussing issues instantly – asking questions, responding to questions and reacting to a wide variety of issues said on the topic. This means things can go wrong and instantly too as a result of the multiplicity of voices, divergent points of views expressed, and the different ways or styles used to discuss or to argue those issues. At any time, somebody somewhere out there in the “mass” can easily dial in and voice out some nasty talk which can hurt people’s feelings as individuals or groups and seriously damage harmonious living in the community. This can create a boomerang effect by damaging the potentials of radio as instrument for accelerating the democratization process in our communities.

But then, interactive programs on radio have enormous potentials to deepen democratic culture in our society. Interactivity on radio programs sows the seeds of democratic values and practices. Sustaining such programs on air helps democracy to germinate, take root, grow, bloom and blossom as a culture in our communities, especially in our rural communities.

Given the positive and negative potentials of interactive programs as instruments for the popularization of democratic values, it is important that, such programs be handled with a lot of professional diligence. This in turn requires that, presenters acquire a good dose of knowledge and skills on how to conceive, produce and broadcast interactive programs to promote democracy.

This is what this hand book is all about – providing such knowledge and skills for journalists practicing in rural radios in Cameroon.

PART ONE

SOME BASIC VALUES OF DEMOCRACY

Chapter 1: Some Basic Concepts of Democracy

The Problem:

- Our knowledge of basic values of democracy is not enough. As a result, we cannot fully exploit the possibilities that interactive programs provide to promote those values.

Learning objectives

This chapter seeks to enable us understand:

- Meanings of some basic values of democracy such as **elections, participation, human rights and freedoms, governance, the rule of law and patriotism.**
- Some basic things that should be done and should not be done in a democracy.

Learning Goals

- At the end of this chapter, the contents of programs we produce are rich enough to make our listeners know what basic values of democracy are.

1.0 What is democracy?

The term “democracy” comes from the Greek words “demos” and “kratia”. “Demos” means ‘authority’ or ‘rule’. Democracy therefore means “people” and “authority” or ‘rule’. It is a form of rule derived from the people. This to a great extent explains why democracy is popularly defined as “government of the people, by the people, and for the people”.

Democracy consists of four basic values, namely:

- protection of the **human rights** of all citizens,
- **elections** (free and fair elections), for choosing and replacing the government
- **rule of law** in which laws and procedures are applied equally to all citizens
- **participation** of the people as citizens in politics and civic life

1.1 Rights and Freedoms of Citizens

In a democracy, citizens have certain basic rights that the state cannot or should not take away from them. These basic rights include basic freedoms generally considered as the corner stone of democracy. They are:

1.2 Right to Life

The very first right is the right to life, that is, the right to be alive. No one has the right to take away the lives of others.

1.3 Freedom of Speech

In a democracy every citizen has the freedom to speak out on issues of collective interest. This includes the right to inform and be informed. Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) states that, "*everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference" and "everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice"*, **(source.....)** Citizens therefore have the right to say and write what they think.

1.4 Freedom of the Press

Freedom of the press is closely connected to freedom of speech. Freedom of press means the freedom of saying what one wants to say through the newspaper, radio and TV. In Cameroon, we can choose between different sources of news to read in the newspapers, to hear on the radio, to watch on television, and read and watch on the Internet. However, in the state-owned and government-controlled media, press men and women from time to time are limited in what to say and write or show.

There is a related term, "freedom of expression", which means the same thing as freedom of speech and freedom of the press, but which includes the right to carry out a demonstration or protest in accordance with laws in force in the community.

1.5 Advantages of Freedom Speech

Freedom of speech is usually considered as a core value of democracy. It promotes the free **flow of ideas that helps to preserve peace and order**. Without free speech, it would be hard to understand and resolve differences of opinion. Free expression of ideas and opinions facilitate communication. Communication is a particularly important tool in maintaining peace and social cohesion in societies where there are differences of beliefs, cultures, and religion. When there is no freedom to exchange points of views in a community, it becomes very difficult to discuss and resolve problems.

Freedom of speech also brings about **creativity**. When people exchange freely, they learn from each other. The ideas given or received enrich each of the interlocutors.

The enrichment of ideas leads to creativity, and creativity brings about innovations, and innovations in turn bring about progress.

Free exchange of ideas and opinions through radio, TV, Internet, newspaper or face-to-face can help us learn about what other people are doing in the next village, town, region, country, or continent. We may then try what others are doing in our context to improve upon our situation. When there is no freedom of speech, the people's creativity is blocked.

1.6 Religious Freedom

People have the right to have their own beliefs. Everyone is free to choose, worship and practice their religion as they see fit without being intolerant to the beliefs of others.

1.7 Cultural Freedom

Every individual has the right to enjoy their own culture, along with other members of their group, even if their group is a minority. The differences in culture, dress, language, cuisine habits, heritage and religion are tolerated. Such diversity is also, celebrated as strength. Cameroon offers a beautiful example with over 250 ethnic communities and two foreign cultural legacies from England and France. This is why Cameroon is today a bilingual country using English and French as official languages. On account of her cultural diversity, Cameroonians proudly refer to their country as "Africa in Miniature" or "All Africa in One".

In a situation of such diversity, each member of the cultural entity has the right to the same treatment regardless of race, sex, religion, heritage, or economic status. Producing programs on radio intended to promote such diversity is promoting democratic values.

1.8 Economic Freedom

All citizens have economic freedom, that is, the right to buy, sell and trade private property. They also have a right to employment. Giving vital information on local radio through the production of programs which can help young people to have employment is contributing to the promotion of democracy in society.

1.9 Freedom of Association

We have the right to associate with others and to join organizations of our choice, including trade unions or political parties. The radio is promoting democratic practice if it does not deliberately produce programs or give information intended to influence

people join a particular trade union or political party. Radio in a rural community is expected to help people make free choices.

1.10 Freedom of Movement

We are free to move about in the country, and to leave the country. Within the country, as happens in some African countries including Cameroon, too many check points on high ways by security people in times of no security troubles, can constitute a violation of free movement of people. However, in times of crisis such as natural catastrophes, (floods, volcanic eruptions), epidemics, (cholera, meningitis, measles) or war, government can restrict or control the movement of people. The rural radio under such circumstances is expected to work closely with government and other agencies at the local level to ensure the safety of the people.

1.11 Elections

In a democracy, people do not use force to get to power. Power comes from the people. The people are sovereign and free to choose their leaders from several competing parties in free and fair elections. In a democracy, the law prescribes that, free and fair elections guided by the electoral law or laws are organized at regular intervals. Free and fair elections mean that, the whole process of organization is handled by a neutral body which treats all political parties and candidates equally. All parties and candidates must have the right to campaign freely, to present their proposals to the voters both directly and through the mass media, including the media belonging to the state. They must be given equal time space on state media. Voters must be able to vote in secret. There should not be intimidated nor suffer any violence as a result of their choices. In the event of any kind of election disputes, some impartial and independent body has to be there to resolve them.

Elections are very delicate operations that need to be handled with care. Free and fair elections therefore, require a lot of organization, preparation, and training of political parties, electoral officials, and civil society organizations who monitor the process from start to finish.

1.12 The Rule of Law

Democracy is a system of rule by laws, not by individuals. In a democracy, the rule of law protects the rights of citizens, maintains order, and limits the power of government. All citizens are equal under the law. Both government and the people must respect the law. No one may be discriminated against on the basis of their race,

religion, ethnic group, or gender. No one may be arrested, imprisoned, or exiled arbitrarily. If we are detained, we have the right to know the charges against us, and to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to the law. Anyone charged with a crime has the right to a fair, speedy, and public trial by an impartial court.

The law is impartially enforced by courts. The courts are independent of parliament and the government. No ruler, minister, or political party can tell a judge how to decide a case. Office holders cannot use their power to enrich themselves. Embezzlement of public funds is not tolerated. Cases of corruption are severely punished, no matter who is guilty.

Example: *In Cameroon, several anti-corruption institutions exist including the National Anti-Corruption Commission (CONAC). So far, several top government officials including former directors, general managers of state corporations, former ministers, secretaries general of the Presidency of the Republic and even a former Prime minister are in prison under the operation “Epervier”, on charges of embezzlement of public funds.*

1.13 Equality and Equity

All people should be treated fairly in what the country has for its citizens and what citizens have to do for their country. No individual or group should be favored over another person or group.

1.14 Patriotism

Patriotism is the show of love and devotion by citizens for their country and its values. Citizens show their love of country by words or by actions. Standing up during the singing of the national anthem at the start of a sporting event, a school day, or some other national event is just one way of showing patriotism. Generally, Cameroonians are at their patriotic best, when their national football team, the Indomitable Lions is scoring victories in a competition. All citizens are expected to be patriotic.

1.15 Participation

Participation is one of the fundamental values of democracy. The concept means so many things at several levels.

1.16 Participation at the Level of the Individual Citizen

The key role or duty of citizens in a democracy is to participate in public life. They can participate in the following ways.

1.17 Vote and be Voted

Voting and getting voted in elections is a form of participation and an important civic duty for all citizens. They can participate by getting involved in campaigns for a political party or for a candidate. They can also stand as candidate for political office. In a democracy, citizens are free to choose which party to support. They should not be forced or intimidated to join or vote for a particular political party or candidate in political competition. Democracy is stronger when citizens become active members in politics.

1.18 Take Part in Debates on Public Issues

Participation also means debating issues of public interest either through the media and other forums such as attending community meetings, petitioning the government, and even protesting. But, any protest is expected to be carried out following what the law stipulates on protests.

1.19 Militate in Civil Society Organizations

Another vital form of participation comes through active membership in independent, non-governmental organizations, generally referred to as “civil society organizations.” These organizations represent a variety of socio-professional interests: workers, doctors, teachers, lawyers, business owners, religious believers, women, students, human rights activists, environmental activists etc. The members generally carry out development activities for the benefit of the less privileged people in society. They also lobby in favor of the poor or weak by making governments or strong national and international institutions to change policy or take actions which benefit the weak. In a democracy, participation in civic groups should be voluntary. No one should force us to join an organization against our will.

1.20 Support Marginalized Social Groups

Participation also means citizens making or supporting efforts aimed improving the situation of marginalized groups such as women, youths and indigenous people. It is important that women participate fully in politics in order to exercise their democratic rights and responsibilities. They can also participate in civil society activities, especially in domains intended to improve upon their situation as a marginalized social group. Many of such women-focused organizations exist both in the rural and urban areas of

Cameroon. Women's groups are among some of the best organized and the most effective as it is about women talking to women about women's problems. In addition to women, youths and the indigenous people such as the Baka (Pygmy people) and the Mbororos, (nomadic cattle herdsman) are among the marginalized in Cameroon.

1.21 Undertake Community Work

Participation also means exercising the right to work for common good. This means people working together for the welfare of the community or the benefit of all, (e.g. community development projects at the level of the village).

1.22 Play Watchdog role to Enhance Governance

Citizens can participate in efforts to improve the wellbeing of all in the community by expressing their own opinions, views and ideas on issues that affect their lives as individuals and as communities at the local and national levels. By being informed and watchful on public issues, we as citizens can observe the ways our local and national leaders use power. As people who elected their leaders, that is, who gave their leaders the powers to be where they are; we have the right to criticize them, observe how they conduct the business of government, and make suggestions on how to improve for the good of all. We also have the right to vote our leaders and representatives out of office if they deem that, they no longer represent our interests. That is why elected representatives at the national and local levels are accountable to us. They have a duty to respond to our needs and suggestions. The watch dog role we play on our leaders therefore helps to enhance good governance.

Chapter 2: Decentralization, Local Councils and Participation

The Problem

Like “governance”, decentralization is another concept about which many talk, but about which some of us rural radio broadcasters know little. Consequently, we have little chances of conceiving programs that help to popularize participation as a democratic.

Learning objective

- To know the meaning of decentralization as a process which gives citizens the possibility to practice “participation” as a democratic value

Learning goal

- As rural/community radio journalists we attract more listeners by producing quality programs on decentralization with greater mastery of the subject matter.

2.0 Definition of Decentralization

Generally, decentralization means:

- The transfer of authority and responsibility of public functions from the central government to lower levels of the administration, (e.g. creation of new subdivisions, divisions or regions)
- The central government relinquishes certain functions to elected officials e.g. local councils with semi-autonomous powers

2.1 Types of Decentralization

Specialists indicate that there are several types of decentralization. In our context, we are interested in two – administrative and political decentralization.

2.2 Advantages of Administrative Decentralization

In administrative decentralization, the central, regional governments and its agencies transfer the responsibility of planning, financing and management of public functions to local regional governments, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations. Cameroon could be considered a decentralized state in terms of its administrative set up. There are regional, divisional and sub-divisional services. Another example in Cameroon is the transfer of powers by the Cameroon Radio Television

(CRTV) which is a government corporation from the national level in Yaoundé to its ten regional stations across the country.

2.3 Advantages Political Decentralization

This type of decentralization is about how citizens participate in, and influence public decisions that affect them as individuals or communities. It is the kind of decentralization which gives the citizens the possibility to have a say in public affairs either directly or through their elected representatives. In Cameroon local and regional councilors and members of parliament are examples of elected representatives even this is not always quite effective in practice with some services.

2.4 The Advantages of Decentralization

Decentralization has specific advantages.

2.5 Administrative Decentralization

The nearer government institutions and services are to the people, the more the people have access to and benefit from them. In Cameroon, most government services are found at the level of the regions, divisions and subdivisions. In this way, government function is performed by the lowest level.

When government is closer to the people, people are in a better position to hold officials accountable for its successes and failures in the provision of basic services, health, education, electricity, and water supply and, the maintenance of order.

2.6 Political Decentralization

This type of decentralization alone has the following advantages:

2.6.1 Enhances Democracy

Democracy requires that, citizens be able to elect their own local leaders and representatives, and that these local governments have some real power to respond to their needs. Citizens are able to elect their own leaders at the local level. The local council offers a good example as a decentralized unit which can strengthen the democratic values of governance and participation.

To enhance good governance at the local level, the council can make the habit of:

- Involving the public in development project conception, budgeting, execution and evaluation.
- Improving service delivery by reducing delays etc.

- Informing the public regularly on what the council is doing and intends to do
- Respecting of legislation in the award of contracts by respecting the current legislation, e.g. public invitation to tender and decision by a commission
- Empowering the community, especially disadvantaged groups, (designing special initiatives for women, disabled, minorities like Pygmies, Mbororos etc)

2.6.2 Satisfies the Interests of Different Groups Including Minorities

If different ethnic and regional minorities have some autonomy, some ability to determine their own local affairs they feel more secure, and are more willing to accept the authority and legitimacy of the larger national state. Decentralization therefore gives democracy more chances to survive in societies where citizens belong to different ethnic backgrounds. Cameroon is an example of such a society. The country counts over 250 ethnic communities or tribes. In addition, Cameroon inherited two different foreign cultures from former colonial France and England. As a consequence, Cameroon is officially a bilingual country today with English and French as official languages. In a culturally complex country like Cameroon therefore, democracy cannot be a winner-take-all system. When the country is decentralized and some governing responsibilities are given to lower units of authority through the regions and municipalities/councils, the people feel that, the government is closer to them. This strengthens their sense of belonging to the national community.

2.6.3 Enables Sharing of Political Power

Another advantage is that, in a decentralized system, political parties and groups which do not have the opportunity to exercise power at the national level are offered the possibility to do so at the lower level of government. This increases their confidence in and commitment to the political system. Decentralization also enables citizens to develop the feeling that, the system is fair and inclusive. If groups without strong bases of support in the country are completely and indefinitely excluded from any share of political power at any level, they are likely to question and even challenge the legitimacy of the system. In Cameroon fair and transparent elections at the level of the councils can be very important in this respect.

2.7 Decentralization as Arena for Training of New Political Leaders

Generally, it is difficult for most citizens, especially the youths to get access to national parliament or the central services of government ministries in Cameroon. They need to start from the local levels. These lower levels of democracy provide a more

accessible means for citizens, especially the youths to become active in public affairs. At these levels, people can question their local officials, monitor what they do, present their interests and concerns, and learn the skills and values of democratic citizenship. In the final analysis, lower levels of elective office can provide an arena for training and recruiting new political leaders, including women and young people.

2.8 The Local Council as a Decentralized Unit

The local council is an example of political decentralization, According to the 1974 Law, a council is a decentralized public authority having the status of a corporate body under public Law. It has a legal personality with financial autonomy

Chapter 3: Principles of Governance

The Problem

Like decentralization, “governance” is another democratic value that is on the lips of governments, politicians and political parties, religious leaders, civil society organizations (NGOs, associations) and international organizations, (Commonwealth La Francophonie). In fact, international donor agencies and financial institutions (IMF, WB) are increasingly asking African countries including Cameroon, to undertake reforms that ensure "good governance" as a condition to obtain aid and loans. But it is a democratic value which even those who propound it do not quite agree on what it concretely means and how it can be practiced.

Many of us know quite little about it, and how it is practiced at the local level. As a result, it becomes difficult for us to conceive and produce programs on governance.

Learning objective

- To make us better understand the various components/principles of governance

Learning goal

- We are able to promote the various aspects or principles of governance through appropriate genres of programs on radio because we have a better understanding of them.

3.1 Definition

Governance is essentially about how public affairs are managed in a structure, an institution, be it public or private. To understand the concept of “governance”, we as citizens can ask this question: *Are public affairs and resources managed in such a way that enables us to have access to basic needs such as health care, quality education, sufficient food, fair justice and personal security?* Are we informed about government business and do we have a say in it? An answer to these questions enables us to understand what governance is, and whether it exists in our society.

Good governance exists where those who manage public affairs make sure that, their management style is **participatory, transparent, accountable, based on consensus efficient and effective**, and **respects the rule of law**. All these concepts are called principles of governance. What do they mean?

3.2 Rule of Law

The principle of the rule of law means laws, rules and regulations in society are fair for all citizens. Concretely, it means law enforcement bodies in Cameroon such as the police, gendarmerie and the courts, treat all citizens without discrimination when enforcing the laws, rules and regulations that govern our society.

3.3 Transparency

This is a key component of governance. A system of management is transparent when citizens are well informed about how public affairs and resources are managed. This requires that, information is produced and simplified for citizens to understand. Such information is also made available through freely accessible channels for all citizens.

Transparency also means, all decisions taken concerning the management of public affairs and resources respect the rules and regulations established by the community. In other words, the management of the council, government services and institutions, execution of government projects at the level of the village, town, region or country by public officials should not be done as if they were personal or family business.

3.4 Responsiveness

Responsiveness means that, public affairs and resources are managed in a way as to meet the needs of the people. What is done is done in **response to the real needs of the people**.

Example: *A health center is expected to serve villagers. But if it is constructed in a place where villagers cannot afford to get there, it means, the decision to do so is not “responsive” to the needs of the people. Some villagers may need water as a number one priority, but government decides to give them a police post. This is not responsive management. It is not therefore good governance.*

Elite politicians in some areas of Cameroon quite often use their political or financial power to divert the location of some development projects to their villages or localities of origin, even if that will not be to the advantage of everybody in the locality. That is irresponsibility, and not good governance.

Responsiveness also means that, public affairs and resources are organized and managed in such a way as **to meet the needs of citizens in the shortest time possible.**

Example: *A health center scheduled to be constructed within 12 months should be completed in 12 months. When the execution of the project goes on and on, it no longer responds to the needs of the people.*

3.5 Consensus

Consensus signifies, citizens are consulted and broad consensus is reached on decisions that when taken will affect them individually or as a group.

Example: *If villagers are consulted on where a health center should be built in their village, the health center cannot be built where it will not possible or difficult for them to get there. The villagers will certainly want it located where it will be easily accessible for everybody.*

3.6 Effectiveness and Efficiency

Effectiveness means public affairs and resources are organized in a way which meets the needs of the people, and, **efficiency** means that, the best use is made of the resources available. This means, they should be no waste of resources which could be human, financial technological, natural and environmental resources. Waste of resources is not an act of good governance.

3.7 Equity and Inclusiveness

This means that, citizens are given equal opportunities to improve upon their wellbeing, and the possibility to exploit their full talents or potentials to improve upon their lives, without obstruction, discrimination or exclusion. Obstructing citizens from using their talents or knowledge for their own progress and the progress of society is not an act of good governance.

Examples: *Job opportunities are opened for all, equal chances for recruitment as civil servants into the public service, admissions into professional schools, equal treatment of files in the public administration and public services are accessible and acceptable to all etc.*

3.8 Accountability

This means that, those who are in charge of the organization and management of public affairs and resources are bound by policy to give an account of, or explain to those who are affected or can be affected when things go well or wrong because of the decisions they take in office. Things can go well or wrong as a result of their decisions and actions taken in their official capacities. When this happens, public officials have to explain to citizens.

Example: *Work on a village health centre scheduled to be completed in 12 months is not completed. At month 13, the person in charge, (government official, contractor etc) should explain why to the public/citizens.*

3.9 Participation

Participation means that, all citizens – men and women, young and old, minority groups such as indigenous people –have the possibility to directly or indirectly formulate and express their ideas, views and positions on issues of importance to them as individual members and groups in the community. They should not only be told about what is to be done, or has been done concerning them and for them. They should have a say in what has to be done before it is done. They can voice their points of view through:

- **Democratic institutions and practices:** e.g. voting and getting voted in fair and transparent elections organized by an independent body either at the national level or local levels (parliament and local councils)
- **Civil society organizations:** e.g. associations, movements, trade unions
- **Liberalized/democratized media facilities:** e.g. rural/community radio, newspaper, social media, (face book), etc.

Chapter 4: Basic Don'ts in Democracy

The Problem

Some journalists practicing in both the rural and urban areas think that because they have the micro-phone, they are authorized to say and do anything on air. They are wrong. Such thinking leads them into doing things that do more harm than good to democracy.

Learning objective

- To reduce the possibility for journalists to use their positions to mislead citizens to do say and do things that can harm democracy and the country.

Learning goal

- Responsible (citizenship) journalism is practiced on rural radios across the country.

4.0 Why Don'ts in Democracy?

There are basic rights and freedoms that every citizen has to enjoy, and no one, not even the government has the right to take them away from the citizen. But in practice, no nation grants absolute freedom to its citizens. Democracy does not give the citizen the license to say and do anything in the name of rights and freedoms. This is because, if a nation does so, there will be chaos. This would leave citizens unprotected and the nation will not be capable of protecting its secrets. Democracy is neither a no-man's land nor free-for all land. It is an imperative to protect the nation and democracy by restricting some freedoms. This means that, if democracy is to work, citizens must not only participate and exercise their rights or enjoy their freedoms. They must also respect certain principles and rules of conduct that can help to strengthen democracy. There are therefore things that we have to do, and others that we do not have to do as patriotic citizens.

4.1 Protecting Country and Democracy

The don'ts of democracy include the following:

- **Practice of hate speech:** speech or acts intended to hurt somebody on the basis of the person's tribe (ethnic hatred), religion and culture.

- **Speech that incites people to violence:** this means using “fighting words” or the kind of language that can cause public violence and thus disrupt public peace or “public order”.
- **Speech or acts that can cause danger to ones country during war:** e.g. giving information to the enemy of one’s country in times of war.
- **Speech or acts that support terrorism/banditry in one’s country:** e.g. providing shelter/cover to bandits or terrorists, or withholding information about criminals and criminal activities from security forces.
- **Revealing state secrets or classified information** such as disclosing number of soldiers, types and quantities of arms a country has etc.
- **Acts that violate economic freedoms**
 - **Violation of copy rights:** piracy of works of art (music, books, films).
 - **Violation of trademarks:** using the names of genuine/authentic product on fake products such as on medicinal, cosmetic products etc.
- **Blasphemy/Profanity:** speech or acts that show a lack of respect for a religion, God, or holy things.
- **Obscenity/pornography:** language, behavior, acts connected with sex in a way that are offensive to people, such as “naked dressing” by girls/women, writing, photos, videos of sexual acts etc.
- **Uttering threats against people** such as: “I’ll kill you! I’ll deal with you!”
- **Lying that can cause a crowd to panic:** (e.g. yelling “Fire! Fire!” in a crowd, football stadium, night club, etc when there is really no fire).
- **Speech or acts that damage the reputation of somebody (defamation),** e.g. writing in a newspaper, saying on radio, showing on TV something negative to damage the honor, dignity and the reputation of someone.

PART TWO

USING RADIO TO PROMOTE DEMOCRATIC VALUES

Chapter 5: Radio as Instrument for the Promotion of Democratic Values

The problem

Some of us as journalists practicing in the rural communities are already making significant contributions to the democratization process in Cameroon through the programs we produce. But, sometimes we do so without:

- Knowing the specific types of program genres that we use or we can use to accelerate the process
- Knowing the specific democratic values and practices that we are promoting or can promote through our programs.
- Being aware or understanding the capacity and efficacy of radio as the instrument we are using or can use to popularize democratic values and practices

The consequence of such ignorance or under estimation is that, we may not be able to:

- Exploit to the fullest, the program genres that can deepen democracy in our communities.
- Put the democratic values that we have to promote in our programs as a priority
- Use the radio to the fullest to make democracy take full roots in our communities

Learning objectives

To make us identify and understand:

- the strengths that make radio a unique medium of communication
- radio program formats that gives radio that unique capacity as a tool for the promotion of democratic values and practices
- some of the democratic values generally promoted through radio, and the specific program genres often used

Learning goal

- At the end of this chapter, we contribute significantly to the growth of a democratic culture in our communities by producing more interesting interactive programs with more listeners participating.

5.0 The Strengths of Radio

Radio is an essential medium of mass communication. Despite the emergence of television, Internet, and other media which have the advantage that the audience can see the images of what they hear about, radio has maintained a position as an invaluable channel for communicating ideas, information and messages, especially in rural communities of Cameroon. Our choice of radio in the promotion of democracy has been inspired by the following reasons:

- Radio sets are available on the market, including markets found in the most remote villages of Cameroon
- Radio sets are not expensive. Almost everyone can afford to buy a set
- Today, frequency modulation radio (FM) technology integrates miniature radio sets to mobile phone sets and makes radio available and affordable to citizens at all levels of society
- Radio carries information and messages to everyone, including those who cannot read and write.
- Radio has the capacity of reaching out to very large audiences in the furthest localities possible at the same time
- The rural radio is located in the community, and is therefore easily reachable for the local people. They can walk on foot, take a taxi, motor bike or drive to the radio house and take part in a live program.
- The rural radio is run by the people and for the people as it enables them to express their thoughts, views, and ideas in their own voice (language) and in their own style, that is, in their own culture
- The programs broadcast on rural radio are more likely to make an immediate impact because the people feel that the radio is in their community and for them
- Radio still enjoys a great deal of the myth of credibility in rural communities of Cameroon. What is heard on radio is in most cases taken for gospel truth by the rural folks.

5.1 Radio Program Formats that Generally Promote Democratic Values

There are radio program genres that by their very nature promote democratic values and practices, (phone-ins and radio drama) and forums that can be transformed into program formats that promote democracy.

5.1.1 Phone-ins/call-back

Phone-ins or call-by telephone or interactive programs are essentially about 'taking talk to the people and the people talking back' using the telephone and the voice or the telephone and an SMS. In some phone-ins, listeners are live in the studio to take part in discussions. That is the real value and power of talk shows – making them interactive. We engage listeners and we expect that at the end, they gain new information and new understanding of the issues discussed.

Phone-in programs generally consist of:

- a single journalist/broadcaster who without a guest in the studio encourages listeners to call in using telephone or text messages to express their ideas and views on a particular issue of public interest
- a group of 2, 3, journalists (with a lead coordinator) in the studio who encourage listeners to participate via telephone and SMS, and discussions on issues of public importance. The guest or guests explain the issue(s) and answer questions from both the hosts and listeners. The advantage with a team of journalists in studio group coordination is that, in the absence of a caller the group can engage in a discussion.

Examples: *Moring Safari in English and CRTV M'accompagne on the state-owned National Radio Station Yaoundé – Cameroon.*

5.1.2 Radio Drama

Radio drama is equally a talking program, but of its own class. In drama, characters created in a fictional world are made to talk out and express the views, experiences and concerns of people in the real world (community) on various issues of collective interest. Radio drama is not a talk show, but, it is participatory, though to a limited extent.

5.1.3 Forums that can be transformed into Program Formats that Promote Democratic Values

There are formats of communication which can conveniently be converted into talk shows on radio. They are **round table** and **panel discussions** which more and more broadcasters in Cameroon are transforming into talk shows.

5.1.3.1 Roundtable Discussion

A **round table** is a form of face-to-face group discussion. Participants agree on a specific topic to discuss. They sit at a round table. The table is necessarily round to avoid quarrels as to who of the participants in the discussion is more “important”, or who is of higher or lower status. Roundtable discussions are facilitated by a host whose job it is to stimulate discussion around a given topic. Everybody has a say.

Participants in round table discussion are expected to be open, honest, and direct with others around the table; always showing mutual respect for the opinions of others. They can discuss all kinds of issues, share opinions, or just brainstorm on a matter. However, discussions generally focus on one specific issue, a problem in order to find a solution to it.

5.1.3.2 Panel Discussion

A panel forum is basically a discussion on a particular subject or issue. The panelists, who are generally experts or experienced people in the topic under discussion, carry out the discussion in a very conversational manner. They give out their expert opinion or ideas on the issue or problem in a way that the audience is able to hear and understand. The discussion provides an opportunity for the audience/public (present in a hall for example) to ask them questions. The questions asked generate further discussion. In the question-answer exchange, panelists share their knowledge and expertise with the audience. Topics in panel discussions can focus on community issues such as health, agriculture, livestock, as well as any other developmental issues. A panel discussion therefore helps the audience further increase their understanding of the issues being discussed and the positions of others on those issues.

Panel discussions can also be organized live from a radio studio for the general public. The listeners can then be given the chance to ask questions to the panelists through telephone, SMS, and email for more detailed explanation on issues they may not have understood well or not all. In this way, a panel discussion becomes a talk show.

5.1.4 Debate

A debate is basically a formal and structured argument on a topic agreed upon by the parties involved. Debating is a team event and two teams are often involved. It requires concerted and coordinated team thinking. What counts in a debate is the overall position of the team, and not the position of a member of the team. One team argues for, and the other argues against the topic. We say, one team argues for the affirmative, (that is, “why the topic is true”) while the other argues for the negative, (that is, “why the topic is false”. There is no midway position on a topic in a debate

In a debate, the overall intention of each party is to persuade the others that, their position is the proper/correct one. Each team will present points in favor of their case. They will also criticize the arguments presented by the other team. This is what makes a debate slightly different from a discussion.

5.2 Differences between Debate and Round Table and Panel Discussions

In a discussion, we do not necessarily have to be persuasive, or seek to convince the others. The main aim in a discussion, (round table and panel discussion) is to express constructive ideas on a given issue or series of issues. In a debate there is only one issue as object of argument, and that issue/topic is discussed in a formal

manner, that is, in accordance with strict rules of conduct. Arguments are conducted using specific techniques. This is why, in a debate, we may at times find ourselves arguing the opposite of what we believe in.

Usually in debate, the winner is the one who has presented the strongest case. However, the overall purpose of speaking in a debate is more important than the specific result of the debate, that is, which team has won and which team has not won. That is less important than the fact of having identified an issue and examined it from both the positive and negative perspectives.

Debates in the classical format are not talk show programs as they do not call for audience participation.

5.3 What Radio Program Formats for the Promotion of what Democratic Values?

Different radio program genres can be used to promote specific sets of democratic values.

5.4 Phone-ins

Programs in which listeners call live to participate promote:

- **Citizen's right of access to information**, ("right to know") on issues in the community
- **Economic and development rights** through the production and free circulation of vital information on economic and development issues, (health, agriculture, education, prices of goods on local markets, employment opportunities etc) for everyone in the community.
- **Freedom of association** by making sure that, we do not use interactive programs as arenas of propaganda for interest groups to influence people join a particular trade union or political party for example. Radio in a rural community, is expected to provide balanced or objective information in their programs to help people make free choices.
- **Fair and transparent elections** by promoting the values of fairness, disseminating objective and practical information on what the citizens should do and should not do before, during, and after an election in order that, everything about the election is conducted in a fair, transparent and peaceful manner.
- **Giving voice to the voiceless** especially in many traditional societies where women and youth, ethnic and linguistic minorities, are quite often ignored in community affairs, and the idea of collectively pursuing women's rights and empowerment is not often considered as priority of the community. Interactive

programs therefore provide opportunities for women to participate and “talk to women about women”. This is providing a voice for the voiceless to express their views and troubles specific to them, thereby reminding people and the government that their problems need special attention and consideration. The radio therefore contributes to a social consensus which requires that, the injustices against the voiceless ought to be addressed so as to uphold **human rights, equity and justice** in the community

- **Freedom of speech** by giving local people an arena to air their views without fear of persecution
- **Governance** by providing an arena for local people in poor and rural communities who have no way to complain when exploited by local authorities and politicians to air their grievances by:
 - playing the role of **community watchdog (community surveillance)** through critical public discussion and questioning public figures (politicians and government officials) on the way they manage public matters
 - making government officials to be aware of public discontent on certain issues or certain sectors and thereby reinforcing **accountability and transparency** for this can allow them to rectify their errors.
- **Decentralization and participation** in decision-making process, by providing a public platform on which everybody can express points of view, ideas, and knowledge on matters of collective importance. In this way, people secure an opportunity to participate in the formulation of decisions on issues that affect them as individuals and as a group
- **Dialogue on air** for people from all sectors and categories as they create a diversity of voices and opinions on air. Such diversity of voices may be ethnic, linguistic or religious. Diversity necessarily brings about differences in many respects. But, expression of differences is a necessary and acceptable practice and for a democracy to survive and grow. After all, it has been said, democracy is dialogue. Call back programs on radio therefore are arenas for the promotion of dialogue in and between communities.
- **Cultural rights and freedoms** through conception and broadcast of contents which reflect and promote local culture through music, dance, and theatre. Using

the home language as language of broadcast strengthens a sense of belonging, identity and consideration in the community. This makes for harmonious living. The fact of people living in harmony constitutes an essential ingredient of democracy. Community radios in Cameroon use several home languages. This is good for democracy.

5.5 Roundtable and Panel Discussions

Round table and panel discussions are not genres of radio programs. But, they are interactive as people are able to talk and exchange ideas, views, and knowledge.. They are interactive. When round table and panel discussions are broadcast, and people given the chance to participate in the discussion either during or after the round table or panel, they promote the same democratic values that can be promoted through phone-in.

5.6 Debate

It is difficult to transform a debate into program in which listeners can call in to participate in the argument and counter argument. But, we can use the debate as a forum to popularize democratic values and practices we want by selecting topics that deal with constraints to the progress of democracy in our community. Topics on **gender, minorities and human rights** issues are quite often linked to constraints to the promotion of democratic values.

Debates also contribute indirectly to the promotion of democratic values. The fact that in a debate two parties are exchanging on a topic from **different viewpoints, contradicting each other** and the **civility** they are expected to observe in the use of language in the exchange are all practices that promote the growth of a democratic culture.

We can broadcast live a debate in the studio, or as a recorded special program.

5.7 Radio Drama

By its very nature, radio drama promotes:

- **Dialogue on air** through the fact that, actors express diverse perceptions, contrary points of view and ideas
- **Access to information and knowledge sharing** for development through the ideas, points of view and facts expressed by different actors on specific themes.

- **transparency** and **accountability** in the management of public affairs by using satire to denounce abuse of power by local politicians, corruption and embezzlement of public funds by government officials
- **development** by informing, educating and raising awareness on certain issues in society through satirizing human behavior for positive social change using the entertainment component of radio drama.
- Awaken the conscience of public officials and politicians to their wrongs
- **Participation** through different characters having different aspirations and using different strategies to achieve them. The final outcome of victory or failure for them is a reflection of democratic practice in which all voices are heard and contradictory viewpoints are tolerated.
- **Freedom of expression and human rights** through characters who in the fictional world freely express their thoughts and opinions on issues raised, and who also go about and about frantically collecting information from multiple sources to overcome challenges obstructing them from attaining their set ambitions. In so doing, they promote some basic human rights such as right of access to information and right to inform and be informed.
- **Rights of marginalized groups/minorities** through the choice of themes which directly deal with what should be done or should not be done to protect the rights of people identified under such groups
- **Cultural rights and freedoms** through the use of local cultural features such as song and dance, proverbs etc. in radio play

Chapter 6: Choosing Topics for Interactive Programs

The Problem

An interactive program is first and foremost for the listeners. Some of us think that a topic which can be interesting to us can necessarily make sense to the listeners. We get it wrong. For a topic to capture and sustain the interest of listeners and even the guest(s), it should contain some specific qualities. In addition, the topic is equally interesting if only we know how to process it for discussion. A poorly processed topic leads to a dull, uninteresting and ineffective program on air.

Learning objectives

- To develop techniques of how to identify qualities of a topic that can make an interesting interactive program
- To master techniques of how to treat a topic for an interesting interactive program

Learning goal

At the end of this chapter we produce participatory programs that are more interesting and effective in the promotion of democratic values and practices.

6.0 Choosing a Topic

The type of topic that can make an interesting program may vary from one community to the other because; communities hardly have the same aspirations and concerns. But, certain qualities in a topic can be interesting to communities everywhere any time. They include:

6.0.1 Proximity

Generally, the underlying factor that determines the relevance of a topic for the listeners is its proximity. By proximity in this specific context, we mean the following:

6.0.1.1 Utility/need Satisfaction

The topic should touch on issues that are readily useful or relevant to the lives of people as individuals or members of a community. Listeners readily tune in to discussion on topics which directly and immediately touch on their needs and their aspirations.

Example: *Topics on issues like health, employment/unemployment, security, money, agriculture, livestock, fishing, etc. generally entice people because they are issues of life, livelihoods, and need satisfaction.*

6.0.2 Knowledge/Substance

For the listeners, the topic should have substance, that is, it should be one which contains or carries something new, something the listeners can in the end take home as a plus in terms of knowledge. Experience shows that, our listeners generally want to understand why things happen (or have happened) the way they do in our communities. They also would want to understand why people behave in a particular way. Topics which inform, educate and provide knowledge in a discussion generally capture listeners.

6.0.3 Sense of Place

The topic which we choose should also be about where we are. Generally, a topic which deals with something that is unique to, or rooted in, our community can be more exciting than one which deals with issues far away. Topics with the colour and flavor of our local culture are preferable. People easily identify with them. If it is a problem, it should be one being experienced by the people in the community.

Example: *Talking about a draughts makes more sense to the people living in the semi-desert village of Waza in Far North Region of Cameroon than talking to them about non-forest products in Mamfe or Yokadouma, when they have never seen a forest let alone a tropical forest. Again, it is more relevant to the people of Waza to discuss problems related to eco-tourism and wild life, because Waza has one of the richest game parks in Africa. Their interests are directly or indirectly connected to that park. Any radio program on the park will certainly interest them.*

Sense of place also refers to **sense of geography**. A topic that makes references to known names of, sites, streets, villages, towns, streams, hills etc. within the community readily hooks the listeners.

6.0.4 Broader Perspective

It is true that for a topic to be relevant, it should be sufficiently based on local content. However, it can also be a topic which provides a broader perspective for the local people. This means that, it could be a topic dealing with a broader issue, or an issue outside of the community that can make listeners better understand their own issues at the local level.

Example: *A topic on how the local people in Kivu in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (RDC) participate in the management of the Kirunga National Park broadcast on Sava FM in Mora will certainly interest the people of Waza, because it gives them a new perspective to the management of a park like theirs.*

The topic sounds so far, yet so near because of the commonality of interests between the people of Kivu in RDC and Waza in Cameroon. The people of Waza will be eager to listen to a discussion on the topic because they would want to know how parks are managed elsewhere. Though far away, such a topic therefore has local ramifications.

6.0.5 High Definition

By high definition we mean, the topic should be that which can be clearly defined, explained and made understandable to everybody. Topics in some domains like ozone layer; global warming, etc. can be complex and highly complicated to handle for both journalists and guests in a participatory program. We are not however suggesting that, complex issues should not be selected for discussion. However, for any topic we choose, we should be able to narrow it down by into a focus statement that clearly states what, why, who, and where.

Example: *Topic on “Girl Child Education” can be narrowed down to a focus statement as follows: “70% of parents in our community do not want to send their girl children to school”*

The topic fits into the principles of clarity or high definition as follows:

- What? = Girl child education
- Who? = Some parents

- Where? = In our community
- Why? = subject/focus of discussion

The program has to give an answer to the “why” question. The desire to know “why” is what attracts listeners to a program and to stay tuned to it. In this particular case, the listeners who know why some parents do not want to send their girl children to school will be eager to call in and participate in the program and those who do not know will stay on to know why. Any topic we cannot narrow down to a focus statement can be difficult and may not make interesting discussion on a talk show.

Another element of high definition in a topic is its degree of **contextual importance**. Is it a topic that is readily clear in the minds of listeners because it is based on what obtains in their known physical, cultural and conceptual environments? Is it a lived experience for them, or that which can be lived by them? Any topic that lacks contextual significance is perhaps not worth the trouble choosing it for discussion.

6.1 Processing Topics

Framing or angling means giving a “central organizing idea” which “provides meaning” to a story or a topic on radio, (Franklin, 2005, p. 85). This is to say that, when we select a topic, we should give it an angle from which we would like the listeners to perceive the issue to be discussed. This means we frame the topic in a way as to promote a particular perspective. If we take topic on “Girl Education” above, we can give several orientations or angles to it. To do so, we first have to dissect or break it down into its constitutive components. We can take the following steps:

6.1.1 State the Topic: “Topic: Girl Child Education”

6.1.2 Identify the Problem in the Topic

Any problem with girl child education? *Yes: 70% of the girl children in our community do not go to school since the Ndu Tea Estate was privatized.* What aspect of the problem as identified, do we want to highlight? In other words, what angle of perception do we want the listeners to have of the problem?

6.1.3 Breakdown the Problem

To dissect the problem; *Many girl children in our community do not go to school*; we can use the 5 Ws + H technique of *where, who, when, what, which and how* as follows:

- Where? = In “our community”. This is vague. In the “Adamawa region” is clearer
- Who? = Some parents refuse to send their girl children to school)
- Why? = Several factors/reasons can explain why
- When? = For several decades of years today
- Which of the aspects as presented above, do we want to highlight? Is it the where, who, why, or when aspect? Why do we prefer to highlight that particular angle to the others?

Whatever aspect we select to frame or angle the program on, depends on what we want to achieve at the end of the program. If we intend to **sensitize** the parents, we can elaborate on the “who” question, and if we want to understand the factors that obstruct our girl children from going to school, we can hook our program on the “why.” It is important to note that, the fact of angling on one aspect does not exclude the other aspects from being discussed in the program. Other aspects can be discussed but more emphasis is laid on the chosen aspect of the topic. It is from this chosen aspect that, listeners are expected to draw their take-home message.

Generally when topics are well framed, they are much easier for the guest and the presenter to handle. It also makes the listeners to stay within the topic and not floating to all directions in the discussion. The absence of focus or angle for a topic damages the tempo of the program and can get listeners on their nerves. Consequently, they can easily “zap off”.

6.1.4 Select Topics with Inherent Democratic Values

The types of topics we choose and the way we frame them, can be a very effective way of promoting democracy in our programs. First we have the liberty to select topics that are directly linked to democratic values and practices. Second, we can tilt any topic to be discussed in a way that directly brings out information and messages which promote democratic values. Discussion on topics on the **marginalization of women, indigenous people, young people including the girl child, human rights, and freedoms, elections, decentralization, councils** etc. from any angle promote

democratic values. But most importantly, we can frame any topic in the direction of the promotion of democratic values.

Example: Topic: *“Agriculture in the West Region of Cameron”*.

If we frame this topic from the perspective of access to land, credit facilities for marginalized groups, (women, youths, etc.), we would be talking about issues related to such democratic values as equity, gender, human rights, development rights and justice.

Topic: *“Bauxite mining in Cameroon”*:

If we frame this topic from the point of transparency, we should be talking directly about governance, and other values like citizen’s right of access to information, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency equity and inclusiveness, accountability and participation.

Chapter 7: Main Actors in Interactive Programs on Radio

The Problem

An interactive program is quite a complicated format. For us to produce it successfully, we need to plan carefully, make correct choices and selections, and manage key actors including listeners on air. The biggest challenge in the production of this type of program is therefore getting presenters, production assistants, studio technicians and guests with appropriate qualities and talents.

Learning objective

- To identify what the presenter, production assistant and studio technician should do and should not do, as well as what, guests or resource persons on interactive programs should be.

Learning goals

- At the end, we as a team of performers acquire appropriate qualities, produce excellent programs that propagate democratic values and practices.

7.0 Ideal Qualities of Guest/Resource Person

We can have a relevant topic, we can have the aptitude to manage a talk show in the studio, but, if we do not have a good guest, all of that may not necessarily make an interesting and useful program.

For a talk show to be a real “show” capable of capturing and sustaining the attention of listeners and making a desired impact on them, the guest should possess an assuring profile. The guest should therefore be:

7.1 A Good Talker

The program is a talk show, and should logically fit well with a guest who meets the “good talker” standard. A good talker means a good communicator. To communicate effectively, requires that the guest be eloquent, be able to express ideas clearly, concisely and with some authority. If the guests fail to communicate effectively, they will fail to transmit information and knowledge. If they cannot transmit information and knowledge to listeners and receive spontaneous feedback from them, it means the purpose of the talk show has not been fully achieved.

On the other hand, if the guest masters the language used, is assuring in tone, then, this can easily convince the listeners and entice them to join in the discussion and share ideas or knowledge.

7.2 Master of Subject Matter

The guest could be a good talker, but good talking is not all that is required to make an interesting interactive program on radio. It also means a mastery of the subject matter. The guest is the resource persons, the able consultant on the subject. To master the subject matter does not necessarily depend on the level of education of the guest. Some people who have worked for long in certain professions and have acquired years of experience may master certain issues in that profession better than so called specialists, especially those who are young in the profession. This is not equivalent to saying that young professionals cannot make interesting guests. They could just be the right people to be invited for a talk show because they possess knowledge that is a la page, (fresh and current).

Mastery of subject matter includes having a good knowledge of the socio-cultural, economic and political environments of the listeners. This makes it possible for the guest to pick examples, allusions, and comparisons that are familiar to the listeners, and thus facilitates their understanding of the topic under discussion

In fact how much knowledge the guests has of the issue under discussion, determines the success or failure level of the program. It is therefore important for us to select guests who master the subject well. This means we should know our guests – their level of education, specialty and package of experience in the topic selected for the program.

7.3 Good Educator

The main goal of a radio interactive program on radio is to give listeners a take-home message at the end of the program that can help them advance as individuals or as communities. The program therefore plays an educative role. For the program to be effective in playing that role, the guest has to be an educator in the studio. This means he/she has to adopt a humble tone should not be pedantic and arrogant in style. They should be able to bring the listeners to understand the message in the topic by explaining things clearly and simply, giving lots of examples from the immediate environments of the listeners. Taking on the posture of educator in the studio for a guest is not to take on the airs of a know-all master. It is about explaining what one knows best in the simplest way possible.

7.4 Self-Master

Being a guest on an interactive program can be quite challenging intellectually, psychologically and emotionally. The guest could be a good speaker, quite knowledgeable in the topic under discussion, an able communicator and educator. But, all of that put together may not necessarily make him succeed on the program if he lacks a high sense of sangfroid. Some listeners go out of the way to tickle and even provoke the guest, by either challenging their knowledge of the subject matter, or using the opportunity to settle petit personal scores with them. This happens quite often. In such circumstances, mature guests just need to keep their calm. They need not blow out of themselves on air. Doing so will devalue their expert status and put their maturity to question. They should be able to rise above anger.

Whenever possible therefore, we should go in for guests who are capable keeping their calm even under the most emotionally and psychologically exacting circumstances.

7.5 Other Considerations Concerning Guests

In addition to the intrinsic qualities of the resource persons/guests invited for an interactive, there are other considerations that have to be taken into account, because they can positively or negatively affect the overall quality of the program.

7.5.1 Number of Guests

How many guests are necessary for a talk show (interactive) program? There may be no standard number of guests required for it. However, one thing is clear; a crowd of guests is not necessary in the studio. When there are too many guests, the program tends to lack punch and spontaneity because, it takes too long for each guest to speak or reply to a question. Listeners are likely to forget who said what. In addition, it is difficult for the presenter to manage such a diversity of viewpoints. The program tends therefore to be slow in rhythm and unclear in focus.

Generally one guest or two and not more than three can be interesting. It is even more interesting when the different guests demonstrate a mastery of the subject matter and have contradictory views about it, or give their expert knowledge on it from various perspectives.

7.5.2 Human Interest Guests

Generally, the logic of bringing more than one guest in the studio to discuss the same topic is to get them examine the topic from different perspectives according to their different areas or levels of interests.

Example: *Floods hit some localities of the Far North Region of Cameroon. Much property including farmlands, herds of livestock are destroyed. Thousands of people are rendered homeless. We decide to produce an interactive program on the floods on Radio Dana in Yagoua, or on FM Kousserie, (radio stations found in the affected areas).*

This type of topic requires that, we should necessarily bring in a “human interest guest”, that is, a victim of the floods as one of the guests. The testimonies of the victim-guest on how they as the directly affected population are coping with their new situation give the program an enriching human interest value. Academics, politicians, local government officials etc., can be brought into the discussion after the testimony to add depth of knowledge on the situation.

The human interest aspects in any program quite often attract and hold listeners to the program. In this particular case, talk on issues touching on how the victims are being treated, and the way post-disaster management of the situation is carried out by government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies, touches directly on democratic values like governance and human rights.

7.6 Ideal Qualities of Presenter/host: Chief actor

The presenter of a talk show is the main actor or chief performer of the “show. The success or failure of the program is over 70% dependent on the abilities of the presenter to manage the program in the studio. The job of a presenter is therefore central to a talk show. For an interactive program to make a positive impact, the presenter should be able to:

7.6.1 Carryout Sufficient Research on the Topic

We cannot produce an interesting and useful program on a topic if we do not have a basic knowledge of it. Adequate research on a topic before building it into a program is absolutely necessary. We can google on the internet, read relevant documents and consult experts to obtain material which will make us understand the topic better. A good understanding of the topic logically makes us to produce a more

interesting and useful program. This is also going to make our guest not appear as our teacher on air. We should not allow the guest carry us to any direction on the program because we know very little or nothing at all about the topic under discussion.

7.6.2 Develop Interviewing Skills

The main role of the host/presenter is to help the guest through skillful way of asking questions to bring out all there is to know about a topic. Interactive programs consist essentially of asking questions and receiving answers. Hosts ask questions either to guests/experts/resource/ persons/ panelists or to listeners. Listeners also ask questions them. To manage an interactive program and make it interesting and effective, the presenter has to have the capacity to ask question correctly. How can we go about this?

7.6.3 Ask Open-ended Questions

We should not ask the type of questions that call for simple “yes” or “no” answers. This kind of yes-no question-answer exchange can only bore listeners and create "dead" air space. We are supposed to allow the guests in the studio answer the questions in their own way. The questions should therefore be open-ended. If one word answers are produced, ask follow up questions for elaboration. This means we have to listen to what the guest is saying very attentively so that our next question can be based on the previous answer if appropriate. This will generate a meaningful, interesting and effective conversation.

7.6.4 Use W Questions Format

A technique basic to the practice of journalism is the constant use of what is usually referred to as the W questions format. Most questions journalists use in information gathering/interviews begin with W in English such as “why, what, which, when”. Generally, the “how” question is added to complete the format. Questions that respect this format require full answers. The answers can hardly be short.

7.6.5 Use Language Steamers

We could still get more elaborate answers from the quest/resource person/expert by using language techniques such as **steamers**. These are phrases/expressions which are used to push or steam the guest to keep on talking. Some steamersinclude:

- “That is interesting; tell us more”
- “Really?”
- And then? And so?

- What was going through in your mind when.....?
- “Is the situation so bad/good?”
- “Could you talk more about that?”
- "Any example?" (When a guest starts talking in the abstract)
- Pick out the most interesting word in their last answer like "dead?", if there is mention of the word in the last answer to push the speaker to say more on the death.

7.6.6 Do not ask Several Questions at a Time

Ask only one question at a time. More than one question asked at a go may only help to confuse the guest. Several questions asked at once forces the guest to hurry over answers, or answer them superficially. Keep questions short. They keep the conversation moving. You have to ask challenging questions. The audience expects it.

7.6.7 Use Language Carefully

As presenters, the precise words we use determine whether our questions help generate more knowledge or information from the experts or resource persons. Furthermore, we should be careful in the way we use words when discussing issues in certain domains – religion, tribe, gender and minority issues etc. In Cameroon, the use of words or expressions such, “gada mayo “mouton”, “anglo”, “Bamenda”, “chop broke pot” “nkwa”, “Bami”, “Pygmee” etc. can inflame more than inform. At are more general level, we avoid words such as ‘devastated’ or ‘destitute’ or ‘terrorized’ because those words take the side of those who see themselves as victims. We try not to use labels such as ‘extremist’, ‘terrorist’, ‘fanatic’ or ‘fundamentalist’ which demonize one group. We can identify people or groups by the name they call themselves.

7.6.8 Manage the Interview to be Conversational

We should make the interview sound as if we are sitting in the local snack bar, or in our home having a conversation with the "expert". A good conversational interview involves discussions, not questions that are shot at the quest like bullets. Questioning should be made in an orderly and logical manner so that, listeners can follow the conversation and arguments. We should sound spontaneous in the program.

7.6.9 Develop Critical Listening Skills

Presenters need to carry out very challenging tasks. They must **listen, clarify, synthesize and reframe**. We have to listen carefully to make sure the meanings are clear. Mixed messages, incoherent statements and incomplete thoughts either from the

callers or the guests themselves should be clarified. We can do this by re-phrasing and reframing declarations, sentences, statements and approaching the issue from another angle so that the guest can elaborate further on it.

When we listen carefully to what the ordinary people calling are talking about, we can formulate questions from there for the guest. Careful listening also makes it easy for us to identify, synthesize and articulate public opinion based on the calls of the listeners. Again we have to listen patiently to find key information in complicated answers and facts so as to simplify things for the listeners if we can. If we cannot, we throw back the question in a more simplified way to the guest. When we listen carefully, we can be able to jot down notes. Notes guide us to ask follow up questions, which in turn guide the guest not to go off-track, and to bring the guest who has already gone off-rail back into the discussion.

7.6.10 Develop Techniques to Bring Guest back on Track

Some guests may talk out of the central issue. Remember time is limited, and we can easily lose listeners if we allow guests go off track for long. The guest should be tactfully brought back on track using expressions like, “coming back to what we were saying”, “coming back to the main issue” and “as concerns the main issue” etc. These are all polite linguistic techniques to get back the guest on rail.

7.6.11 Create an Admirable Radio Personality

We should be able to build an admirable radio personality such that, people would always want to listen to us. This means, we have to be: articulate, confident, convincing, knowledgeable, broadminded, unbiased, and self-controlled to handle situations of heated arguments and counter arguments which can easily go out of hand. On air, we should be able to allow for diversity of opinions, build a balanced and courteous conversation, and highlight human interest and relevance to public opinion, to show that we care. We should sound humble in tone and, be respectful to listeners. A good presenter should avoid using the expression “I” during meetings with other members of the production team. We should be ready to learn, admit any genuine shortcomings of ours, knowing that nobody knows everything, and that, we learn every hour of every day of our lives. Even more, we should just be nice people on air knowing that, the public is listening and we need to capture and keep that public under our spell.

7.6.12 Be Optimistic

In spite of the challenges we do face in producing talk shows, we should develop a positive and optimistic attitude on air by directing discussion towards the positive aspects instead of just focusing on the negatives. In the same light, it is important that, on air we refrain from any talk which can exaggerate differences and inflame conflict. It is our responsibility to calm fierce emotions when they do explode on air. We can use humor for example, to do this.

We can also be optimistic by encouraging reflection on issues that seem to be intractable even when they have been discussed about on a radio program. All around us cannot just be gloom and doom. There is always a soft spot to any challenge. That is why, it is always important that, the last question we ask our guest or guests should be that which gives a forward-looking answer, be it positive or negative. This means a hope-carrying answer from the guest or at least, a question which calls for further reflection on the issue discussed.

7.7 Production Assistant: what to do, what not to do

The production assistant takes care essentially of the practical aspects of production at all stages. They also link the production team to guests/resource persons, and the listeners to the program on air.

7.8 At Pre-production Stage

- Keeps guest bank document
- Prepares the control sheet of the program
- Contacts guests and takes appointments with them
- Receives guests in the guest room or facility (if any) before they get into the studio
- Keeps the guests at ease as they wait, (e.g. serve coffee or tea to guests if available)
- Reminds guests briefly on the topic in the guest room (if any)
- Briefs guests on studio manners (that is, how the guests should conduct themselves in the studio, what they should do and what they should not do: e.g. their sitting positions in front of the microphone, use of head phones, how to manage a cough or sneeze in the studio, what to do with personal mobile phone sets while in the studio etc)

- Get all gap filler material ready before program begins (music or any relevant written information, ideas and opinions), that can easily be used by the host to fill unforeseen situations of silence on air.

7.9 At Stage of Program on Air

The most challenging moment in the job of the production assistants consists of managing calls from listeners. They receive all calls from listeners before channeling them to the studio through the technician. They are main link persons between the presenter and guests in the studio and the listeners.

7.9.1 Calls Screening

A talk show is a very democratic radio program format. It is opened to all, regardless of sex, ethnic background, social status, age etc. It takes only the will of the listener to participate in the program by calling by phone or being live in the studio. The expected purpose for listeners calling in to participate is to advance or deepen the topic. But, some calls from listeners do damage to the program. It is therefore necessary to screen them. What should the production assistant take into consideration when screening calls? The production assistant should:

- Work very closely with studio technicians in the screening of calls
- Give preference to first-time callers for new voices bring new perspectives that keep the program fresh and interesting.
- Make sure callers are talking about the topic being discussed.
- Remind the callers to express their views clearly.
- Make listeners not turn the program into venue for expression of personal issues
- Tell callers that when they get on the air, they should go straight to the point
- Cut off abusive, incoherent callers or when callers go off topic, are long-winding. Most listeners will appreciate our keeping the focus.
- Avoid holding listeners for too long on phone

Chapter 8: Tackling Problems of Interactive Programs

The Problem

Interactive radio programs or talk shows are not easy to produce. The challenges are many and varied. They range from technical and professional to challenges of a general nature. If we are not able to identify such problems, and we do not know what to do to overcome them before entering into the studio or while in the studio, then, our program is bound to fail.

Learning objectives

- To identify some of the common problems we encounter (or can encounter), in the production of interactive programs
- To suggest practical ways and means of handling such problems

Learning goals

- We successfully produce interesting and effective programs despite the problems that come up in or out of the studio.

8.0 Challenges of Talk-back Programs

For those of us who are already presenting interactive programs, the problems listed below are familiar. The list is not exhaustive, and the solutions are neither final nor exhaustive as well.

Table 1: Some challenges of talk-back programs on radio and possible solutions for them

Poor studio facilities	Studio equipment may operate poorly	We should check our equipment before engaging in a talk show
Poor Phone lines	We find it difficult to hear our callers, or our callers can go silent on air.	We should not depend just on callers. We can also invite some listeners into the studio to take part in the discussion when it is possible. We can have more than one journalist in the studio. In the event of silence in calls, the journalists present in the studio can discuss the topic and thus keep the program going.
Working alone	Being the producer and presenter at the same time makes it difficult to do the job well	We should get a production assistant. The absence of someone to manage calls and callers leaves the show opened to possible abuse and danger.

Trouble with Callers	The ultimate challenge in talk shows is handling callers. Callers' remarks can be inflammatory, off-topic, incoherent or terribly long-winding. This will bore the listeners and they can turn off (zap) to another station.	The host should politely turn off the long-winding and boring caller.
Political	The political context can make things difficult to produce an interactive program. In Cameroon, talk shows are quite often temporally suspended on state and private media on the eve of, during, and immediately after national	Under precarious political situations, we should choose a topic for our show and the timing of broadcast of the discussion on the topic with a lot of care. But then, we should not get into self- censorship.
Fear to talk by bureaucrats (guests)	In Cameroon, some elected officials and bureaucrats and other primary sources fear to talk, especially in a context where they will be asked questions concerning their management. They are afraid of questions that relate to whether or not they are transparent and accountable in the way they manage their public offices. Many hardly accept invitations to speak on talk shows .They usually say they need clearance from their administrative hierarchy. Another, excuse often advanced by functionaries for refusing to talk on talk shows is that, they are bound by what they call "le droit de reserve."	We should keep inviting them, verbally and especially in writing. We invite them well ahead of time to enable them sort out any bureaucratic obstacles. We tell listeners in our promo of the program that, we have invited this or that official (minister, director, prefect, mayor etc.) as guest on the next program. We should not call the name of the official. But we can mention the rank or status of the office. This could oblige them to respond positively to our invitation. If they fail to honor the invitation, simply tell the listeners, without any comment that, the invited guest did not show up.
Corruption	A culture of buying influence can be damaging to talk shows. Bribes in cash or kind ("gombo") may be offered to presenters or to the boss of the radio station to ensure that opinions aired favor the corruptor. This can happen when a public figure is entangled in a controversy or scandal.	It's a fundamental principle of journalism that we don't accept money to tilt information or contents of a program to satisfy the interests of an individual, groups of individuals, or an institution. Consequently, station managers should not accept money from such people and put the presenters of the programs in a situation where they have nothing but accept the guests. Host of talk shows should not take money or

		“gombo’ from corrupt and corrupting guests. Professionals do not take bribes. Journalism is not for sale.
Self-censorship	Self-censorship means that journalist deliberately bury the other side of the topic and silence difficult questions. This can sometimes be caused by fear of powerful interests which may force official sources and journalists to say less than they want, or do not say anything at all. Some journalists also censor themselves to avoid losing access to, and favors from important political figures or/and management executives. This is common in radio stations or media houses where promotions in the profession are based on patronage and less on competence. Self-censorship can start from a bad experience and become a bad habit that destroys professional journalism.	As professionals in journalism, we have an obligation to be accurate, fair/balanced and responsible in reporting and shaping the contents of programs. If we produce an accurate and properly balanced story or program, we can be sure that, we are protected against criticism from either side.
Control	The local elite, council authorities or central government who in one way or the other help in the financing of the radio may want to dictate content and genre of programs which suit them against public interest.	A presenter is expected to resist pressure from the financial bosses. This should however be done with a lot of tact.
Intimidation	Some rural radios receive financial assistance from political and business elite, council, government officials, and development agencies. These benefactors turn round and intimidate station managers to tilt programs in a way that promote their personal interests. Some of them have very close links with government, and would always want that the interest of the government be promoted or protected, for fear of losing favor. They may thus discourage talk shows from	The station manager should seek to dialogue with the elite or council authorities in such situations. They should carefully explain the importance of talk shows, in the enhancement of local development. Resist intimidation in the workplace by encouraging professional standards among colleagues and emphasizing fair and balanced content.

	presenting controversial subjects and can even threaten to withdraw their financial assistance. The consequence is that, station managers may in turn intimidate co-workers to avoid all controversial topics to please the special interests of those who finance the radio, thus displease the audience.	
Taboo subjects	Some subjects such as sexual issues, ethnicity or tribalism in public administration, “Anglophone problem”, and stigmas around such labels as “bamis”, “nkwa’ah”, “nordists”, “moutons” “anglo”, “bamenda”, “pygmy”, “chop broke pot”, are very close to taboo subjects in Cameroon. Some people can be embarrassed, feel offended and react angrily to discussing such issues on radio.	Be sensitive. Explain to listeners why the issue is important. Use real people’s experiences or suffering to demonstrate the human implications of taboos.
Cultural Restrictions	Traditional limitations on people’s freedom to speak openly because of their race, gender, religion or other distinctions can make it difficult to discuss them.	As on “taboos” above.
Poverty	Listeners who lack access to a radio or a telephone because of poverty are excluded from talk shows. This can make talk shows very unrepresentative of a large part of a community.	We can take the talks show to the community, record it in a remote village with everyone gathered around. Allow villagers to use the microphone. Or send a reporter out into the streets or the rural areas with a mobile phone, so people without phones can use it to call in to the talks show.
Our own beliefs and values	Our personal values shaped by our family, life experiences, are the most powerful influences on how we first react to guests and callers. A caller or a guest may offend our values with their ideas or attitudes.	We need to think before responding, and try to get at the positions and the interests of our callers rather than allowing our own opinions, prejudices and ideas to dominate. An angry presenter rarely makes a useful contribution to understanding an issue. Controlling our own anger is absolutely necessary.

Personal experiences	Our own experiences are significant to us, and we may want to bring them into the discussion. This could be an intrusion into the discussion and could damage the listener's interest in the program.	Our role is to facilitate and guide the information flow and ensuring free expression. When we stop being facilitators and we go narrating our own experiences, audiences may focus on our experiences and opinions instead of learning from guests' and callers' opinions. A good talk show presenter never needs to use the word 'I'. However, a quick and short allusion to our personal experiences may be used to illustrate a point, clarify an issue or ease understanding of a point in the discussion.
Family and clan	Our own families, clans (tribes) and interest group may disagree with an objective approach. They may feel that we should take one side in a discussion or argument. This means taking sides for example against our families, tribe or region in a discussion.	We should know that, we are not advocates for family or tribe. Who we are and what we believe in private should not intrude into the public debate when we are on air.

All these are general challenges which are common to almost all talk shows. But they are not all of the problems with talk shows

Chapter 9: Handling Dangerous Talk on Air

The Problem

Live radio programs are generally delicate, be it reporting an event or conducting a talk show or interactive program. Bad talk capable of hurting people can come either from the listeners, guest or even the presenter in some cases. However, the whole burden of ensuring that, bad talk on the air does not generate into dangerous talk lies very much with presenter. Bad talk poorly managed on air inevitably damages our program, and obstructs the use of the program for promoting democratic values and practices. The responsibility of the host of interactive programs is therefore enormous.

Learning objective

- To identify devices on how to manage dangerous talk in an interactive program.

Learning Goal

We are as actors – guests/resource persons, and presenters – become sufficiently competent to prevent talk on air

9.0 Managing Hate Speech

Hate speech is any form of words directly contemptuous of other people and/or which call for harm or violence against them on the basis of their tribe (ethnic belonging), religion or culture. This is offensive and dangerous speech.

Faced with hate speech on air, the presenter should:

- Condemn it straight away as dangerous and unpatriotic, for silence on it could push the offended/hurt people or person into thinking that the presenter approves of it. Thinking so can inflame matters all the more.
- React critically in a manner as to put the offending statements or words in proper perspective, a perspective that is more likely to restore reason and calm.
- Seek the guided intervention of the guest or some other caller to mend the damage caused by the hate speech
- Abstain from indicating any lightheartedness about it such as giggling or laughing even if the hate speech was expressed in a humorous manner by the caller.
- Write a report on the incident immediately after the program and submit to the station manager or director. The report will help the boss prepare for any administrative reaction demanded by hierarchy.

9.1 Managing Anger

Eruption of anger on air is frequent during discussions in a talk show. Guests can use angry, threatening language. Callers can use the radio as a megaphone for their personal opinions. There are also guests and callers who argue and interrupt all others in the discussion. This is often very embarrassing to the presenter. What do we do in such situations?

- Remind guests who talk simultaneously that nobody can understand what they're saying.
- Be ready to interrupt and remind guests or callers when they become disrespectful or stray off the topic.
- Have music ready to play as interludes while hot emotions cool down.
- Have letters and emails ready to read as a diversion from hot and bad talk,
- Introduce a new angle to the discussion to take them away from the point of discord
- Inject specific facts into a tense dialogue to direct a guest or caller to calm down.
- When guests are angry with each other, gently take them back to their last point of agreement.
- Presenters must distance the station from any threats that guests or callers make on-air, that is, indicate that, their statements are not those of the station and commits only them and not the station.
- Do not take negative calls as personal. Be interested in why they are upset, without encouraging their anger.
- Just remind the caller or guest who gets angry that, it is not gentle lady or gentle manly to be angry on a live radio program
- Carefully use humor as a device to calm tempers.

9.2 Managing Language

Generally voices rise and tempers flare on interactive programs. This is in the nature of interactive programs. Exchange and cross exchange of ideas, points of views, arguments and counter arguments are all ingredients of democratic talk.

But, then what words and expressions should be used to keep the exchange as means of spreading and deepening democratic values and practices. Below is **useful discussion or debate vocabulary and expressions (source.....)** which can be used when we want to make a point, state an opinion, ask for an opinion, express

agreement and disagreement, interrupt, settle an argument and conclude a point of view.

9.2.1 Making a Point

- Well, I think that...
- The first point I would like to raise is this...
- My position is the following...
- Here's the main point I want to raise...
- I'd like to deal with two points here. The first is...
- A moment ago, I raised the point on... Now I would like to add that.....
- Let me just restate my position.....
- Just to be clear, here is what I mean...

9.2.2 Stating an Opinion

- In my opinion...
- The way I see it...
- If you want my honest opinion....
- According to Amougou.
- As far as I'm concerned...
- If you ask me...

9.2.3 Asking for an Opinion

- What's your idea.....?
- What's your take on.....?
- What are your thoughts on all of this.....?
- How do you feel about that.....?
- Do you have anything to say about this.....?
- What do you think.....?
- Do you agree.....?
- Wouldn't you say.....?

9.2.4 Expressing Agreement

- I agree with you 100 percent.
- That's so true.
- That's for sure.
- You're absolutely right.
- Absolutely.

- That's exactly how I feel.
- Exactly.
- I agree with her/him.
- I have to side with Abdulahi on this one.
- No doubt about it.
- I suppose so
- I guess so.
- You have a point there.
- I was just going to say that.

9.2.5 Expressing Disagreement

- I don't think so.
- **(strong)** No way.
- I'm afraid, I disagree.
- **(strong)** I totally disagree.
- I beg to differ.
- **(strong)** I'd say the exact opposite.
- Not necessarily.
- That's not always true.
- That's not always the case.
- No, I'm not so sure about that.
- I see your point, but I think...
- Yes, I understand, but my opinion is that...
- That's all very interesting, but the problem is that...
- I'm afraid I can't quite agree with your point.
- I think I've got your point, now let me respond to it.
- We can see what you're saying. Here's my reply...

9.2.6 Interrupting and Being Interrupted in a Discussion

- I need to say something now
- Let me just respond to that, please.
- I'm sorry to interrupt, but you've misunderstood my point of view.
- Forgive me for interrupting, but I must respond to that.
- Sorry, I just have to disagree with your point.
- Excuse me, but that's not quite correct.
- Hold on a moment, that's not correct.

- Is it okay if I jump in for a second to say that/to point out that.....?
- If you would allow me to add a comment here...
- If you don't mind, I'd like to take issue with what you just said.
- If I might add something...
- Can I add something here?
- **(After accidentally interrupting someone)** Sorry, go ahead, **or** Sorry, you were saying...
- **(After being interrupted)** You didn't let me finish.

9.2.7 Settling an Argument

- Let's just move on, shall we?
- Let's drop it.
- **(sarcastic)** Whatever you say, /if you say so.

9.2.8 Concluding an Argument

- I pointed out that...
- To recap the main points...
- Let's sum up where we stand in this discussion
- Let me summarize my position in this discussion
- In summary, I want to point out that...

If we fully apply the foregoing language guides on how to talk on interactive radio programs, our program will sound gentler lady, gentle manly, more friendly, more appealing and appeasing. By using language in a way that respects persons with whom we disagree on issues is an excellent way of promoting and deepening democratic culture within our communities. It is also a mechanism for managing dangerous talk on air.

Chapter 10: Radio Drama by Talla Mankfu Josephine

The Problem

Generally, when we think about drama, we readily imagine the existence of a set with lighting, a stage, scenery, and colorfully dressed actors. Quite often, drama is intended to show and present us a story. We as the audience should see that story acted on the stage. That is why, in everyday language, we say we are going “to see” a play and not we are going “to hear” a play.

But, curiously, for radio drama we are correct to say we are going to “hear a play”. Radio drama therefore represents a unique form of radio broadcast. It tells stories without the use of visual aid. We do not see the story. It makes us “hear a play or hear the story” and not “seeing” it. This is why radio drama relies so much on creating a mental scene in the listener’s imagination by the use of descriptive language and sound. That is also why it is sometimes called “the theatre of the mind”

It is for all these reasons that, it is very challenging to conceive, write and produce a drama sketch for radio.

Learning objective

Initiate community/rural radio journalists to the techniques of writing simple plays for radio such as:

- Conception of a radio play
- Structuring the story
- Creating dialogues
- Use of sound effects and music

Learning goal

- Rural radio broadcasters write, produce and broadcast interesting radio plays.

10.0 Power of Radio Drama

Before examining techniques of writing and producing a radio play, let’s identify its strengths as a means of communication.

Radio drama is an effective form of communication. This is because:

- It reaches a large audience and consequently, spreads information and messages in areas where other more traditional methods have failed.
- As an entertainment medium significantly hooks the listening audience in a light hearted manner and thus easily communicates and informs.
- It is cheap to produce: An actor is capable of playing several roles due to the absence of visuals and thus reduces the number of characters and cost. The

absence of sets, lighting, costumes, props and space dramatically also reduces cost.

- It is an important tool in initiating social development. And all of this thanks to its entertaining capacity. So, when strategically used, it can become a valuable vehicle for improving the lives of people in rural communities.

10.1 Steps in Producing a Radio Drama

For radio drama to promote democratic values and practices, it has to be produced according some norms and techniques.

10.1.1 Conception

How do we proceed in the production of a radio play? The very first step in the creating a radio play is **conception**. To be able to conceive we have to go through the stages below.

10.1.2 Have Basic Knowledge of what a play is.

We cannot produce a play when we do not know what a play is. We need to know the elements that when put together make up a play.

The first element in a play is the **story**. To be able to get an idea of a story, we need to be alert, watchful and critical about issues, practices, phenomena, human behavior, events, incidents and conflicts in our immediate community. They are sources of inspiration for ideas on which to build a radio play.

10.1.3 Identify Idea of the Play

An interesting play begins with the choice of the idea of the story, that is, what the story is based on. This requires we select:

- A relevant topic/idea/theme that is of interest to our immediate community for it makes no sense to build a play on an issue with which our listeners cannot be able to identify.
- A theme that involves an important conflict of interest/and or value and in our specific context, an issue/theme which can help promote a democratic value.

Examples: *Refusal by some parents to send the girl child to school, refusal by some traditionalists to allow their wives go out to vote during elections, mismanagement of public funds etc. are topics that touch on democratic values .*

10.1.4 Checkout for Precise and Clear Language

In radio drama, the listeners receive information in the form of dialogue, sound, noise, silence and music and they try to make meaning out of it. The language used by actors must clearly express the message to be sent out. This is important since there are no visual aids (body movements, facial expressions presence of objects) etc. to help listeners better understand the meaning or message of the play. The actor who is the intermediary between the author and the audience should therefore communicate simply and clearly.

10.1.5 Create a Story that Follows the Principle of Logic

As Aristotle stated many years ago, a story should have a **beginning**, **middle** and an **end**. This means that an incident or event should occur as a result of previous happenings so as to give the story a logical flow.

Example: *This morning, Ahmadu was hurrying to attend an interview for an international job. He got entangled in a traffic jam in downtown Yaoundé. Consequently, he arrived late for the interview. He missed the job opportunity.*

The principle of logic should also be seen in characters of the play. They should have strong ambitions and in the course of struggling to achieve their ambitions, they meet with obstacles. Their efforts to overcoming these obstacles should make them succeed or fail. These are qualities of a hero or tragic figure in a play. It is therefore important to create a story that follows this principle. The end of the story should be satisfying to the audience; it should end with a strong resolution to issues raised.

10.1.6 Create Believable Characters

Characters should be suiting to their role. Unfortunately, we are dealing with radio where you cannot see the characters physically to determine whether or not they are suiting to their role. But this can be achieved with emphasis led on the voice of the actor.

Example: *The role of a grandfather can be revealed to the listener through a voice that portrays a grandfather.*

Even if the actor interpreting the role does not match, it can still be cheated provided they can be able to speak like a grand dad. Fortunately, the radio allows for cheating to take place.

10.1.7 Limit the Number of Characters

We should limit the number of characters in a radio play to avoid listeners from getting confused with a multitude of voices. With too many actors involved, it becomes difficult for the listeners to distinctively single out from the crowd of characters who is present, where, and saying what to whom. This can be very confusing. In addition, plays with large casts cannot be successfully performed over the radio. Furthermore, fewer characters reduce cost of production.

10.1.8 Create Attractive Dialogues

With the traditional drama the audience directly interacts with the actors on stage. The people watching are present, they see what the actors are doing, and hear what they are saying. In this way, they can react promptly – laugh, cry, scream, and shout, etc. This direct interaction has a great impact on the overall presentation of the drama.

But this is not the case with the radio drama which does not give the listeners the possibilities to react so directly, and so spontaneously. This means that, to capture and sustain the interest of the listeners, we need to **create dialogues that are attractive**. In addition, we have to provide a wide variety of sound effects as well as music that are meaningful.

10.1.9 Create Visual Action through Dialogues

Create dialogues that are **descriptive**. This means that the dialogues should be able to paint a picture in the mind of the listener so that they can visualize what is taking place in the scene.

Example: *“Oh stop him! Please stop the Goliath!! Stop the Goliath!! Stop him...!”*
 “Oh my God! Just look at the way the hefty man is fastening his teeth, with
 all his might, speeding after tinny Mafor!
 The little girl is approaching a ditch!
 She will crash into the ditch!
 Hold Goliath! Hold himmmmmmmmm!

10.1.10 Use Natural and Appropriate Dialogues

Spoken lines by characters should be natural and appropriate to time, place, and situation in which they find themselves. eg the type of English spoken in 1930 is not suiting today (2013). Their spoken lines should therefore reflect a real life situation.

10.1.11 Make Good Use of Sound Effects

Remember that sound effect is an integral part of radio drama. The fact that, radio drama lacks visual scenery like the stage, set, lighting, costume, make up, actors, requires that, when creating a radio drama, emphasis should be laid on the audio aspects, that is, spoken words, sounds and music. The play writer therefore has to work in sound effects to bring the play to life. Consider such sound effects as:

- Doors - opening and shutting produces bangs, squeaks and knocking
- Street sounds - children's cries, school bells, freeway traffic, street vendors cries etc.
- Kitchen objects: a kettle whistling, sounds of spoons, knives, cups, pot leads etc.
- Astounding noises to wake up audience: an explosion, a car crashing, an angry mob shouting etc.
- A languorous sound to announce a sorrowful happening such as death

We can use all these sounds and many others, depending on what effect we want to create. This will bring the play to life and hook the listener. But, we should be careful not to use sound effects that have no link with the scene in question.

Example: *a scene at a beach should have sound effects of splashing water and not kitchen utensils.*

We can use any sound available in our immediate environment, but let it be an appropriate sound for a specific purpose.

10.1.12 Use Music

Music is very important for telling a story in radio drama. It can be used in various circumstances in the play to achieve different kinds of effects. The following are some of the ways and reasons for using music in a radio drama:

- The introduction of background music is a complement that sets the opening and closing tone of a radio drama.

- Music matches the general mood or feeling of a play such as happy or sad occasions, tensed or slow moments.
- Most stories “...rely on music to engage the audience’s attention”
- Music provides entertainment in a play

10.1.13 Use the Narrator Device

- A voice narrator is important to introduce and explain each scene. In a radio serial the narrator can summarize previous episodes before the beginning of new episodes

10.1.14 Identify the Geographical and Atmospheric Setting of the Scene

Identify the geography and the atmosphere as well as the time in which the scene is set.

Examples: *names of character (Mafor), settings (Bafut, Moloundou, Mora, Bipindi, Mundemba), songs (njang dance, bikutsi, makossa), costumes (Wrapper), props, food (folere, ndole, kwem, achu, contre)*

These items and language should reflect a geographical setting and should be conveyed to the audience through spoken words and sounds.

Example: *the conversation below:*

FON: *Greetings to you daughters of Bafut!*

WOMEN: *Mbee!*

FON: *Praise to our ancestors, the fore fathers of Bafut, for giving us such a bright morning here in this palace and the vast sky of the entire Bafut is all blue. This sign of the good news I have for you.*

WOMEN: *Mbee!*

FON: *Good! I’ve called all of you women to announce that, we are expecting an important visitor from far away land in the days ahead. My colleague in the Adamawa, the Lamido of Ngaoundere is visiting us next Saturday.*

Sounds of ululations

So, Mafor you organize the women so that, we give our guest from the Adamawa, a befitting welcome in njang song and dance, and of course sumptuous “achu” meals.

MAFOR: *Mbee*

FON: *Thanks for coming and all the best*
(Sounds of majestic steps of the Fon exiting)

MAFOR: *You've all heard from the Fon himself and not Mafor.*
So we need to prepare "achu" of quality and in quantity. We have to
wear our Bafut palace wrappers, and get ready to dance from
sunrise to sunset, to welcome the Fon's colleague from
Ngaoundere.

Items like "achu", Bafut, palace wrappers, njang locate the play in a specific socio-cultural and geographical area.

10.1.15 Do Effective Mixing

Mixing the different soundtrack dialogues, ambient sound, special effects and music, is an activity in the production of radio drama that requires much careful handling.

- We have to check and ensure that the sound levels and effects are conveniently mixed.
- Ambient sound and sound effects should be creatively used "...to foreshadow a turn of events or establish the mood of a scene..."
- When major a twist in events or situations is about to take place, ambient sound and sound effects should be creatively used to announce them. This goes same when painting the mood of a scene.

Example: *a love scene should have ambient sound and sound effects that indicate love*

10.1.16 Number your Scenes

When writing a play, we should always number the scenes to enable us identify them more easily.

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Appendix I: Values of Democracy



Protection of Minorities.



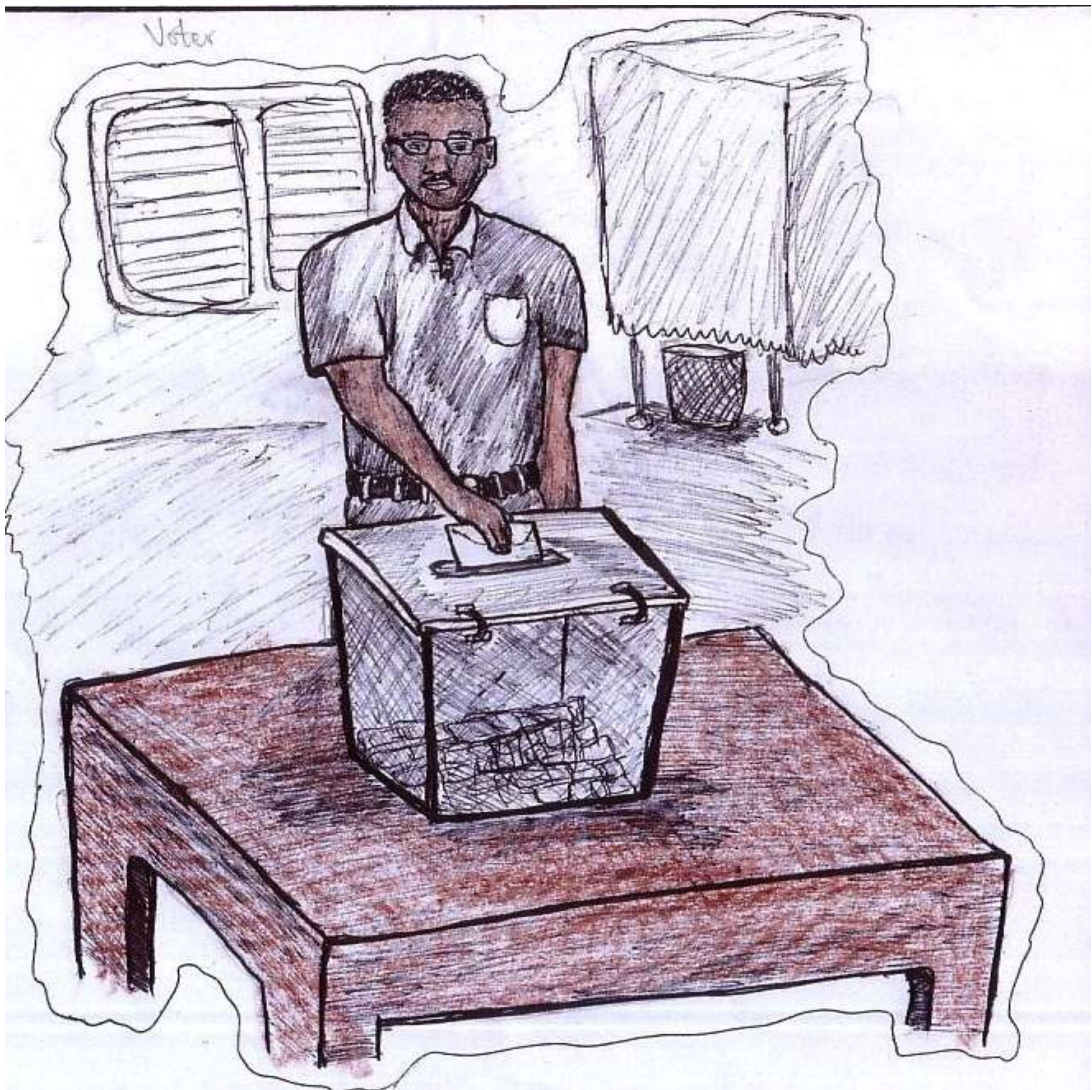
Gender Equality



Good Governance



Patriotism, Equality and Fraternity.



Vote and be voted

Appendix II: The Power of the Radio



Radio: Unique Tool of Communication



A Radio Studio: Presenter and Guests



Roundtable Discussion



Radio: Unique Tool of Communication