COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY KENYA COMMUNITY RADIO IN FOSTERING SOCIAL COHESION AND INTEGRATION IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Kenya Community Radio can employ very good Communication Strategies that foster Social Cohesion and Integration but this influence has not been realized because they lack distinct identity, they are confused and classified with vernacular/ethnic commercial FM radio stations. Communication strategy is the "what, who, why, when, how, and where" of conveying a message. This project was undertaken with the aim of finding Communication Strategies employed by Kenya Community Radio in fostering Social Cohesion and Integration. The target population constituted of 30% of all the 12 Community Radio Stations in Kenya. A survey research design was employed using a questionnaire and information was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented using frequency distribution tables, histograms, pie charts, narrations and discussions. Results from the findings revealed that Communication Strategies employed by Community Radio in fostering Social Cohesion and Integration are programming content geared toward the local area, community projects that encourage people to come together and public forums where communities are provided with opportunities to express themselves. From the findings it can be concluded that handful of Community Radio Stations active in Kenya’s PEV period was praised for their balanced reporting and even now they do foster Social Cohesion and Integration. Recommendations is that, Kenya Community Radio need to voice more about their existence and also come up so strongly to differentiate themselves with other commercial/vernaculars radios. They should find ways to sustain their operations and diversify income for sustainability without necessarily becoming commercial ventures.

Key Words: communication strategies, Kenya Community Radio, social cohesion, integration in Kenya
**Introduction**

Communication strategy is a plan for improving an organization’s ability to effectively convey messages to both internal and external groups (Evans 1992). Communication strategies help the companies to propagate information in a structured and controlled manner. In Girard’s (2007) view, community radio means radio in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community. Community broadcasting is conducted on a non-profit basis to cater for educational, religious, professional, musical and other interests either in terms of geographic communities or communities or interests. Some community radio stations broadcast within a radius of ten kilometers. Social cohesion is a process of building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community avows Berkeley, Rob (2003). Evidence shows that communication and the use of the media can be a powerful tool for integration (Melkote & Steeves, 1991). Frampton et al. (2007) asserts that the power of community radio to mobilize groups and bring change to societies is well recognized. She further says that with community radio, “the focus is on dialogue, on finding solutions, on the future rather than who did what to whom..., on bringing all the stakeholders together and through the radio trying to calm situations down and move the society toward peace and democracy,” Community radio developers must have a clear strategy and vision of what they want to achieve, she concludes.

**Background Information**

Communication strategies are plans for communicating information related to a specific issue, event, situation, or audience. They serve as the blueprints for communicating with the public, stakeholders, or even colleagues. Effective Communication is vital for any strategy to be successful, (Elway Research International website). Dissemination of accurate, educational, developmental and empowering information and news to citizens thus remains a global challenge to most governments today. Communication strategies employed by a Community Radio comes in handy in a country that is facing such challenges by complementing the mainstream media and sometimes offering an alternative source of information and news.

Community radio has been used to help spearhead democratization, peace building, national healing, development etc. states (Fraser and Estrada, 2001). In fostering Social Cohesion and Integration, Tett (2010) avers that Community radio plays a vital role in building vibrant communities, in mobilizing groups to action by informing and empowering citizens, in giving voice to the marginalized groups of Society, and in bringing community needs to the attention of local and even national governments.
Global Perspective of Community Radio

According to Diaz-Bordenave (1977) the first community radio in the developing world is widely acknowledged to have been Radio Sutatenza, established in Colombia in 1947. da Costa, Peter (2009) claims that, since the 1990s community radio has mushroomed throughout the developing world. In many parts of the world, community radio acts as a vehicle for the community and voluntary sector, civil society, agencies, NGOs and citizens to work in partnership to further community development aims, in addition to broadcasting. In fostering Social Cohesion and Integration in peace-building, Community Radio has often proved strong. For example, community radio stations in Colombia have daily programs for hostages being held by insurgents asserts (Girard, 2007).

In Africa, Radio is undoubtedly the most important and accessible medium. According to Myers (2011) in 1985 there were less than 10 independent Radio stations in the entire continent. As stated by community dialogue website, Community radio stations do apply communication strategies that can be mobilized for campaigns, for example by announcing campaign events, hosting talk shows with campaigners, or playing the campaign radio jingle and songs. Community radio brings people together and contributes a sense of community. Programmes are often recorded in open village meetings and the effect of hearing one’s own and one’s neighbors’ voices on the airwaves has been profoundly empowering. Partly because it operates in local languages, community radio can be especially important for women listeners, who, particularly in Africa, tend to favor their mother tongues over colonial languages. In fostering Social Cohesion and Integration, Radio Maendeleo in the DRC continues to provide information about local fighting, troop movements, and road blocks for the troubled area of South Kivu, (BBC, 2006).

There is a problem of applying these communication strategies in Africa especially in Countries where community radio is allowed, but there is no clear definition of community radio. Community radio is placed in the same category as commercial or private radio. Examples of these countries in Africa include: Niger, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Mali, Ghana, Angola, most of the countries in East Africa, and most of the countries in Central Africa, claims (Ntab, 2002).

Local Scenario of Community Radio Stations in Kenya

In Kenya, communications Strategies employed by Community Radio in fostering Social Cohesion and Integration are numerous. Githethwa (2010) states that Communities see radio as providing them with the space to assert and safeguard local cultures, as a platform through which their rights can be advocated for and claimed, as a means of holding those who govern them to account, and as an agent for social change. Githaiga (2008) confirms that Kenya’s first Community Radio was the Homa Bay Community Radio Station established in the western part of Kenya in May, 1982 and deregistered two years later. In Kenya, Community Radio Stations are only a handful and those who have already been granted frequencies by CCK are 12 in number (Refer to
Appendix II). She further states that Community broadcasting has been overshadowed by players who do not belong to the community broadcasting category and thus they have consistently struggled to gain a foothold in Kenya. The greatest problem surrounding Community Radio Stations in Kenya is that they are confused and classified with vernacular/ethnic commercial FM radio stations claims, (Githaiga, 2008). This therefore means that Kenya Community Radio has not received much intellectual and critical research attention specifically and there is little information written specifically about Community Radio and their contributions in the communities they serve.

Community Radio is not a Vernacular Radio station even if they broadcast in a particular vernacular language because that is the one the whole community understands. Due to the above problem, Kenya Community Radio has also been blamed widely for igniting ethnic hatred and animosity and especially during the PEV of 2007. Example is when is blamed for ethnic incitements through ethnic based programme content.

In Kenya, Communication Strategies employed by Community Radio in enhancing Social Cohesion and Integration were clearly demonstrated during the Kenya post election violence up-to-date. According to Githaiga (2008) in Kenya Community Radio has, despite its tiny size, emerged from the post election with great credit and arguably provides a model for the future. Few Community Radio Stations that do exist in Kenya appeared to have played a much more positive role during the PEV. Example is Pamoja FM, located in Kibera slum one of the main centers of the post-election unrest in Nairobi played an especially courageous role. Pamoja FM insisted on providing a voice for different communities and worked to calm conflict. Through talk show tried to reach across ethnic barriers, and were actively curtailing calls that seem to be engaging in ethnic stereotypes and were calling for reconciliation. Over the past six years the radio stations have campaigned tirelessly to “promote peace and stability in Kibera.” (Bwire, 2013).

Ghetto FM located in Pumwani is another example. The station prides itself as, Kenya’s politically-neutral station at election time (2013). During the recent (2013) Kenya’s election they continuously relayed this message that, “As a nation still trying to achieve national cohesion and integration, the 43rd tribe that is represented by Ghetto Radio is definitely what the Kenya needs in order to live as one.

Another example is Koch FM. In response to the PEV it gathered community members to create peace messages and jingles, which they regularly played on air and also mobilized, organized, and undertook a call-for-peace procession in Korogocho and Ngomongo. They also distributed handbills and T-shirts with peace and reconciliation messages. The study therefore explored Communication Strategies employed by Kenya Community Radio in fostering Social Cohesion and Integration. It critically analyzed i) the influence of programming content strategies; ii) the effect of community projects strategies and iii) contribution of community radio public forums strategies in fostering social cohesion.
and integration. It is hoped that the study will help Community Radios to come up with better strategies that foster social cohesion and integration among communities. This will provide investigated evidence basing on how they operate differently from other Commercial Vernacular, Public and Religious radio stations.

**Statement of the Problem**
Communication Strategies objectives are providing information; increasing awareness; encouraging action; changing behavior; promoting community participation; resolving conflict, or asking for input avers, (Evans, 1992).

According to African Broadcasting Charter (2001), Community media provide a voice for the community; they are not for profit and less vulnerable to political and commercial interests and influences. Fairbairn, (2009) argues that Community Media can serve as a factor of social cohesion and integration because it can facilitate dialogue, discussion and public debate through opinion and views.

Kenya Community Radio can employ very good Communication Strategies that foster Social Cohesion and Integration but this influence has not been realized because they lack distinct identity, they are confused and classified with vernacular/ethnic commercial FM radio stations claims, (Githaiga, 2008). Due to this problem, Kenya Community Radio has also been blamed widely alongside vernacular/ethnic commercial FM radio stations for igniting ethnic hatred and animosity and especially during Kenya PEV of 2007. This study addressed this problem by highlighting Communication Strategies employed by Kenya Community Radio in fostering Social Cohesion and Integration. It critically analyzed i) the influence of programming content strategies; ii) the effect of community projects strategies and iii) contribution of community radio public forums strategies in fostering social cohesion and integration. The study will help Community Radios, commercial, religious broadcasters, media professionals, Government stakeholders, NGOs and others to come up with better strategies that foster Social Cohesion and Integration among communities.

**Objectives of the Study**
The general objective of the study was to investigate communication strategies employed by Kenya community radio Stations in fostering social cohesion and integration in Kenya.

**Specific Objectives of the Study**
1. To analyze the influence of programming content strategies employed by the community radio in fostering social cohesion and integration.
2. To determine the effect of community projects strategies employed by community radio to foster social cohesion and integration.
3. To investigate the contribution of community radio public forums strategies in fostering social cohesion and integration.

Literature Review

Theoretical Review

A theoretical framework is a structure of concepts which exists in the literature; a readymade map for the study. The Study was guided by Social Judgment Theory and Communitarian Theory.

Social Judgment Theory

Sherif and Sherif (1976) argues that SJT is a theory that focuses on the internal processes of an individual's judgment with relation to a communicated message. SJT explains persuasive messages and how they are likely to succeed. SJT attempts to explain how likely a person might change their opinion, the probable direction of that change, their tolerance toward the opinion of others, and their level of commitment to their position. Sherif et al. (1965) defines attitudes as "the stands the individual upholds and cherishes about objects, issues, persons, groups, or institutions". We adjust an attitude once we have judged a new position to be in our latitude of acceptance. If we judge that message to be in our latitude of rejection, we will also adjust our attitude, but in the opposite direction from what we think the speaker is advocating.

The linkage of SJT to the study is that communicated messages through Community Radio can make people change an attitude towards others if there was animosity in the community. Judging from commutated messages, people can make informed decisions on how to live together, work together, best ways on conflicts/animosity reduction, sharing of information, job creation and others. SJT can be applied to change attitudes towards others through the programming content, community projects community radio public forums organized by the Community Radio in fostering social cohesion and integration.

A major gap which exist with the Social Judgment Theory is that persuasion is difficult to accomplish. Successful persuasive messages are those that are targeted to the receiver’s latitude of acceptance and discrepant from the anchor position, so that the incoming information cannot be assimilated or contrasted.

Communitarian Theory

Communitarian theory, views the rebuilding of community as a process of social organization involving self-help, institutional integration and consensus building. While the 'community' may be a family unit, it is usually understood in the wider sense of interactions between a community of people in a geographical location, or who have a shared history or interest asserts (Avineri and Avner 1992). Beauchamp and Childress (2001) argue that Communitarianism refers to a theoretical perspective lessen the focus on individual rights and increase the focus on communal responsibilities.
The linkage of this theory to this study is that since the theory discourages individualism and advocates ‘communitarianism’, Community Radio have a responsibility to come up with Communication Strategies to help people live together, work together, strategies on conflicts/animosity reduction, sharing of information, job creation and others. This can be achieved through programming content, community projects and public forums organized by Community Radio as a way to foster Social Cohesion and Integration.

There are gaps which exist with Communitarian Theory implementation wholly that hinder the successful influence to the community, in Social Cohesion and Integration of Communities. The notion that human beings can only flourish within the context of a community is debatable. Families, neighborhoods, nations, as well as churches, are referred to as communities. These are different forms of social entities, and one might doubt whether there is much they have in common. Arguably communities differ in what their members consider to be communal concerns. A football team takes an interest in its members’ physical fitness, but it cares neither about their religious views nor about their political allegiances.

**Conceptual Framework**

Maxwell, J. (2009) state that, a conceptual framework is a structure of concepts which are pulled together as a map for the study. Critical variables are examined as to their contribution or influence in explaining why the problem occurs and how it can be solved.

![Conceptual Framework Diagram](image_url)

**Figure 1.1 Conceptual Frame Work**

**Programming Content**

This refers to the way broadcasters select and arrange the various elements, such as music and talk in a manner that is considered pleasing to listeners. Bell and Morse (1999) views it as a comprehensive set of broadcast activities scheduled to run at a community radio
station to meet the needs of the target audiences. Alumuku (2006) confirms that modern-day Community Radio Stations often serve their listeners by offering a variety of content that carries news and information programming geared toward the local area. Programming content is produced by the community, with focus on local concerns and issues.

Sterling et al. (2007) provides evidence that Community Radio listeners are given a voice with which to respond to programming and to create programming content. The content is locally oriented and produced. Programmes designed on topical issues have further endeared Community Radio to the people. The Radio engages experts/resource persons as guests on these programmes and they (resource persons) are able to explain and make clear issues in their areas of expertise. Major areas include family life, moral education, gender and social inclusion, domestic violence, conflicts and conflict resolution, peace building, etc., programmes designed to promote social cohesion. Every successful radio station appeals to the interests, tastes, and desires of its audience. Major areas include news, sport, talk, religion, health family life, moral education, gender and social inclusion, domestic violence, conflicts and conflict resolution, peace building, etc. Every successful radio station appeals to the interests, tastes, and desires of its audience. In so doing, the station will fulfill the basic functions of community radio to meet the diverse needs of the community within which it operates. The type of programming a station uses depends on several factors, such as how long the station is on air each day, but largely determined by the community served by the station.

According to Girard (2007) what makes programmes to community radio different is that, in addition to pleasing, entertaining, and perhaps providing some general enlightenment for its audience, they seek to facilitate change, social progress, and better living conditions in the community that the radio serves.

Mtimde (2000) contends that good community radio programming needs to be relevant to its community and actually relate to the mission stations set themselves to achieve.

Just as all Community Radio Stations have a common mission to support and contribute to the community, they also have a common strategy that involves community participation at all levels including programming, management and financing the station. The more interactive, entertaining, engaging or compelling the radio content, the more likely it is to have an impact. This is thought to be partly because it encourages interpersonal dialogue.

Now that audiences can participate more and more in radio programmes and can even produce their own radio content, through new ICTs, the potential for empowerment and enrichment is greater. Dramas are especially effective for engaging audiences, and long-running series and soap-operas (edu-tainment) ensure audience loyalty and regular listening. The type of programming a station uses depends on several factors, such as how long the station is on air each day, but largely determined by the community served by the station.
If the radio station and/or the programme maker is not trusted in the first place, no messages, however compelling will get through. People have got to trust the messenger before they trust the message. Therefore, serious radio stations guard their reputations for impartiality precisely, as they know that if they lose that, they lose listeners (and ultimately revenue). Likewise, a local radio will only be credible if it is genuinely interactive and inclusive and will be judged accordingly by its local audience who will abandon it states (Myers, 2004). Today, many people wake up to clock radios, drive to their work listening to car radios, and also spend some of their leisure time hearing their favorite radio programs.

**Community Projects**

Walters et al. (2011) claims that effective radio activities can make a significant change in a community’s life. Through the activities of Community Radio, the people are encouraged to peacefully coexist at the family and community levels. People can able to go about their daily social and economic activities in an atmosphere of peace and happiness. Alumuku (2006) adds that Community Radio Broadcasting is a voice, a resource and a tool for communities to work together towards development.

Da Costa (2009) claims that a community of 100,000 people can easily be served by a single community radio station. Community Radio can partner with the community it serves whereby participation encourages the community to take responsibility for the project. This kind of commitment and pride helps people to stay involved and keep the station going even when resources are very scarce. Many communities have local events, often with a long tradition, that they value highly. These include sports matches, agricultural shows, musical and theatrical performances, educational projects, and welfare initiatives.

A station that helps with a widely publicized event of this type will gain a lot of goodwill from the local population. The main help a radio station can offer is with publicity such as having announcements about the event in the weeks before it happens, and arranging live broadcasts from the event where possible claims, (Bosch, 2007). Many social goals require partnership between public and private groups.

Though government should not seek to replace these Community Radio Stations instead, it may need to empower them by strategies of support, including revenue-sharing and technical assistance educational and social services. Community radio in its very nature has inherent potential to foster social development for the communities it serves. Dunaway (2002) stresses on the idea that, community radio aims to serve particular community with information, education and entertainment.
Fourie (2001) states that for a community radio station to serve its listeners effectively, it must be able to have a clear understanding of the social stratification of the community. This will in turn help the station to be able to cater for all the various interest groups from the children to the elderly through its community projects. Stations should however not assume that because they have strong support of their listeners, no further effort is needed to ensure participation. Listeners should therefore be continuously involved in all aspects of the station. This will give them the opportunity to suggest community projects and ways of addressing issues that affect them. It will also allow them to participate in developmental processes and nation building as fresh ideas that will be beneficial to all will be brought to light. Such platforms and opportunities to people will allow them to participate in the task of transforming the society and also help them. For example in rural areas community radio is effective in improving the sharing of agricultural information by remote rural farming communities. Community radio in this regard provides a set of participatory communication techniques that support agricultural extension efforts by using local languages to communicate directly with farmers and listeners’ groups.

Public Forums
Prehn (2002) asserts that participation is the engine of democracy and Community Radio is a tool for participation. The strengths of Community Radio therefore lie mainly in the horizontality and diversity of its operational structure. Its organizational structure is an expression of the bottom up framework, which is reflective of a community network of universe of universes, multiple languages, and the expression of differences. They work to strengthen their communities to promote community dialogue and to present audio evidence in support of movements for progressive social change.

This type of participatory communication is not limited to sending messages to the public; it is an agent for social change, cultural development, and democratization. Community radio service to their listeners adds value to their local communities. The benefit is it brings people together, they organize events, it’s open to the wider community and it highlights and addresses local issues thus it gives a voice to people that might not have a voice normally. Through public forums, Community broadcasting provides communities with genuine opportunities for expressing their values, aspirations and fears.

Urgoiti (1999) argues that community participation is the backbone of any successful Community Radio Station. He further asserts that community participation is a patient, ongoing and inclusive process. Through public forums organized by the Community Radio people can identify with its programmes, support and participate. Community participation is the involvement of the local residents in the decision making and the work of the station.
It is about identifying “felt needs” and what people say they want and running the station with the aim of addressing those needs (Jordan, 2006 and Bosch, 2007). An open day or entertainment event could be announced and listeners charged a small amount to visit and see the station in action through the public forums organized by the Community Radio. Following their experiences at such events visitors are likely to become faithful listeners. Thus, an open day or entertainment occasion is as much a community building activity, (List 2002). Participation gives listeners a sense of belonging, importance and achievement in addition to ensuring content relevance to community needs declares, (Wigston, 2001). In addition they foster exchange between community radio broadcasters using communications to develop greater understanding in support of peace, tolerance, democracy and development. Tett (2010) avers that Community radio plays a vital role in building vibrant communities, in mobilizing groups to action by informing and empowering citizens, in giving voice to the marginalized groups of Society, and in bringing community needs to the attention of local and even national governments.

Importance of community participation in the community radio station The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in one of its publications titled “The People’s Voice” (2004) stressed that community participation should not be an isolated meeting but a process where everybody gets together to hear and discuss an idea or proposal that will benefit the whole community and bring about development. It should be an on-going interaction between the radio station and the community.

Fostering of Social Cohesion and Integration
No man or woman is an island. People cannot live in isolation and in such extreme forms of individualism; everybody needs friends or companions. A sense of togetherness, belonging and shared experience; be it in groups of friends, in family, in clubs, in churches or in groups of any kind it is an integral part of human nature. Community is the foundation of human society. Isolated we curl up and die. Community radio stations have capacities to create a sense of belonging within the wider community as well as internally within stations, to providing a localized information service, to provide service for local community projects. In these ways community radio foster social cohesion and integration that contribute significantly toward community building and social change. Berkeley (2003) confirms that Social cohesion is a process of building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community. Tett, (2010), adds that Social cohesion is the capacity of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members, minimizing disparities and avoiding marginalization emphasizes In a cohesive society, both the state and communities play a key role in ensuring the well-being of citizens concludes.
Kenyan Community Radios are powerful drivers of Social-economic transformation in the communities they serve. Strong and positive relationships are always developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighborhoods.

According to Githaiga (2008) in Kenya Community Radio has, despite its tiny size, emerged from the post election with great credit and arguably provides a model for the future. Few Community Radio Stations that do exist in Kenya appeared to have played a much more positive role during the PEV. Pamoja FM, located in Kibera slum one of the main centers of the post-election unrest in Nairobi played an especially courageous role. Despite its position, insisted on providing a voice for different communities and worked to calm conflict. Through talk show tried to reach across ethnic barriers, and were actively curtailing calls that seem to be engaging in ethnic stereotypes and were calling for reconciliation, (Bwire, 2013).

Ghetto FM located in Pumwani is another example. The station prides itself as, Kenya’s politically-neutral station at election time (2013). During the recent Kenya’s election they continuously relayed this message that, “As a nation still trying to achieve national cohesion and integration, the 43rd tribe that is represented by Ghetto Radio is definitely what the Kenya needs in order to live as one.

Another example is Koch FM. In response to the PEV it gathered community members to create peace messages and jingles, which they regularly played on air and also mobilized, organized, and undertook a call-for-peace procession in Korogocho and Ngomongo. They also distributed handbills and T-shirts with peace and reconciliation messages.

In fostering Social Cohesion and Integration, Community radio’s achievements are numerous such as community outreach projects, peace building forums, exchange of information, networking of groups, the provision of skills and training, sports events, sponsoring of events and others.

Empirical Review
An Assessment of the Role of Community Radio in Peace building and Development: Case Studies in Liberia and Sierra Leone
Search for Common Ground (SFCG) has been working in Liberia since 1997 and in Sierra Leone since 2000. SFCG’s established its brand across the region as a leader in peace building through community radio programming and related activities. As Sierra Leona and Liberia have transitioned from violence to peace, SFCG has supported the process with public information, dialogue, community outreach and capacity building through radio projects like news shows, soap operas, and community outreach projects (SFFCG, 2009).
The Community Radio Station as an Agent of Development

Community radio’s impact on development in the communities it serves is accomplished primarily through partnership with development agents and development minded local actors, the radio is also a demonstrably effective, independent agent of development. Examples of high impact programming included local news magazines shows, locally-based investigative journalism shows, women’s-issues programming, trivia, programming dedicated to exploring issues in romantic relationships, local sports news and live coverage, and discussions in local languages, Child Rights, Disease Prevention, Childcare and Childrearing, Access to Education, Gender-Based Violence, Rape, Legal Rights (including statutory versus traditional systems of law), and Corruption.

Similarly, radio in all locations was active promoters of community cleanliness and sanitation. Interactive, public forum programming (call-in forums, etc.) are also frequently cited as both popular and impacting community attitudes and behaviors.

The Community Radio Station as an Agent of Peace building

SFCG’s and community radio’s original focus on peace building is that, the radio stations observed in this study continue to represent a strong voice for peace in the communities they serve. Significantly, community radio stations in all locations were described as active participants in diffusing potential violent crises.

In Liberia, for example, Community radio voter education around a complicated run off vote between now President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and George Weah of 2007 reduced tensions notably, in ways that many believed warded off potential violence. At all four locations, Community radio’s ability to quickly disseminate election information is believed to have counter acted the potential for unfounded rumors to fuel conflict. Overall, this study found that community radio continues to play a strong role in local peace building and non-violent conflict resolution has meaningful impact across locations. Radio is also noted as an active agent in diffusing local conflict and preventing backsliding into violence. All locations revealed a significant unmet potential for increased quantity and quality of radio-led peace building.

This study concludes that in addition to explicit peace building programming, community radio stations’ promotion of inclusive development processes such as good governance, effective communication, security, and local economic growth - has a broad impact in also promoting sustainable peace.

The Role of Community Radio in Livelihood Improvement: The Case of Simli Radio, Ghana

Simli Radio is a community radio station located in a small rural community, Dalun, within the Tolon-Kumbungu District of the Northern Region of Ghana.

It was established in 1996 under the Ghanaian Danish Community Programme (GDCP), an integrated rural development programme. The overall strategy of GDCP has been to promote integrated rural development that will create an enabling environment for
constructive dialoguing between duty bearers and rights holders; thus giving voice to the vulnerable and excluded to demand for and claim their rights (Simli Radio 2010)

**Education and Livelihood Improvement**

Simli Radio has been used to improve awareness and knowledge of solutions to community development problems within various sectors including culture, rural development, education, hygiene and sanitation, agriculture and local governance among rural people.

**Communication and Information Sharing**

Simli Radio has strategy of communal listenership, more than 100 communities have formed listeners clubs. This finding about Simli Radio finds support with the assertion of Sterling et al (2007) that Community Radio provides listeners with the voice with which to respond to programming and to create programming content. Indeed, Simli Radio has considerable impact on listeners in the communities.

**Social Cohesion**

Simli Radio through its sports programmes has contributed to peace building and conflict resolution in the study area. Respondents said they have benefited immensely from the sports activities of the station.

This level of appreciation by the people is in line with view of Walters et al (2011) that effective radio activities can make a significant change in a community’s life. Through the activities of Simli Radio, the people are encouraged to peacefully coexist at the family and community levels. People are now able to go about their daily social and economic activities in an atmosphere of peace and happiness (Simli Radio, 2010).

**Lessons learnt from Simli Radio**

Radio FM stations that try to remain a political and non-partisan, especially in conflict prone areas have greater impact in delivery of services. Simli Radio has really served as one of the communication channels in Ghana that has encouraged target communities to participate in programme activities and replicate skills acquired (Simli Radio, 2010).
Research Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a survey research design. According to Kothari (2004) one of the advantages of the survey design is the fact that its applicability in descriptive or diagnostic studies makes it shed more light on all the objectives of the study and resources available. Surveys can be useful when a researcher wants to collect data on phenomena that cannot be directly observed. In this study survey research was used because thoughts, opinions, and feelings of respondents on Communication Strategies applied by Community Radio cannot be directly be observed.

Population

Cooper and Schindler (2008) define population as the total collection of elements about which we wish to make some inferences. The targeted population in this study constituted of Directors, Producers, Editors and Presenters of all Community Radio Stations in Kenya. The justification of this population is that they are responsible for planning and implementing of these Communication Strategies. As a target population, 30% of all the 12 Community Radio Stations in Kenya which have been granted frequency by CCK was sampled which is more than the appropriate size of the accessible population for descriptive studies according to (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999). These are Pamoja FM, Ghetto FM, Koch FM and Shine FM Community Radio Stations, (Refer to Appendix II)

Sampling Frame

The sampling frame constituted of all the 12 Community Radio Stations in Kenya which have been granted frequency by CCK. 30% of the population within each sample frame was sampled from the 12 Stations making it to a total of 4 Stations.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), 10-30% of total population forms a representative sample. Therefore 30% of the 12 Community Radio Stations was selected making it to 4 stations. Further 30% of Directors, Editors, Producers and Presenters of the Stations were selected depending on the population per station.
This constituted to 30% of 20 respondents = 6 of Pamoja FM; 30% of 35 respondents =10.5 (11) of Ghetto FM; 30% of 25 respondents = 7.5 (8) of Koch FM; and 30% of 15 respondents = 4.5. (5) of Shine FM, the total constituted to 30 respondents, (Source: respective websites).The study adopted Purposive sampling to get information from the respondents because purposive sampling relies on the judgement of the researcher when it comes to selecting the units (e.g., people, cases/organizations, events, pieces of data) that are to be studied. This ensures selection of adequate numbers of subjects with appropriate characteristics, (Black, 1999).
Data Collection Instruments

The study used questionnaire for data collection. Very simple questions were asked for respondents to either tick the box or fill the blank spaces provided therein. It had both open and closed ended questions.

Data Collection Procedures

The study relied on several sources of data particularly primary and secondary sources of information. The questionnaire targeted Directors, Editors, Producers and Presenters of the Stations. A questionnaire was designed and handed to the respondents to extract information on the field under the study. Also the researcher administered email questionnaire to some Stations to get the required information. In some cases, the researcher and his two assistants made use of the drop and pick method where they dropped the questionnaires and picked later after having been completed. Assistants helped in data collection through distribution and collection of the questionnaires. Secondary sources of information like websites, social media, journals were also used to collect information.

Data Processing and Analysis

The researcher used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to code, analyze, and interpret qualitative data. Data is presented using frequency distribution tables, histograms, pie charts, narrations and discussions.

Research Findings and Discussion

Demographics

Data is presented using frequency distribution tables, histograms, pie charts, narrations and discussions for qualitative description and categorized and summarized according to common themes. The analysis is based on the study objectives and research questions. The findings presented are from a total of 4 Community Radio Stations which formed 30% of the Community Radio Stations given frequency by the CCK.

During the survey the respondents were asked to indicate what their target Audience were and they indicated the following: For Ghetto FM the main targeted audience were youth and a section of informal settlement, For Koch Radio the main Audience were Youth and a very small section from street families, For Pamoja main audiences are Small and Medium Traders and Informal settlement and finally Shine FM, the Majority are youths and Students.

From the discussion it was revealed that community living in informal settlements is very vulnerable to negative related ethnicity, violence, discord etc and so Community Radio plays a great role to target audiences in looking for ways that foster Social Cohesion and Integration.
Period of Broadcasting
During the survey the respondents were asked to indicate the period the Community Radio has been in existence. Ghetto FM has been in existence for 6 years, Pamoja FM has been in existence for 6 years while Koch FM and Shine FM has been in existence for 7 years. This implied that Community Radio has been existence in quite good number of years but their influence has not been realized in Kenya vis-à-vis their influence in fostering Social Cohesion and Integration in Kenya. Also from the findings it’s clear that most Kenya Community Radio Stations existed before and after PEV.

Core Programming Content
When respondents were asked to indicate the core programming content, 30% indicated news, 20% indicated music and entertainment, 13% indicated education as the core content, 14% said health issues and HIV Aids, 7% indicated security, 7% indicated women, while agriculture, religious issues and politics were represented by 3 % as indicated in Figure 4.3. This means that news rated highly as core programming content but news and information has to be geared toward the local area or the community. Respondents also indicated that various element of Programming Content is able to influence in fostering Social Cohesion and Integration because they are packaged based on basic issues of community and also information can be relayed quickly in times of crisis for example during the Kenya PEV period.

Today, many people wake up to clock radios, drive to their work listening to car radios, and also spend some of their leisure time hearing their favorite radio programs. Without the Community Radio, most people would know little of events beyond their immediate neighborhood.

People Who Influences on Programming Content
The respondents were asked about who influences the programming content and they indicated that 40% is influenced by the listeners, followed by 27% by the presenters, 23% by the producers and volunteers 10%. From the findings we learnt that listeners have an upper hand in influencing programming content because it has to be locally oriented and produced as a partnership between the Community Radio and the Community. Sterling et al. (2007) provides evidence that Community Radio listeners are given a voice with which to respond to programming and to create programming content. The researcher agrees with the above statement because from the findings, for example, issues of mugging and human rights violations are often reported by the listeners at the Community Radio Station making it run like a police station report office. Once they receive such reports and verify their validity, they present them on air for all to hear and take collective community actions.

Respondents further said that Kenya Community Radio haves programmes that deals with current affairs and politics that affect the community, issues of sexuality, entrepreneurship, unemployment, HIV/AIDS and STIs, day to day life of a slum dweller
which are meant to offer encouragement and hope, educates on child nutrition and health; providing cheap and affordable tips to healthier living and common children diseases, Business and environment etc.

**Community Projects**

The question sought to know whether radio station organize community projects that influence your audience in living together, working together, conflicts/anomosity reduction, sharing of information, job creation of which 73% indicated yes while the remaining 27% indicated No.

**Forms of Community Projects**

The respondents were asked which were some of these community projects which influence audiences in living together, working together, conflicts/anomosity reduction, sharing of information, job creation, of which 33% indicated Environmental Cleanup, 27% indicated Microfinance, 23% Drama Festival and finally 17% indicated sports/tournaments as one of Community Radio projects.

**Extent of influence of Community Projects and Indicators of this Influence**

The respondent were asked to give their personal view on to what extent does these community projects influence their audience in living together, working together, conflicts/anomosity reduction, sharing of information, job creation. The influence is that 67% indicated to a large extent, 20% moderate, 3% less extent and 10% indicated not all.

**Indicators of this Influence**

From the literature review, Walters et al. (2011) claims that effective radio activities can make a significant change in a community’s life. Through the activities of Community Radio, the people are encouraged to peacefully coexist at the family and community levels. The researcher agrees with the author because from the findings is that all the Community Projects organized by these Stations focuses towards fostering Social Cohesion and Integration.

From discussion some of the indicators of this influence is that 67% indicated that to a large extent projects like sports matches, environmental campaigns, local musical and theatrical performances, educational projects, microfinance/welfare initiatives, call-for-peace processions and others help people to come together, live together, share information and stay involved in those projects. On the other extreme end 3% felt that influence of these Projects is less extent by these Community Radio Stations.

The influence of these projects is that there has been greater participation of the Community thus culminating in a beehive of activities geared towards improving the Community’s livelihoods and in so doing fostering Social Cohesion and Integration.

**Public Forums**

The question sought to know whether the respondent do organize public forums where listeners can participate in open discussions among of which 80% of the respondent indicated yes, 20% indicated No.
Based on findings, Community Radio Stations do organize Public Forums where everybody gets together to hear and discuss an idea that will benefit the whole community and bring about development. Further from discussions with the Community Radio it was revealed that some of these organized forums are community gathering at social halls, chiefs camps or in schools, open air meetings at nearby stadiums etc.

**Factors that Necessitated the Public Forums Strategies**

When respondents were asked to indicate the factors that necessitated the public forum strategy to be employed was to: Share information – 33% of the respondents indicated very strong, 54% of the respondent indicated strong, and 13% of the respondent indicated average on the same. Express their fears – 51% of the respondents indicated very strong, 39% of the respondents indicated strong and 10% of the respondent indicated average. Conflict Animosity Reduction – 20% of the respondent’s indicated very strong, 46.7% of the respondents indicated a strong level, 20% of the respondents indicated an average level and 13.3% of the respondents indicated a weak level on the same. For working together – 15% of the respondents had very strong views on working together, 25% of the respondents had strong views, 40% of the respondents had average views and 10% had weak views. For National Identity – 15% of the respondents had very strong views on the national identity, 55% of the respondents had strong views, 20% of the respondents had average views and 10% of the respondents had weak views on the same.

**Contribution of Public Forums and General Satisfaction with the Communication Strategies**

Public Forums by Community Radio as a way to foster social cohesion and integration is inevitable. From the findings contribution of these forums is that 73% of the respondents strongly agreed that Public Forums is a good strategy employed to bring people together in a community, 17% agreed, 7% Disagreed while 3% strongly disagreed.

**General Satisfaction with the Communication Strategies Employed to foster Social Cohesion and Integration**

From discussions respondents expressed their satisfaction towards Communication Strategies employed by Community Radio in fostering Social Cohesion and Integration. From discussion with Kenya Community Radio Stations we learnt that the influence of Community Radio in fostering Social Cohesion and Integration was demonstrated clearly during PEV period and after in Kenya.

There are other Communication Strategies which can be employed but these mentioned are some of the main ones with respect to this study.

Comparing from the literature review, Prehn (2002) asserts that participation is the engine of democracy and Community Radio is a tool for participation. They work to strengthen their communities to promote community for social change, cultural development, and democratization.
This is true because as reflected from the findings these Public Forums by Community Radio serves as an avenue where people can Share information, Express their fears, Conflict and animosity reduction, for working together, for National Identity etc. All this is geared towards fostering Social Cohesion and Integration among various Communities. Comparing from the literature, Tett, (2010), says that Social cohesion is the capacity of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members, minimizing disparities and avoiding marginalization. In fostering Social Cohesion and Integration, Githaiga (2008) asserts that in Kenya Community Radio has, despite its tiny size, emerged from the post election with great credit and arguably provides a model for the future. Few Community Radio Stations that do exist in Kenya appeared to have played a much more positive role during the PEV. The researcher confirms this from the findings in that most Kenya Community Radio Stations existed before and after Kenya PEV. Also comparing from Empirical Studies of Simli Radio in Ghana, a station that try to remain political and non-partisan, especially in conflict prone areas have greater impact in delivery of services, (Simli Radio, 2010). Example from the findings is that Ghetto FM station prides itself as, Kenya’s politically-neutral station at election time (2013).

**Summary of Major Findings**

**Target Audience and Period of Broadcasting**
From this study, targeted audience of Community Radio is composed of youths, followed by women, then children and finally others. Kenya Community Radio Stations have been broadcasting for more than 5.

**Core Programming Content, How Core programming content influences in fostering social cohesion and integration and who influences the programming content**
Community Radio core programming content are news/local or Community news, followed by entertainment/music, followed by education, security, health issues/HIV/Aids, women issues, agriculture, religious issue and lastly politics. We further learnt that Community Radio Stations are politically neutral stations. From the findings it was revealed that Community Radio use programming content strategies well in educating the communities on various issues affecting them which foster in Social Cohesion and Integration. Findings further revealed that listeners have an upper hand in influencing on programming content because the Community Radio is for the community.

**Forms of Community Projects, Extent of influence and Indicators that they foster Social Cohesion and Integration**
Findings showed that Community Radio Stations do organize community projects which uplift the lives of community. Based on findings some of Community Projects that influence in fostering Social Cohesion are Environmental Cleanup, Microfinance, Drama
Festival and Sports/Tournaments. Further to that, these projects influence to a large extent in fostering Social Cohesion and Integration. Indicators is that projects like sports matches, environmental campaigns, local musical and theatrical performances, educational projects, microfinance/welfare initiatives, call-for-peace processions and others help people to come together, live together, share information and stay involved in those projects.

**Forms of Public Forums, Factors that Necessitated the Public Forums Strategies, their Contribution and General Satisfaction in fostering Social Cohesion and Integration**

Based on findings Community Radio Stations do organize Public Forums where everybody gets together to hear and discuss an idea that will benefit the whole community and bring about development. From the findings some of these forums are community gathering at social halls, chiefs camps or at schools, open air meetings at nearby stadiums etc. During these forums handbills, T-shirts, caps are distributed with peace and reconciliation messages. Factors that necessitated the Public Forums Communication Strategy mostly was for Conflict/animosity reduction followed by express their fears, share information, work together and last for national identity.

From the findings contribution of these forums is that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that Public Forums is a good strategy employed to bring people together in a community. From discussions respondents expressed their satisfaction towards Communication Strategies by Community Radio in fostering Social Cohesion and Integration and especially during Kenya PEV period and after.

**Conclusions**

Kenya Community Radio can employ very good Communication Strategies that can foster Social Cohesion and Integration but this influence has not been realized because there is a problem of lack of a distinct identity and confusion with Vernacular FM.

A community radio station is one that is operated in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community. Therefore Kenya Community Radio requires better, more strategic engagement and support in Kenya and elsewhere so as to eradicate the problem of a distinct identity and confusion with Vernacular FM and also they should voice more of their existence.

Through their programming content Community Radio Stations often serve their listeners by offering a variety of content that carries news and information programming geared toward the local area. Therefore programming content needs to be relevant to its community and actually relate in fostering Social Cohesion and Integration. Handful of Community Radio Stations active in Kenya’s post election period was praised for their balanced reporting approach. Therefore the Government of Kenya should come so strongly to support them and ensure their continued existence.
Community Radio projects encourages people to peacefully coexist at the family and community levels. Therefore Community Stations should be encouraged to widely publicize these projects to gain a lot of goodwill from well wishers. Through public forums, they provide communities with opportunities to foster Social Cohesion and Integration. Therefore this should be a continuous process where everybody gets together to hear and discuss an idea or proposal that will benefit the whole community and bring about development.

**Recommendations**

There is need to find a way of voicing more about existence of Community Radio Station in Kenya. They need to come up so strongly to differentiate themselves with other commercial vernaculars radio stations. The Government of Kenya should come so strongly to support them and ensure their continued existence. The more interactive, entertaining, engaging or compelling the radio content, the more likely it is to have an impact through their programming content. In fostering Social Cohesion and Integration there are hardly any words that are free of charge. Therefore caution needs to be exercised on use of words in a programme, and the picture that these words create.

Through Community Radio Projects, the people are encouraged to peacefully coexist at the family and community levels. Station should be encouraged to widely publicize these projects to gain a lot of goodwill from well wishers. There should be partnership between public and private groups. Also Listeners should therefore be continuously involved in all aspects of these stations.

Public Forums strategy enhances participation which gives listeners a sense of belonging, importance and achievement. Recommendation is that, it should be an on-going interaction between the Community Radio Station and the Community to foster Social Cohesion and Integration.

**References**


