


Community Radio Social Impact Assessment: Removing Barriers, Increasing Effectiveness

A Synopsis

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, AMARC conducted in a 2006 a long-range participatory action research seeking to identify the barriers that limit the potential positive impact of community radio and explore ways to increase the effectiveness of community radio in achieving poverty reduction, development objectives, inclusiveness and democracy building in local communities.

The evaluation process highlighted that communities have sought in community radio a means to express their own issues, concerns, cultures and languages. Community ownership of the media and participation in programming has led to communication processes that are effectively empowered local actors to achieve poverty reduction, forward development objectives, encourage inclusiveness and participation, peace building, good governance and accountability. AMARC and other stakeholders have contributed strongly to the expansion of scattered CR experiences into a dynamic and diverse global sector of broadcasting that has become an alternative to commercial and state owned media, which often neglect representation of the poor, the marginalized particularly women.

The evaluation process has pointed to the lack of proper enabling legislation as the single most important barrier to increased effectiveness of CR social impact.

 It has also revealed the rich experience of CR movement and the need to encourage exchanges of best experiences in order to better highlight CR social impact. There is need for appropriate tools and indicators to evaluate CR social impact that go beyond information dissemination indicators or small project impact in individuals. Some specific experiences point to the need for further research on how to increase the effectiveness of CR. To do so, the most important challenge is to embed participatory monitoring and evaluation across the CR network

AMARC plays a leading role in the worldwide CR movement for its perception of what CR should be, for its accumulated expertise and the extension of its network of more than 3000 members from 110 countries. The last AMARC 9 World Conference of Community Radio Broadcasters held in Amman Jordan in November 2006, received the first findings of the evaluation process and defined strategic lines of action for 2007-2010 seeking to reinforce the CR movement by removing barriers and establishing conditions for increasing its effectiveness. This book seeks to share the evaluation process findings and contribute to increased debate and awareness of CR social impact.