



Panos Eastern Africa

Driving Change Through Rural Radio Debate in Uganda



Evaluation Report
March 2011

Supported by Deepening Democracy Program in Uganda

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Community members participate in a Rural Radio Debate.

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Foreword

Panos Eastern Africa has been implementing the Rural Radio debate Project since July 2009 in partnership with 20 radio stations across Uganda. The project goal was to contribute to a free media's promotion of accountability by providing rural communities with a platform to voice their concerns and engage their leaders.

Through the project PEA has built the capacity of the partner radio stations to promote meaningful and inclusive debate and dialogue within communities.

In order to take stock of the project progress, Panos Eastern Africa commissioned a midterm evaluation of the project to assess the effectiveness of the rural debate methodology; profile the emerging issues/themes from the debates; document achievements and lessons learnt from the project implementation.

This is a report of the outcome of the evaluation. We hope it will enrich the already existing knowledge and contribute towards other efforts to promote good governance and accountability through use of radio as a tool for voice, community empowerment and participation.



Okubal Peter James Ejokuo
AG EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive summary

Panos Eastern Africa's Rural Radio Debate project in Uganda aims to strengthen rural people's participation in democracy. The project began in late 2009 working with 20 partner radio stations around the country, piloting a new methodology. Panos Eastern Africa (PEA) supports the radio stations to hold debates in communities on development, governance and political process topics that are generally selected by the communities themselves. Radio station staff moderate the debate in which community members engage with local leaders and office-holders, experts, and NGOs. The debates are broadcast and extended with studio debates and phone-in programmes.

In January 2011 PEA commissioned an independent evaluation with four areas of focus: to assess the methodology and its potential, to assess the results so far, to examine the topics for debate emerging from the communities, and to identify any challenges in implementation. This evaluation would feed into the preparation of a proposal for a second phase of the project, later in 2011.

Section 1: Profile of the debates

Summary information was available on over 350 debates held in the period December 2009 – January 2011. Nearly one third of the debates were about local services and infrastructure issues. Health was the most common topic, followed by education, roads, and water and sanitation. These topics are very pertinent to the project's purpose, since they enabled communities to understand better how services are delivered and to hold the providers accountable. 61 debates were on election-

related topics, fulfilling part of the project's purpose of empowering citizens to participate more meaningfully in the 2011 national and local elections. 50 were on general governance and accountability issues. 57 were on social/cultural issues such as heavy drinking or teenage pregnancy. These topics included many that are largely outside government's responsibility, and the debates often resulted in increased awareness by the communities and individuals within them of their own role in finding solutions to problems. The topics overall match quite closely with other pictures of Ugandans' concerns such as media coverage, the Citizens' Manifesto, objective statistics, and political manifestos. The rural debate process has not so far revealed any previously hidden concerns. The challenge for governance in Uganda is not failure to recognise the problems but failure to listen to the voices of poor people and act effectively to resolve the problems.

Section 2: Evaluation of the Rural Radio Debates methodology

The concept fits well with current understanding of good governance, which sees good governance as requiring not only capable government – the supply side - but also citizens actively demanding good governance and holding power-holders accountable – the demand side. The concept is highly relevant for Uganda, where independent local radio stations exist as potential partners for communities in holding power-holders accountable, and a local government structure down to village level offers potential channels for community influence and demand.

This section describes each stage of holding a

rural debate and the actors involved, identifying how each contributes to the whole and what factors need to be in place for them to do so. It draws out some key lessons learned from experience so far. Key lessons are:

- The methodology places significant demands on radio stations, which strong stations can meet but which are challenging for some weaker stations. PEA needs to review the possibility of providing additional support to help weaker stations make the most of the methodology.
- Advance preparation of each debate is essential. This should be more strongly emphasised in project planning and training.
- Skilled moderation of debates is essential. More emphasis should be placed on developing the moderation skills of partner radio staff.

Section 3: Results and impact

There is clear evidence of positive results for each objective – both short-term results consisting of actions to resolve problems and bring immediate practical development gains to the participating communities; and indicators of longer-term results, consisting of observable changes in attitudes, behaviour and processes among the various stakeholders which are likely to bring further practical gains in due course. The richness of the results already found at this early stage justifies the view that the methodology is effective and relevant to Uganda at present.


Project Objective 1 - Strengthened capacity of selected rural communities to voice their concerns, debate development and political issues, influence decision-making and demand accountability – is broken down into eight separate elements, to provide evaluation

indicators. ‘Capacity of a community’ includes voice, information, debate skills, familiarity with radio, a sense of agency, participation of opinion leaders, ability to demand accountability, and participation of women. From the information available in reports it appears that change is evident in all these areas, and some of the stories of results listed in Annex 6 provide more objective evidence.

Project Objective 2 - Strengthened culture of responsiveness among power-holders – can be broken down into six indicator areas: actions, commitments, participation in debates, responding to debates, embracing radio as a partner, and improvements in service delivery and engagement with communities. Cultural change of this kind is bound to be slow and many power-holders are still opposed to or suspicious of the rural debates, but signs of change are appearing. The 46 stories of ‘actions taken as a result of debates’ in Annex 6 all illustrate progress towards this objective.

Project Objective 3 - Strengthened capacity of selected rural radio stations to facilitate such engagement and responsiveness. Change in this area is crucial for the lasting impact of the project. Stations need to work with communities to keep up the pressure on local and national power-holders after the project itself is over. It is too early to see concrete results here, but some stations are already saying that have found enough benefit for themselves from implementing the methodology – such as increased audiences, and increased credibility and influence – that they intend to continue using it.

Impact will be achieved through building a culture and habit in the people of Uganda of engagement in democratic processes and demand for accountability. Such a culture will be



sustained by a constant role of media as forum, platform, channel and watchdog. It is too early in the project to look for impact yet, but there are already signs that the project can achieve it. The methodology is creating interest, ripples from debates are spreading beyond their specific locations, and people, politicians and radio stations are all gaining a sense of the potential power of radio.

Section 4: Implementation constraints and challenges

The methodology is new, and so it is important to monitor implementation issues carefully. PEA staff have responded effectively to a number of issues that emerged in the course of the project's first year – for instance, the need for additional training for the radio stations. Four areas are identified where resolving issues at this stage would contribute to a stronger next phase of the project.

Partner radio stations: the methodology is demanding in terms of staff time and skills. Some stations have been able to implement the project to a very high standard, but for others it is a stretch and they have been holding fewer debates than planned, and sometimes of less good quality. PEA needs to reflect on whether there is any way of giving additional support to the weaker partner stations without creating dependency.

Training for radio station staff and regional editors: a training methodology and different training inputs should be consolidated. Initiatives already begun to strengthen the ongoing training support should be intensified, which might include an increased role for the regional editors, and/or separate in-house training courses. Training needs of the regional editors should be considered.

Monitoring and reporting is important for management, accountability and learning. Much has been achieved in the face of a media culture in which project reporting is unfamiliar, but there is further to go. Reporting systems and requirements need to be clearly agreed, understood and adhered to.

The Regional Editors are key actors in the project implementation, providing management, support for the partner stations, skills-building and problem-solving, and acting as channels for information to PEA. While some have provided valuable and appreciated support to stations, others have not, and several have neglected their role as conduit of information and learning to Panos. PEA should look more closely into the reasons for the varying levels of performance. More regular contact, support and encouragement might help all to perform at the standard of the best. To achieve this and other improvements, PEA may need to increase the management time devoted to the RRD project.

Introduction:

Evaluation purpose and methodology

Panos Eastern Africa's Rural Radio Debates Project was launched towards the end of 2009, piloting a new methodology that was felt to have great potential for deepening rural Ugandans' participation in democratic processes. In January 2011 Panos Eastern Africa (PEA) commissioned me as an independent consultant to carry out a mid-term evaluation of the project, when it had been in operation for a little over a year. The purposes of the evaluation were to document the methodology as it was working out in practice; to assess the results and early indications of impact of the project; to identify any issues that needed to be addressed in the second year of this first phase; and to draw out lessons and make suggestions for the design of a new phase, to be undertaken later in 2011.

The evaluation was carried out from 24 January to mid-February 2011, mainly in Uganda but with additional desk research and document analysis carried out in London. I reviewed project documents and aggregated information from the project's management and monitoring documentation; interviewed PEA staff involved in the project; visited eight of the 20 partner radio stations to conduct semi-structured interviews with station managers, station staff implementing the project on the ground, some local people who had been partners in organising debates or had participated in them, a few listeners and members of participating communities; and met with three of the project's Regional Editors (of whom there should be ten, but seven of the posts are currently filled). The field visits of eight days in total were organised by the project manager in PEA, who accompanied me on the

visits along with PEA's information officer. The project manager had selected the stations to be visited to include stations in different parts of the country, stations under different types of ownership (private, NGO, religious), and stations that were implementing the project most successfully as well as some that had experienced some difficulties. Accessibility was also a factor, given the limited duration of the field visits.

The main purpose of the evaluation was to deepen understanding of the methodology and its potential, as well as to assess whether the project was on track to achieve its objectives. The methodology was new, and its activities, processes and management were being reviewed and adapted in response to experience throughout the first year. Part of the evaluation task, as I interpreted it, was to analyse the objectives, break them down into elements and suggest indicators and approaches that can be used for more rigorous evaluation in future phases of the project, both of process and impact. I also made recommendations for consolidating the methodology and building on the experience so far.

This was a mid-term evaluation carried out after only just over a year of project implementation. I was not, therefore, looking for impact-level results. However, through aggregating and analysing the impressively large number of short-term and local-level results that have been recorded, I was able to suggest the impact that is likely to be achieved in the longer term. This is consistent with a "theory-driven" approach to

evaluation. The underlying Theory of Change has not been laid out in any detail, but it seemed to me that for the present purposes a sufficiently clear and coherent theoretical understanding is implicit in the project design.

The evaluation was shaped by its purposes, the modest resources available, and the extent of the documentation and data that had been gathered through the course of the project. Limitations included:

- No attempt was made to gather information from all the partner radio stations.
- Selection of the radio stations to visit was made by the PEA project manager, not by the consultant. There was some bias in favour of strongly-performing stations – but this was reasonable, given that the primary purpose of the evaluation was to understand the methodology and its potential rather than to assess performance.
- There was a lack of previously-established indicators and baseline data. For some areas this would have been difficult to achieve but in others – for instance, the capacity of radio stations – it could have been done and should be introduced in future phases.
- It was not possible to observe the operations of partner radio stations at first hand. The evaluation relied on self-reporting by the stations' staff and

reports from the regional editors and Panos staff.

- It was not possible to observe debates at first hand or to engage directly with community members. Again, the evaluation relied on observations reported by radio station staff and regional editors.
- Serious attempts have been made by PEA at systematic documentation of the project activities and outputs, but the documentation is not complete. For instance, some reports of debates are missing, and not all contacts between regional editors and the stations in their area have been documented.
- Some aspects of analysing the process and impacts of debate at community level require more focused research, including observation and interviews, than was possible this time. For instance, to gain more understanding of the factors affecting the participation of women in debates, or the influence of local opinion-leaders on community members' confidence in speaking out. The deeper understanding of empowerment processes that could be gained through such research would be very valuable not only for PEA but also for the wider development community.

Annex 6: Evaluation Terms of Reference

Section 1: Profile of the debates

The purpose of the Rural Radio Debates project is to strengthen the capacity of rural people to engage actively in democratic political and governance processes (see page 32). This capacity includes people's willingness to identify and debate priority problems and issues for their communities. As part of assessing the project's progress, therefore, it is important to see to what extent communities are taking up the opportunity offered by the project to initiate their own debates, and the types of topic they are proposing. It will also be useful for PEA to know whether some specific topics are emerging as particularly widespread concerns: this information could be the basis for further interventions, and may also provide a way in to assessing the project's impact in due course. For these reasons PEA asked the consultant to gather and analyse the available information about the topics of the debates carried out during the first year of the project.

This profile is based on review of 350 summary reports and notes of debates held between December 2009 and January 2011. The radio stations organising the debates were located all around the country from Mbale to the Rwenzori Mountains, from Arua in the north to the DRC border in the south. Most of the stations were located in towns, but the project support has enabled them to venture deep into surrounding rural areas, sometimes as much as 200 km from their base. Broadcasts of the debates were heard even further afield – for instance in Kenya from Mbale, and in Sudan from Kitgum.

The numbers of people who were physically present in each debate varied widely, from less than a dozen to nearly 1,000, so it is not possible to give a figure for how many people participated in person overall. The audience hearing the

debates on air was of course far larger: the programmes were popular, and were broadcast at popular times during the weekend.

The project purpose is understood as to strengthen rural people's participation in formal political processes - particularly important during a year leading up to general elections - and to strengthen their engagement with day-to-day management of public affairs, institutions and resources at local level – important at any time. At least three-quarters of the debates were on topics suggested by the communities themselves. For the rest, the radio stations or project's editors introduced topics that were key for the project's purpose but that the communities themselves had not at the time seen as priorities – particularly topics around political processes and the elections.

For the purpose of this profile, I have grouped the debate topics as follows:

- Service delivery: 108 debates
- Specific election-related topics: 61 debates
- General governance and accountability: 50 debates.
- Social issues: 57
- Livelihoods: 20

See Annex 1 for a list of the debates by topic.

These topics overlap, of course. Weaknesses of service delivery result from poor governance and accountability; some of the livelihood issues could also be classified as access to services or governance; and the election-related topics include the ability of elected leaders to enhance delivery of services and account for their actions. The 'social issues' group is the most distinct, including topics which were more about communities' own behaviours and cultures (for instance, fear and stigmatisation of children

born to LRA rebel captives) but here too the role of laws and institutions is present. For example, prevalent drunkenness is linked to the opening hours of bars; teenage pregnancy is linked to the poor quality of educational provision and achievement.

Different debates on the same topic have a different focus and angle. This shows the freedom of each radio station team and each community to shape the debates themselves, as well as the stations' different levels of commitment, skill and maturity. This freedom is crucial to the project, as it is part of stations building their own engagement with their communities and their ownership of the project.

Service delivery

Health

Access to and quality of health services was the most frequently-chosen topic across the country. It was identified by communities themselves, generally as an obvious and persistent problem, but once or twice in response to a particular event such as a cholera outbreak. Specific topics included physical dilapidation or inadequacy of health centres, absence of health centre staff or undesired behaviour and attitudes, poor or costly services, and particularly the non-availability of medicines in health centres (the main focus of at least 8 debates). Petty corruption is often thought to be the cause – theft of drugs by health centre staff, which are then sold on the market instead of being provided free, and charging for services and small items (such as gloves) that should be free.

We do not have information about actions or decisions resulting from all the debates surveyed, but of the 46 actions known to have

resulted from debates (see Annex 6), eight are in the area of health – so it seems safe to assume that debates on health topics quite frequently produced speedy responses. In a number of cases we do know about, the suspicion of corruption was corroborated, and the offender dealt with. In other cases, the causes of problems were neglect, low morale and inefficiency – all attributable to poor management.

In many cases the issues were corruption, which can be addressed by exposing and refusing to accept it; and inefficiency, which can be addressed in the same ways, identifying who is responsible for what different parts of the service, exposing them and holding them to account. In these cases, where the problem is occurring at local or district level, the RRD methodology can help bring about immediate solutions – providing a platform and trigger for collective and public highlighting of the problem, identification of those responsible and pathways for change, clarification of people's entitlements and exposure of failings. In other cases, the problem was absolute shortage of resources. This is more difficult for communities to address, as they have rather little power to attract more resources into their area. So the power of the RRD methodology in these cases is indirect, helping put the questions of resources and quality of service on political agendas.

How significant is the topic of health services in the overall topic of empowerment and democratic engagement? Very: health care is something that is of immediate importance to people on a regular basis, it is a fundamental responsibility of governments to provide or ensure provision of, and because it functions at a level close to the communities, it is within people's reach to do something about it, to a certain extent. Not only in Uganda but all over the world, monitoring of services at grass-roots

level and creation of demand from service users are being seen as key to improving management of health services.

Education

Education as a topic was in equal second place, and like health was mostly identified by communities themselves. Many of the same points can be made about education as about health services. As with health, education is a daily concern and Uganda is a country in which people are aware of and responsive to their right to education. Free primary education has been a pillar of government policy for 13 years and free secondary education for three years. The achievement is way below the promise. The content of debates was mostly focused on management issues at specific local schools, including the very low morale and poor behaviour of teachers – drunkenness, sexual exploitation, absenteeism - evidence of low expectations and poor management throughout the system, starting with each school’s head and School Management Committee. At the same time communities took a share of the responsibility for low standards of achievement and high dropout rates. Parents were reminded of their duty to ensure children attend school, adequately fed. Communities were reminded of their roles – as parents, and as members of PTAs and SMCs. There seemed to be more sympathy for teachers, with poor pay and no accommodation, than for health workers, and some communities were willing to contribute to teachers’ housing.

Five of the known immediate results followed debates on education, suggesting as with health that the RRD can play an important role in catalysing demand and action where the solution is within reach at local level. Some of the debates were on issues that could only be addressed at

national level, such as the effectiveness of the mother-tongue curriculum, so again the role of the debates is to enable people to reflect and voice their views on issues that should be on political agendas.

As with health, education as a topic is highly relevant to the overall goal of building engagement. If people do not feel empowered to influence the school their children attend and hold its staff accountable, they do not feel empowered at all. If they do not understand the administrative bureaucracy it is part of, they are unlikely to understand other systems that govern their lives. And at a higher policy level, education curriculum and standards are so much part of a country’s culture that they should be shaped through consultation and discussion, reflecting the needs and aspirations of communities.

Water and Sanitation, and Roads

WatSan was in equal second place in terms of the number of debates, closely followed by Roads. In these infrastructure topics, corruption in tendering and contracts was a recurring theme. Nine of the known immediate results followed debates on these topics, suggesting again that the methodology is effective in exposing malpractice and enabling people to demand accountability. In the case of roads, the debate moderator often had a role to play in providing information, as it is not easy for communities to know which authority is responsible for what road, or how contracts are managed. Plenty of information also emerged about non-performing statutory structures such as water management committees. But as with education, communities were also ready to learn about and recognise their own responsibilities – for organising the maintenance and cleanliness of water sources, for instance, or providing community input into road maintenance.



Ibuhe Bridge which broke down two weeks after construction in October 2010. The Bridge which connects several villages to Masindi –Butiaba road was subject of debate by Radio Kitara in Masindi

As with the previous topics, the relevance of these to the overall theme of empowerment is high. These are services provided at district level and lower, and people need to understand the bureaucratic responsibilities in order to know where to turn to identify failures and demand action. There is a big information gap, which committed rural radio, through projects like this, is well-placed to fill.

NAADS

NAADS featured frequently, perhaps because it's the main "development project" (as opposed to regular service delivery) in most areas (apart from the north) and is much trumpeted by the President. Debators had very little good to say about it. Issues discussed included: how the beneficiaries are chosen, why the benefits are not more widely spread, confusion about how much the beneficiaries are supposed to contribute themselves, and questions about the integrity of the suppliers of inputs. Corruption was frequently cited as a rotten core at the heart of NAADS. Whether or not this is true is not the issue here: it is the negative perception, the lack of trust, that is important. Ironically, NAADS was

designed to be a participatory and empowering programme, but that is hard to implement in a country like Uganda where it is often observed that people's default position is rather *not* to participate, *not* to seek information. Too little effort was apparently made in the rolling out of the NAADS programme to overcome these obstacles, and people feel excluded.

What could the debates project contribute to this problem? The "problem of NAADS" is not one that could be solved at local level, but communities obviously needed and valued platforms for expressing their views. Debates on NAADS were reported as being very emotional and with people clamouring to speak. There was some valuable sharing of information: people learned more about how NAADS is supposed to function, and NAADS officers listened to people's problems and corruption charges and started responding to the general information deficit. Gradually the debates might strengthen people's confidence and willingness to engage positively in this important government programme.

So how relevant is the topic to the "Participating in democracy" purpose? Again, very. This is a government development programme in which

participation is actually directly intended, and people need to be enabled to do that. Greater success would have very positive side-effects such as nurturing greater confidence in and willingness to engage with government.

RRD topics compared with other areas of national discourse

Part of the evaluation remit was to compare the topics being generated by communities in the RRD project with topics being discussed in other areas such as politicians' campaigning. The intention was to see whether communities were putting forward issues that were different from, and neglected by, discourses at higher levels. This was not in the event a substantial focus of the evaluation mission, mainly for reasons of time, so the following observations are preliminary and impressionistic.

Topics in radio and print media coverage

First, it is interesting to compare the topics covered by the media in general, including some of the RRD partner radio stations, with the topics covered in the rural debates. One source of comparison is the Memonet Media Monitoring report covering the period 1 – 21 December 2010.

The report observes that “rural FM radios are not broadcasting controversial topics in their news programmes,” and “some media houses blocked opposition candidates from accessing their stations.” The main topics covered by the vernacular print media were security, health, and education. For radio, the main topics varied from region to region but overall in order they were: economy, human rights (especially in the north), security, corruption, education, health, agriculture, roads and energy. There is plenty

of overlap but not 100% matching with the RRD topics.

Three of the RRD partner stations were part of the Memonet survey: Spice, Rock Mambo and Open Gate. For Spice, the top topics covered in their news programmes were human rights, which had more than four times as much air-time as the next topic, the economy; followed by agriculture, energy, security, corruption, and health. Rock Mambo also put human rights first, followed by security, corruption, education, health, roads, agriculture, and economy. Open Gate led with energy, followed by economy, health, corruption, education, agriculture, security, human rights, and roads.

A rapid scan of topics covered by the country's main newspapers during two weeks a month before the election was not particularly revealing: the papers were covering the political campaigns, and politicians were reflecting back to the voters what they knew the voters wanted to hear, as politicians usually do at such times. The match between the topics covered and the communities' major concerns expressed in the rural debates was almost total.

RRD topics compared with Ugandan vital statistics

It is worth noting that the RRD topics seem to match the objective reality of Ugandans' lives, as this is described by the usual channels of statistics and development reports. In health, for instance: maternal health services occur frequently among the RRD debate topics, and Uganda does have a high maternal mortality rate, at over 500 per 10,000 (among the worst 25 countries in the world, according to Unicef figures). Inefficiency in service delivery occurs frequently as a topic of debates, and it is true that of the small per capita sum spent on health annually (also

among the lowest 25 countries in the world, according to Unicef) less than 10% reaches the citizen – a sign of serious inefficiency.¹ Similarly with education: drop-out rates are indeed very high, as the RRD participants observe. Of the 7 million children who enrolled for primary year one in 1997, fewer than one million sat for their primary leaving examinations in 2003. The completion rate for girls declined from 30% in 2007 to 25% in 2008.²

RRD topics compared with the Citizens' Manifesto

A further triangulation of the RRD topics with other “maps” of Uganda’s challenges can be done by comparing them with the issues that emerged from the Citizen’ Manifesto process.

The Citizens Manifesto was developed in 2010 through a fairly systematic and large-scale process of consultation and dialogue with grass-roots people and citizens’ organisations across the country. It was organised by a group of NGOs concerned to build a movement advocating for top-to-bottom reform of Uganda’s political and administrative systems and culture. People were asked what they wanted to see in a revitalised Uganda. Aggregation and analysis of results from all the local and interest-group exercises across the country produced a list of the 10 development issues seen as most critical. Below, these 10 issues are listed in the order they appear in the Manifesto, with their ranking among the RRD development and service-delivery topics for comparison. (The ranking of the RRD topics is very approximate, because we do not have enough information to do a systematic ranking.)

1 Information taken from the Citizens Manifesto national synthesis report

2 As previous

RRD topics compared with the Citizens' Manifesto

Issue	Rank in CM	Rank in RRD (service delivery topics generated by communities themselves)	Comment on RRD ranking
Corruption	1	Cross-cutting	'Corruption' did not occur as a theme in the abstract in the RRDs. However, specific instances of suspected corrupt practice occurred frequently, and many speakers mentioned their general view that corruption is widespread, during debates on many different topics.
Poverty	2	0	'Poverty' in general did not occur in the RRDs, but several debates focused on particular aspects of poverty or poverty-reduction, such as "Have loan schemes helped women in this area?"
Declining fortunes of agriculture	3	=5	Agriculture and NAADS together were the topic of 19 debates, coming equal 5 th (with violence against women) in the list of topics.
Environmental degradation	4	0	One debate on Climate change was the only one focused on an environmental topic.
Poor infrastructure (roads)	5	4	
Unemployment (especially of youth)	6	≤10	Youth unemployment was debated mostly as one aspect among many of the difficulties of bringing up sons. It was ranked lower than 10 th in the number of debates.
Population growth rate	7	0	This did not occur at all in the known RRD debates
Breakdown of the health service delivery system	8	1	Top of the RRD ranking
The poor quality of education	9	=2	
Low levels of civic consciousness	10	0	This did not occur as an explicit topic in the RRD debates, but was evident in many debates – indeed, combating these low levels of civic consciousness can be seen as part of the purpose of the RRD project.

The similarities in the two lists are clear. The differences between the two rankings can easily be explained by the nature of the Citizens' Manifesto exercise, in which the direct suggestions made by poor people were analysed and aggregated into policy-level views from the perspective of the needs of the nation as a whole, as well as complemented by considered suggestions from organised groups such as women's organisations. This was different from the Rural Radio Debates, where the topics are the direct, perceived grievances of poor people looking at their own communities. It is not surprising that "environmental degradation" hardly appears as such in the RRD list: rural people are likely to experience it as an aspect of lack of water, or poor returns from agriculture. Similarly, it is no surprise that rural Ugandans themselves perceive the high birth-rate as a problem of poor services, not as a national problem in itself. The "low level of civic consciousness" identified by the Citizens' Manifesto process can be seen in almost every one of the rural debates, but people who are trapped within that low-level consciousness are not likely to articulate it as a problem.

There is no judgement being made here about one being a "truer" picture of the issues facing Ugandans than the other. The purpose, as stated above, is to compare the issues emerging from the RRDs with other comparable sets of issues, to see how the RRD issues fit into a wider picture and to check whether there are any anomalies emerging that would merit further investigation or action.

Election-related topics

According to the information available to the consultant, this set of topics was to a certain extent introduced by the project, especially

early on before campaigning fever had really got going. It does not therefore reflect the priority concerns of communities as much as does the previous set of topics.

Voter registration exercise

This group of debates raised practical/logistical questions faced by rural people – was the time long enough, was the process effectively run? Many people failed to register, and some felt that the process was deliberately rigged against them. The need to register was clearly understood, and its relation to fair honest conduct of elections. One debate went so far into the process as the display of registers – allowing voters to check their name is present and correct.

Elections and the multiparty system

These topics aimed to strengthen people's understanding and share views about how the multiparty system works. They were largely educational in character. (Many speakers apparently preferred the old system, where voting was effectively for an individual rather than a party.) There was a focus on individual performance and accountability rather than much discussion of party discipline and loyalty – aspect of the system which are perhaps harder to understand and appreciate. The NRM primaries in August 2010, in which discipline and loyalty broke down within a single party, did nothing to help build people's understanding, and presented voters in Feb 2011 with a confusing picture. Though the functioning of multiparty politics is not yet very clear, and the influence of debates like these impossible to measure, in the long term of course voter education of this kind is essential if Ugandan politics and governance is to mature.

Roles of different levels of elected representative

Key to people's ability to hold leaders accountable is their understanding of what the leadership role at each level actually consists of - what is the area of responsibility, what should be expected and what demands can be made? A lot of the scepticism and disengagement of ordinary Ugandan people stems from unrealistic or unclear expectations of different actors, and subsequent disappointment when they 'fail to deliver'. A few of the partner stations made a point of this, with carefully-framed debate questions avoiding direct didacticism but designed to help people elicit clarity themselves.

Performance

As for the previous group, it goes without saying that a democratic electoral system depends on people judging whether or not to re-elect their MP/incumbent at any level. But based on what? It is not clear whether the debates elucidated what the system itself requires. The debates show communities vowing to reward 'performance' and to vote out candidates who have not performed, but what does 'performance' consist of? For local leaders it's not difficult - adequate supervision of service delivery, fairness, personal integrity, determination to root out corruption, closeness to and understanding of the communities, etc are legitimate measures. For parliamentary representatives it is less clear, though MPs paying more attention to constituency concerns would be a good place to start.



Three Hoima Mayoral Candidates take part in a live debate organized by Spice FM in Hoima Town 25th February 2011

Electoral malpractice and electoral violence

The debates classed as ‘malpractice’ were about bribing voters. This is such an open and standard practice in Uganda that it is not surprising many members of communities accept and support it. Though some speakers and radio stations promoted the view that it undermines the viability of the system, this did not prevent some communities and their members from coming out in favour – “I’ll take the money then vote how I like”; “The person I vote for will get a lot out of it, why shouldn’t s/he pay me a bit first?” and even “They should pay more, don’t they have any respect?”

No one disagreed that violence around elections is to be deplored and avoided. The topic occurred quite frequently because people were understandably fearful after the violence in the NRM primaries, and before that the explosion of violence after neighbour Kenya’s elections in 2007. Like other many countries Uganda has a large population of volatile young people who can quite easily be persuaded to riot and violence.

All these and the other election-related topics are highly relevant to the project goal. In the short term it is not possible to measure any outcomes from these discussions, but they fulfilled a major need in the pre-election period, helping to people to understand the process and allow them to air their views and concerns. In the long term this kind of discussion can be expected to build a more profound understanding of and confidence in the system.

Social issues

The topics in this group seem to have been mostly chosen by the communities, but occasionally the radio station chose one on the basis of a

recent incident or publication of a report, and a few seem to have been suggested by NGOs. The topics include marital relations, gender-based violence and sexual issues (teen pregnancy and abortions, rape and impunity of rapists); youth unemployment and riotous behaviour, including drink and drug use; the clash of modern versus traditional culture; and some issues of superstitious stigmatisation of LRA abductees and their children.

In many of these debates it seems the communities were exploring for themselves the role of ‘governance’ in the topics. There was often a call for more robust regulation or control by the forces of law and order, but communities also recognised the role of individual and group behaviour and attitudes in addressing problems. Drunkenness, for instance: higher bar licensing fees and shorter bar opening hours may have some effect in reducing it, but it is also a matter of culture, of social and peer expectations, as well as of wider economic factors such as unemployment. Communities taking responsibility for themselves should certainly be seen as part of ‘democratic engagement’. These also tended to be issues which polarised sexes and age-groups, thus encouraging different groups to speak out. This would encourage the habit of discussion and dialogue, which also is the point of the project.

General governance and accountability

Issues in this group included land disputes, creation of new administrative districts, general local budget and management issues and corruption, crime and insecurity. Most of them would have been suggested by communities. Some were addressing local problems which could produce an immediate action and solution; others addressed general principles and aspects of national governance.



Photo 1: Hitting two birds with one stone; A breast feeding mother gives her views in a debate by RukungiriFM



Photo 2: A Karimojong woman stresses a point in a debate by Nenah FM in Moroto

Women’s contribution to the RRD topics

Given women’s lower level of participation in the debates than men’s – in numbers present and speaking, and no doubt in contribution to selecting topics - do the topics covered in the Rural Debates reflect a male-centric view of the world? Are women’s voices being muffled, as they so often are in development-related consultation exercises? A separate survey of women would be needed to find out, but looking at the information we have, it seems not, at least not in the set of debates on service-delivery subjects. Health is the day-to-day concern of women more than men, as are education (in the sense of being responsible for getting children to school fed and dressed) and water. Of the social issues too, a high percentage are strongly gender-related – rape, domestic violence, insecurity. Women seem to have attended the debates on politics and election-related issues in smaller numbers than others, but along with the reports that women were hesitant to speak because they generally leave politics to their husbands, there were also reports of women listening attentively and speaking effectively.

Section 2: Evaluation of the Rural Radio Debates methodology

The following description is of the Rural Radio Debates methodology as it has developed from the project’s inception in mid-2009 to the time of the evaluation mission in early 2011. The methodology has changed and evolved since it was presented in the original project proposal, and it was for this reason that PEA asked the consultant to describe and assess the methodology as it is now. One major difference is that live outside broadcasts, originally planned as the core activity, were outlawed in September 2009, as the project was getting off the ground. Other differences derive from refinement of the methodology as it was tried and tested on the ground.

The concept

The project was designed to strengthen rural people’s engagement in democracy at national and local levels. Since 2005 Uganda has had the structures and processes of multiparty democracy, but among the general population

particularly in rural areas understanding of how a multiparty system works is limited, and so people have little capacity to understand what their vote means and hold their elected leaders at different levels accountable.

In the day to day administration of public affairs and the delivery of services, ordinary people's ability to engage with processes and hold office-holders accountable is also very weak, even if the structures for them to do so are present in theory (such as local governance structures extending down to village level, and participatory bodies for the supervision of schools). Feeling that they are ignored by leaders and have no power to influence decisions, people become cynical about leaders and government. They become passive and don't seek to understand or participate. The result is that inefficiency, neglect and corruption go unchecked, and poverty and low levels of development persist. (Uganda scored 2.5 out of a possible score of 10 in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perception Index. This was the same as its 2005 score.)

Good governance, according to DFID's 2006 analysis, requires the state's *capability* to perform its key functions; *responsiveness* to its citizens' aspirations and needs; and *accountability* to its citizens.³ Government is the supply side of good governance. In its 2007 publication *The case for communication*, Panos London added to DFID's definition an emphasis on the importance of active civil society creating the demand side.⁴ People must have the capacities to express their aspirations effectively and to actively hold government accountable.

The Rural Radio Debate methodology has been

3 *Eliminating world poverty: making governance work for the poor*, UK White Paper on International Development, Department for International Development, London 2006

4 *The case for communication in sustainable development*, Panos London, 2007

developed specifically to do this - to address people's disengagement at grassroots level and to strengthen the demand side of good governance in Uganda. It aims to help people become effective partners in good governance, participating actively in democratic political processes and the administration of affairs. The core of the concept is rural radio stations and their enormous potential to inform, convene and mobilise people, to amplify their voices and to be fora for debate and dialogue. The methodology sees rural radio stations as potentially key actors in participatory democracy and good governance.

The methodology's main activity consists of bringing together local communities in person and on air to discuss development and political issues of local and national concern, among themselves and with power-holders and representatives. The communities "make their voices heard", airing their experiences and views. There is also an emphasis on identifying the causes of problems and then looking for solutions, and on clarifying for people what powers they individually and collectively have to act and make a difference - whether in a local administrative issue or in national elections. Broadcasting the debates gives wider reach, producing increased pressure on power-holders to act to resolve the issues raised.

The aim of the project could be described as not just 'voice' but 'effective voice' - effective for accountability. 'Voice' means not just individuals' voices but voices aggregated through the public debate process to become 'community voices'; voices not just complaining of problems but seeing and demanding solutions; voices not just to one another within the community but voices in dialogue with local power-holders; and voices not just at community level but across districts through the radio broadcasting, and reaching up

sometimes to national level.

The Rural Radio Debates methodology is highly appropriate for Uganda because it turns on local radio stations, mobilising their power to facilitate debate and amplify voice. Uganda has dozens of radio stations outside the capital, which have varying but substantial degrees of freedom (depending on who owns them) to make their own decisions about what to broadcast and to participate in a project like this that challenges the status quo. Radio ownership and listenership rates are quite high and radio is on the whole a major and trusted source of information.⁵

Another factor in the potential impact of the project is Uganda's local government structure, which goes down to village level. The structure of district, sub-county and village-level councils is intended to bring services close to the people. In practice now it is often perceived as ineffective and as offering many opportunities for manipulation and corruption.

⁵ Information cited in *Transitioning to Peace: attitudes towards social reconstruction and justice in northern Uganda*, University of California, Berkeley School of Law, December 2010

But at least it exists, and one role of the radio debates is to enable communities to engage with it, stimulating flows of information and accountability which will make it more effective and bring it alive. Many of the debates carried out so far have involved communities learning about, challenging, engaging with and making demands of the local governance structure.

The existence of these two institutions – the radio sector and the local government structure – means that the RRD methodology has enormous potential for bringing change across the whole of Uganda.

This chapter assesses the value and potential of the methodology as a means of strengthening voice and participation. It describes the methodology one step at a time - what each step involves, key factors in its success and contribution to the project purpose, and issues and lessons learned from experience so far.

The Rural Radio Debate process

1. People involved

Partner radio stations

The twenty stations participating in the project are of different types - private, NGO/community, religious – and different sizes. One of the most successful has 30 staff, another equally strong has 18. PEA invited them to be part of the project on the basis that they already had a broadly public service mission with most of their programming devoted to public affairs-related talk rather than music or religion. PEA estimated that they would have the fundamental capacity to carry out the project.

For their part, the stations chose to participate because they thought the programme would enhance their community service mission, strengthening their programming and enhancing their role in their communities. Stations have to make significant contributions from their own resources – the time of experienced staff for several days a week to carry out the project and attend training and support sessions, and a regular airtime slot which the project does not pay for. PEA provides some small items of equipment and transport costs for carrying out debates. This material input is deliberately modest, so as not to attract stations to partner for financial reasons. PEA believes that the project can bring clear benefits to the stations.

The stations' commitment to the project is an essential element in achieving the long-term goal. Once the project support is over, the stations will have skills, experience and audience demand for continuing a similar activity or other types of programming in pursuit of the same goal of deepening democracy.

Experience so far shows that implementing the project well does indeed bring benefits to the partner stations (see page 45). They gain higher audiences, and increased trust and identification from their communities, all crucial for the survival and growth of a community-based station. Some of them are also starting to win recognition from power-holders as intermediaries between people and authorities. Acceptance by power-holders of radio's role in governance is a key indicator for the project's long-term goal.

The project calls for a debate every week and a broadcast based on the debate, in a regular and popular time-slot. A key factor for the partner stations in running the debate project well and at this level of activity is staff time. Station staff have to be deployed to cover the functions of producer (overall supervision, research, planning and preparation of the debates); moderator (who leads and moderates the debate in the community); presenter (who presents the debate broadcast, and hosts studio guests or phoned in contributions); and technical back-up. PEA recommends a team of at least three people, not full-time on the project but able to give it several days a week. Support from a wider editorial team can contribute to identifying topics and framing them for debate, and generally support the project.

In practice few of the partner stations have been able to consistently commit the full amount of staff time PEA suggests, and to build a stable team and routine. Stations face many challenges of financing, staff turnover, inexperienced management, and pressure of external events

- particularly from politics during the run-up to the 2011 elections. Many are carrying out the project in a worthwhile way but at a lower level of performance than originally envisaged, for example holding one or two debates a month instead of four. A few are struggling to maintain a staff complement with sufficient skills and time to explore the methodology's full potential. The lesson for PEA is that it needs to consider what level of performance, in terms of numbers of debates, is sufficient to produce the results, and whether expectations should be adapted to match the capacities of all the partner stations; and whether more support could help the less strong stations develop.

Summary point on the methodology's potential:

- Radio stations exist whose mission matches that of the project; the project builds the stations' skills and capacity and helps them establish commitment to the role of radio in deepening democracy and a demand from their audiences that they will do so.

Summary point on lessons learned:

- The project methodology can be very successfully adopted by some radio stations, but for others it is a stretch. PEA must consider how to adapt the project to fit with the actual capacity of partner stations.

Communities

Each week the debate team from the partner station goes to a different village/community in their area to hold and record a debate, after preliminary visits and discussion to ensure the community is interested and willing and to confirm selection of the topic. The team tries to visit far-flung communities who rarely get the chance to speak and be heard, at least

occasionally: some debates have been held in locations 200 km away from the station. The higher costs of visiting remote parts are balanced by debates in more easily accessible places such as towns or market centres on main roads: the need for building understanding of and engagement in democracy exists almost equally, after all, in these less isolated places.

The community's contribution to a debate is mainly the time and trouble individuals have to take to attend. Debates commonly last for around two hours. The draw may be at first the novelty of radio coming to the community, and the intrinsic interest of the topic. As people become more familiar with the idea of debates, the value of the opportunity to discuss issues in a public forum with local leaders starts to attract them.

PEA does not give any financial or in-kind incentive to reward people's participation, though they often expect this. Some stations report that their communities are coming to accept the idea that debate is valuable for its own sake, while for other stations people's expectation of a reward is still a challenge.

The numbers who attend debates vary enormously, from as few as 10 to over 1000. Many stations regularly draw between 40 and 100, but the numbers seem to be unpredictable. We do not know what factors distinguish debates that attract huge numbers from those that barely convene 20 – whether it is to do with the mobilisation activities of the station, or its existing popularity, or local cultural and geographic factors. It does not seem to be related to the topic of the debate. There is perhaps no 'right number' of participants. However, the reasons for the variation should be investigated and lessons learned. If a station regularly attracts small numbers to debates, this would suggest

that communities lack interest, or are still suspicious and afraid as most were at the start – which would suggest in turn that the stations in question are not succeeding in building profile and public enthusiasm for the concept.

Summary point on the methodology’s potential:

- The format of an open-air debate is easily accessible to most people, and a station’s debate programme can be driven by demand coming from communities.

Summary point on lessons learned:

- Numbers of community members participating in debates on the ground vary widely from one community and one station to another. PEA needs to look into the reasons for low numbers and identify additional support if appropriate.

Invited guests

Debate among community members themselves has value – exposing and articulating issues, broadcasting and calling attention to concerns, and sometimes moving towards solutions. But the debate has greater value if those with power to influence and achieve solutions are directly involved, to explain the problem or issue, clarify the pathway towards addressing it, answer questions and challenges about their own role, and commit to action. In other words, if the voices of the community result immediately in greater transparency and an accountability process. An element of a successful debate is that key actors have been identified, invited and persuaded to participate, whether in person, in the studio or by phone. This is part of the role of the debate programme producer. The guests may be local and district council heads and members, officials

and technical staff, private sector contractors, or NGO representatives. Plenty of local leaders also attend without specific invitation, more-or-less ex officio: reports from debates show a steady presence of local-level leaders.

The idea of the debate concept is that in the short term these power-holders, though reluctant and not accustomed to such public scrutiny, will participate in debates because they see they can’t avoid it. They are figures with public duties and responsibilities, and the debate will expose them to questions and challenges which they will have to answer in one way or another. Gradually, it is hoped, they will acknowledge the fact of the debates and will join in with less reluctance and adapt their behaviour – some even embracing transparency and accountability and welcoming the role of radio as a useful tool.

At present, however, many power-holders are still reluctant and fearful, and avoid engaging if possible. Many still see the debates as attempts to undermine them, rather than as initiatives for the general good. There have been occasions when officials have disrupted debates, or tried to. Sometimes on the other hand they accept, and then have to be restrained from taking over and using the debate as their own platform. Listening to the communities is strange for them.

But a change in the political culture - the long-term goal of the project – is starting to happen (see Section 3, Results). There are already several examples of politicians welcoming the debates and the idea of transparency in general. It will be important to track to what extent this was a feature of the pre-election year. Once the level of political contest has died down, perhaps there will be less positive support, and the debate radio staff will have to work harder at this aspect.

Summary point on the methodology's potential:

- Debates, actual and on air, are successful as a mechanism for communities to engage with power-holders and hold them accountable. The methodology has the potential to contribute to a change in the political culture.

Summary point on lessons learned:

- Building trust and engagement from power-holders will take time, but is starting to happen.

NGOs

Partnering with NGOs working on relevant issues in their area has proved an effective way for some stations to strengthen debates. NGOs can bring knowledge of issues on the ground, expert speakers, and sometimes the capacity to mobilise communities effectively. For their part, they may value the opportunity of extending their reach through radio. Sometimes the NGO and radio station already know one another, on other occasions the NGO happens to hear a debate or trailer and approaches the station. NGO partners with different stations for one or more debates in the past year include Warchild Canada, Child Rescue, World Voice Uganda, district-level NGO Forums, FOWODE (the Forum for Women in Democracy), the International Republican Institute, the Midwestern Region Anti-Corruption Coalition, Karughe Farmers' partnership, and Karambe Action for Life Improvement (see box).

Radio Stations and NGOs; a win-win partnership

An on-going collaboration that brings benefits to both partners is between Kasese Guide Radio and Karambe Action for Life Improvement (KALI). This local NGO works on governance, corruption, civic competence, accountability, service delivery, and gender – many of the concerns of the debates project. KALI and Kasese have collaborated for five debates so far - on the stalled building of a district HQ, water supply issues, and the citizen's manifesto. For Kasese Guide Radio, KALI are a good resource. KALI's network of community agents at sub-county level have been involved as mobilisers and resource people in some debates, and a network of trained community-level volunteers monitoring service delivery provides unusual access to issues.

For KALI, Kasese Guide Radio gives them access to a new type of radio programme and bigger audiences. "We used to do a few public debates before, like Ebimeeza, and various live broadcasts, talk shows and press conferences. Guide's moderating helps make the issues lively and explain them to people. The number of people calling in shows the impact." The collaboration extends beyond the rural debates project. "We invite Guide whenever we have a workshop. Sometimes they give us their services free. Guide has helped us expand and widen our network"

Summary point on the methodology's potential:

- There is potential for radio stations to partner more often with NGOs in the project, as it can be a win-win situation.

There have been no negative experiences so far, but radio stations would have to ensure their independence was not undermined or challenged.

Summary point on lessons learned:

- Partnership of stations with NGOs was not identified in the original project concept. It should be incorporated into future proposals.

2. Preparing a debate

Preparation is essential. The time and depth of preparation accounts for much of the difference between successful and less successful debates. Sometimes a debate may be prepared within a week, sometimes it can take longer.

First the producer identifies a community for a debate, a week or more in advance of the planned debate date. The community may be identified by the station, or suggested by NGO partners, or it may have rung or written to the station itself to request a debate. At first the fear of being perceived as challenging authorities and politicians was a big constraint on communities, but gradually as people heard the broadcasts and started to trust the station and understand the nature of the debate, more and more communities started taking the initiative themselves to contact the station and request a debate. Some requests come to the radio stations with the endorsement of the local council chair, others simply from groups of concerned citizens or individuals. Partner stations say the demand exceeds what they are able to supply; the project is becoming 'demand-led'.

The next step is to choose the topic for the debate. Ideas for topics come from a variety of sources. Most are proposed by the communities themselves; sometimes the station proposes the

topic, responding to an event that has been in the news; sometimes suggestions come from community leaders or from NGOs working in the area. At least one debate was organised opportunistically, piggy-backing on a meeting called by the District Chief Administrative Officer to discuss relief after landslides. The station's debate team may have to select the most viable and appropriate from a number of proposals. In the early months of the project, support with selecting topics and forward planning was part of the job-description of the regional editors. In practice they have done this less, as stations prefer to be led by the communities' suggestions, in keeping with the spirit of the project.

When communities first suggest issues, they are likely not to see them in terms of governance – so it is up to the debate team to probe into the issue and identify a governance angle to be debated. Besides keeping the debates in line with the project goal, having a narrow and specific topic rather than a very broad one helps focus the debate on solutions. The topic "Why are we poor?" is likely to produce a disconnected series of personal views from which no plans for action can be distilled; whereas the topic "Why has such-and-such government programme not benefited us?" is more likely to lead to focused, in-depth exploration which can lead to answers. A strong and well-supported team is able to sit down together to discuss the topic, perhaps with their regional editor, and agree how to handle it.

“There had been shoddy work on a road. The contractor did the work with local hoes, not a grader, though he charged for that. We looked at the road, visited the engineer, got the cost, the contract and the name of the contractor, and then visited the district secretary for works. Then we did the debate. The community rose up, demonstrated and confiscated the hoes. Because we researched we have never been taken to court” (Rock Mambo Radio)

The producer at Mighty Fire FM explains: “We develop an objective for the show – the reasons, what can be done. For instance, girls dropping out of school. The main reason is that people have no hope, and little help from their parents. Hunger.

Then we move on to what can be done? We also ask leaders – why haven’t you done anything about it? Every time they come on the radio, even in talk shows they’ve paid for.”

Ideally the station links with the community through informal contacts or visits community leaders to discuss the topic, refine it and check that it is appropriate for discussion.

“We sit down in an editorial meeting and ask our reporters for places and issues. We choose one, then go to the place and ask the people and leaders if it is a proper issue to discuss. We are looking for issues where we can make a difference.” (Mighty Fire FM)

Next the producer and team must research the debate topic. This stage is important for moving the debate towards solutions – it will move further if the journalist has seen the way forward him/herself, and brought in the right people. If it is a local problem s/he must find out who is affected, the history of the problem, and

its causes; what approaches to resolving it seem promising, and what information people lack that might help them address it. In this investigative journalism stage, the debate team speak to different stakeholders to understand the issue and where responsibility lies, or gather facts and figures on the seriousness of the problem.

“Sometimes we extend the preparation of the topic over several weeks. When you go to the field without information you feel a fool.” (Kagadi Kibaale Community Radio – KKCR 91.7 FM)

A date, time and location for the debate are agreed, through the station’s contacts on the ground or local leaders. Stations may avoid involving politicians in helping arrange debates, as it is important not to compromise people’s perception of the station’s neutrality. The debate is announced over the airwaves a few days before it is due to take place; the local contacts may also help mobilise people to attend.

The next step is to invite relevant power-holders to participate, so that they can respond to questions and challenges. Stations differ in how they do this. For instance, KKCR 91.7 FM is already well-known to leaders and officials in its region for its many public-interest talk shows and it has a network of people who are willing to come to the studio. Other stations’ producers have to work harder to explain the nature and purpose of the debate and persuade suspicious power-holders to participate. Mighty Fire FM makes a point of bringing leaders to the debate itself: *“We bring the leaders and local people face-to-face. It’s the first thing of its kind that’s happening in the district. It’s not only beneficial to the community but for others who hear on radio.”* Life FM, on the other hand, prefers to invite leaders to the studio: *“We don’t usually*

invite [leaders higher than LC1 level] to the debate as people won't speak out in the presence of authorities." The difficulty of persuading leaders to travel to the location of the debate is also an issue. Rock Mambo Radio and Kyoga Veritas Radio do not even invite studio guests during the debate programme itself, for fear the leaders will dominate the debate to the exclusion of ordinary people's voices. Instead they may invite them to phone in, or invite them into the studio to appear in a different talk show.

Is one of these approaches better than others? At this stage we have not done sufficient analysis to be able to say that any one approach is more or less effective than others. Each station has good reasons for running the debates the way it does, and there is value in respecting their differences. On the other hand, from the perspective of the project objectives it would be desirable to encourage more face-to-face interactions and support all the actors – communities, leaders and moderators – to learn to manage these. Perhaps the partner stations could be encouraged to experiment, for instance through exchanges of experience and visits to one another to see debates in operation.

The preparation stage of a debate is often skimmed, by stations which are not able to commit enough staff time or where staff have not received training and have not understood how important this stage is. The result may be a debate that is weaker in a number of ways. If the topic was not thoughtfully distilled and formulated, the debate may be hard to focus and lead towards solutions. If the journalist/moderator has inadequate understanding of the issue it may be harder to keep debators focused on the point, and the moderator is more at the mercy of the emotions and demands of individual participants wanting their turn to express their complaints. For example, Radio Apac reported

of a debate on child abuse, *"Divergent views almost brought chaos, and it was difficult to quell."* KKCR, in a debate on the removal of a market, reported *"Commotion, straying off the topic, trying to unseat the LC3."* If the team have not brought opinion leaders, relevant leaders and officials into the debate, their often valuable roles of calming tempers (in the case of opinion leaders) and identifying sources of change are missing.

Of course debates must not be so carefully planned and controlled that they are being 'spun' or stage-managed towards pre-planned outcomes, losing the purpose of allowing communities to express themselves. There is a balance to be found. A debate that is less successful in terms of generating new understanding, ideas and commitment might mean a less positive result for the community, and in the longer term a less positive view of the debate project from audiences, politicians and the radio station itself – and less sustainability. So it is important for PEA to maintain support, monitoring, mentoring, and renewing of skills, maintaining continuous discussion with stations about the importance of committing adequate resources. Training and agreeing MOUs are not one-off actions at the beginning of the project, but a continuing process, given the flux and fragility of most radio stations.

Summary point on the methodology's potential:

- With adequate preparation by the station, key actors lined up and key knowledge gathered, the stage is set for the debate to move towards a solution or learning.

Summary point on lessons learned:

- This crucial preparation stage is often skimmed by stations that are over-stretched or under-committed. It was

perhaps not sufficiently emphasised in the original RRD concept and proposal document, in the orientation or the project management tools. More emphasis should be placed on it in the future.

3. Holding the debate in the community

The team arrive and set up their recording equipment at the appointed place, and the community members assemble. Sometimes people drift in during the debate, attracted by the crowd or having finished their other tasks, or drift out having decided they have better things to do. This can be a problem if the topic has to be repeatedly re-explained. Some stations own a public address system which they can use to call people as the debate is about to start. (One station has observed that it is harder to hold a debate in a town because people there expect a certain level of grandeur such as a public address system and a tent. Without that they do not take the event seriously. This station partnered with a better-equipped international NGO to hold an urban debate.)

Some radio teams use the time while they are waiting for a crowd to assemble to talk informally to people, hear what they think and encourage them to speak when the time comes – particularly women.

The debate begins with an introduction by the moderator, introducing the topic, explaining the use of the microphone, setting the rules for the debate (wait to be invited before you speak, listen to and respect others, try not to repeat what others have said, keep it short and to the point) and establishing time-keeping (sometimes two minutes per speaker). Sometimes invited guests make presentations, and then the community members are invited to speak and ask questions,

coming to the microphone as the moderator calls on them.

Many stations have noted the valuable role of community opinion leaders. Ordinary people may be hesitant to speak out until a familiar and respected figure has set the tone. Community elders and retired officials are often able to fill in the background history of an issue or remind debaters of how things used to be dealt with in the past. Being more used to such discussions than the ordinary people, they are often able to keep tempers calm and help guide the debate forwards.

The moderator's skills are needed to keep interventions short and to the point, to invite responses from guests as appropriate, and to prevent people from using the opportunity for personal attacks or political campaigning (a constant challenge during the pre-election year). Moderating may be hard, if people are not used to listening and lack debate skills, if they find it hard to understand the topic, if emotions run very high or if people are still nervous about speaking out in front of authorities (or in front of their husbands, in the case of women). It is often noted that people are shy at first and gain confidence half-way through a debate. The moderator at Spice FM explains how he brings women in:

"I go up to someone with the mic if I look at her and think she has something to say. Recently a woman I approached gave the best example of the whole debate: 'I'm a small farmer with a nice pineapple garden and some nice-looking goats. The NAADS programme came and offered me money to pose for a photo as one of their model farmers – but I wasn't part of the programme.'"

A skilled moderator has a plan and follows it, allowing community members to talk about the problem or issue as they experience it, then

pausing and deliberately starting to move the debate towards solutions.

“We arrive a little early, introduce ourselves. Then there are presentations, perhaps by some local leaders. Then we ask ‘From this presentation, is there anything we have learned?’ and people start answering. Their weakness is often that they lack information.” (Kyoga Veritas Radio)

“After they had talked about the causes (of rape), we asked ‘Now that we’ve seen the causes, how can we see a solution? This is a common problem in our area. Why can’t we find solutions?’” (Radio King)

The moderator may ask for ideas, or elicit information to help people understand the pathway towards solutions, or give information based on the team’s own research: who is actually responsible for the dilapidated road? Is the council chair the right person to complain to about a poor school? What can you realistically expect your MP to do for you? In a good debate people listen to one another, get ideas and make new suggestions. At the end, the moderator wraps up – what have we learned? What have we decided? KKCR say, *“At the end of the debate, we ask, ‘So what do you need to do?’ (Our aim is to harmonise between the community and leaders.)”*

It is hard for one person to lead and manage the debate on his/own. A team of at least two people is better – one to moderate, one to help by observing, counting participants, taking notes, perhaps carrying the microphone to speakers.

PEA is committed to promoting the voices and participation of the most marginalised people such as the disabled, and women. Does the debate methodology enable such people to speak out? If marginalised people attend the debate, the moderator can ensure they are

invited to speak. The participation of women seems often to be the result of the moderator’s deliberate intervention rather than spontaneous. But to what extent the most marginalised in a community actually get the opportunity to speak and be listened to in a public forum surrounded by other community members and leaders is a question that PEA should monitor. Is the talk dominated by the more powerful, the elites within the community? The important role of opinion leaders in starting off the discussion, making it ‘safe’ for people to speak, certainly raises a question about a downside to this – do people follow and echo their views, keeping their own opinions to themselves?

At the start, PEA put more emphasis in training on the studio stage of the debate – hosting studio guests and callers. Though PEA realised early in the course of implementation that it was in the area of organising debates in the communities that skills were most lacking, it seems this is still an area of weakness for some partner stations. Some stations mention in their reports that debates are difficult to handle, suggesting lack of skills in moderating, as well as lack of preparation. PEA must strengthen the training element of the project, including providing for continuous monitoring and reinforcement of skills.

Summary point on the methodology’s potential:

- With skilled moderation, a debate can be an effective and accessible platform for marginalised people to speak out, to others within their community as well as to wider audiences.

Summary point on lessons learned:

- Skilled moderation is needed to ensure debate is not dominated by any one speaker or group of speakers such as the more powerful within communities.

PEA should track this.

- Skills in moderating are still lacking in some partner stations. PEA should ensure sufficient monitoring and support to strengthen them.

4. *The broadcast debate*

Back at the radio station the team and editors edit the full recording of the debate down to the required length for broadcast. This might be done on the Saturday after a Friday debate, ready for a Sunday broadcast. None of the radio staff the evaluator met mentioned regretting that live broadcasting of the debates is not possible at present. Being able to edit the recording for time and relevance seems to compensate for the loss of the extra frisson of hearing a debate live and the political freedom this embodies.

Broadcast debate programmes have titles that emphasise the participatory nature of the programme: “Your Parliament”, “Your voice”, “The Voice of the People”, “Knowledge is to be shared”. Some have catchy tag-lines or theme songs – in one case, a song performed by a rural woman as her contribution to a debate, which has become very popular with the station’s audience. The programmes are broadcast weekly if the station can sustain this, with a repeat broadcast from time to time if for some reason one planned debate did not take place – because of political interference, perhaps (experienced on one or two occasions), or because of bad weather.

The programmes vary in length from 30 minutes to two hours or more. A typical format consists of an introduction by the presenter (up to four or five minutes long if the issue has to be explained); the edited version of the recorded debate; studio guests (if these are present – see above) responding to issues and questions raised

in the debate; and a section for listeners to call in and add their view or ask questions. Some stations also include pre-recorded interview material from power-holders. Callers-in may include power-holders if they were mentioned or attacked in the programme and feel the need to give information or defend themselves immediately.

We don’t have figures for the audience size of the debates. Some partner stations report that the debates have attracted their largest audiences. Since rates of radio ownership and listening are quite high in Uganda, and several of the partner stations now have the highest audience figures in their regions, it is safe to assume that the debates are reaching a significant and growing proportion of the population outside the capital.

Several stations report that the debate programme has also become required listening for power-holders in their region – anxious to know at once if they are being challenged, and to intervene if necessary. In one area, the power-holders and politicians ask the topic of the debate in advance so that they can be better prepared; others are reported to meet together on the day after the broadcast to discuss it and agree any response. There have been many cases of power-holders contacting the station asking for a ‘right to reply’ – including by paying for airtime themselves.

There have been some cases of the airtime slot allocated to the debate programme being eroded. It may be cut or re-allocated altogether if an agency or politician wants it and pays for it. As long as the project does not pay for airtime (which is a good principle for boosting the stations’ ownership and sustainability) it is vulnerable to this in the case of weaker, less stable stations for which selling airtime

overrides other longer-term considerations such as building audience loyalty.

Summary point on the methodology's potential:

- The debate broadcasts can be among the stations' most popular programmes. It can therefore be assumed that they reach a significant proportion of the population around the country.

Summary point on lessons learned:

- There have been cases where the allocated airtime has been eroded or given to another, paying, programme.

5. Follow-up

Debates are planned to move towards solutions, but the solutions are not likely to be instantaneous. It is more likely that an action is promised or planned for the future (see Annex 6). The radio station has an important role in following up to track and broadcast that the actions are carried out as agreed: power-holders will know that the public eye is on them, and on-air audiences of the debate will know when positive results ensue. Each time this happens, it will reinforce the sense of empowerment.

Follow-up can happen in several different ways.

- Sometimes power-holders themselves ask for airtime to inform the public when they have taken action.
- The debate team may take the responsibility for following up. At Kasese Guide Radio, *"in every debate we make sure those responsible give a timeline for action. Then we call them to check."* Radio King asked community members and activists to keep in touch with them: *"In a debate on rape, a group was set up to fight back, to educate people and talk to victims. They have a*

centre offering handicrafts and mutual support. We told them, if you have a problem, contact us. We haven't heard anything, so we plan to go back and see a positive story." At KKCR they *"write to the stakeholders, telling them about the debate and asking them to take action. They might also come to the studio to be on our Leadership and Development programme."*

- Some stations have regular programmes to evaluate the debates, inviting listeners to call in with comments and updates. (This is an idea that was proposed by PEA in the middle of 2010. Where it has been adopted it seems to be working well.) For instance, at Kasese Guide Radio: *"We have a slot every Wednesday for people to phone and give us feedback. And an evaluation programme the last Friday of every month. The evaluation programme is useful – getting feedback from the community, thinking about how to follow up."*
- For stations that have continuing relationships with NGOs, these can become part of the follow-up process. Kasese Guide Radio say, *"We share the follow-up roles with KALI. Sometimes we get news from the community and report it to KALI, sometimes the other way round."*
- In many stations the story is passed over to the news team, who broadcast any information they receive about results and may follow up the stories themselves. For instance, at Rock Mambo Radio: *"It's our responsibility to follow up. If the leaders have promised something, we incorporate this into the news."* Kyoga Veritas Radio: *"The District Council chairman called in to tell us when the Asuret health centre had been*

refurbished [after our debate]. We sent a reporter and broadcast it in a news programme.”

- An issue may be incorporated into the agenda of other current events talk shows through the week. A talk show host at Rock Mambo Radio says: *“I get a lot of information from the debates. I use clips from the debate in my morning talk show and ask the audience to ring in.”*

Summary point on the methodology’s potential:

- If a station integrates the debate programme with its other news and talk programming, they enrich each other. The impact of a debate is strengthened if it becomes part of the region’s news agenda for a while.

Summary point on lessons learned:

- PEA should formally incorporate the different sorts of follow-up into the debate methodology and encourage all partner stations to do it.
- PEA should also gather information about follow-up more systematically than it does at present, to help it assess the impact of the project.

6. Panos inputs: training and mentoring

The debate methodology requires particular skills from the journalists that are well beyond the usual experience of a rural radio journalist, so training workshops and on-going training and mentoring support are essential elements of the project. *“In rural stations we don’t have many highly qualified people. We employ people with two-year diplomas from local journalism schools,*

and have to strengthen them. [Besides] the media is constantly changing, the training helps us keep up.” (Spice FM) The skills are mostly the skills of high-quality journalism – research and investigation, framing topics, planning, interviewing and moderating discussions – which can enrich the stations’ other programming and news reporting beyond the project.

One focus of training has been to build journalists’ understanding of the broad area of governance and accountability. Another has been the project’s concept of debate and the skills needed to hold a successful debate. These were new areas for the partner stations: most had done some ‘participatory’ programming, but this mostly consisted of inviting guests into the studio or possibly recording vox pops in the field. The skills of moderating a debate are different: research and framing topics; moderating; dealing with emotion and conflicting views; talking and listening to rural people. (The partner stations are referred to as ‘rural’, but in fact they are mostly based in towns, and many of their journalists have little experience of going out into deep rural areas to talk to people there.) A debate that moves towards problem-solving may also require skills that are nearer to conflict resolution and mediation skills than normal journalism. Panos is developing a resource to back up the debate-organising skills – a “Step-by-step guide to organising a rural radio debate.”

Three or more members of the debate team from each station were invited to participate in a training workshop. Several participants in the workshop have attested how helpful it was for them:

“[At first] we didn’t know how to carry out debates. Our first debates were one-sided, one angle, we didn’t get leaders’ views, and they attacked us for this.” (Rock Mambo Radio)

“From the training [I gained the idea of] ‘mind mapping’ – to think how can we get communities to discuss the issues we want them to. And how to get women to speak - talking with them ahead on how to choose a topic. And how to control people, having a time-keeper.” (Mighty Fire FM).

Another focus for training was to reinforce the core skills of media professionalism – research, accuracy, balance, objectivity and observance of the law in political reporting. This was particularly important in the pre-election year which saw rising pressure from government and politicians and proposed new powers to close down any media seen as ‘undermining national security’. It was important for the debates, and for the stations as a whole, to maintain and be able to defend a reputation for being non-political (in the party-political sense) and balanced. The effort seems to have paid off. Though some stations may have self-censored, others were able to stand up to pressure and none was formally charged with any violation of the law.

Resources to back up this training included posters of media ethics and key points of the country’s broadcasting law.

“At first I had to refer to the checklist all the time, but now it’s in my head. It has helped me do the research, go to offices and ask questions, demand answers – why are there no drugs? Why this shoddy work on the roads? (I was a news reporter before, not used to investigating).” (Life FM)

In some stations those who participated in Panos training themselves have been able to pass the training on to other staff, both in and beyond the debate teams. Some have done this informally but effectively, but Spice FM has set up formal processes.

“The training was just for one, but we have internal workshops to pass it on. We have a regular programme of internal staff development, since the new management. Everyone is included, 16 including interns. Our debate project Regional Editor helps us plan them. One session was on ethics – we pinned up the Panos chart and I led the session, based on the Panos training. The second was on elections – how to play and stay on the pitch. Again we used the Panos notes, and brainstormed. It has helped, no one has been in trouble. The boss gets complaints but we can always justify ourselves. The ethics session included that we had to fight “payola”. It was undermining our reputation. On election coverage – fairness, moderation. Unbalanced subjective stories were slipping through into the news sometimes, causing trouble.”

The PEA training workshops have been effective, but it has become clear that workshop-based training is not enough – both because new people join the programme regularly and need to be upskilled; and because, at least for some, transferring understanding from the classroom to the field is better done through on-the-job training and mentoring, and regularly reinforced. Recognising this, PEA took steps to strengthen the contribution of the regional editors to training and skills development, developing a plan for them to carry out regular mentoring sessions with the stations. Plans are also being developed for a series of in-house training programmes, in which a trainer will be able to accompany the holding of a number of debates and provide hands-on advice and support.

Summary point on the methodology’s potential:

- The skills and approach needed to organise successful debates can be conveyed through training.

Lessons learned:

- If the debate team in a station are very

overstretched, they are unable to put what they have learned into practice. For instance, they may not be able to spend time preparing a debate, even if they know how to do this. This fact must be part of PEA's overall consideration of how to support weaker and less well-resourced stations in using the debate methodology.

- Some of the station staff who attended the main training workshop were not the right people to receive and use the training—for instance, some stations sent studio-based technical people rather than journalists. In future, PEA must be more careful to clarify the different roles involved in the debate project and discuss these with the stations in advance, and help them identify which staff members to send for training.
- Now that a training curriculum and approach has been developed for the methodology, it should be written up – as a resource for future training, to support the roles of the regional editors and in-house trainers, and as a reference for project teams in the stations.
- The regular mentoring role of the regional editors should be strengthened – for instance through training and resources for them, and the development of needs assessment and training plans for each station.
- PEA could encourage stations' own in-house training efforts.

7. Panos inputs: material and financial support

PEA gave each station a computer and recorders. This donation of equipment was modest, in order not to attract into the project stations that lacked commitment (see above). Some of

the stations experienced difficulty in using the recorders, questioning whether they are robust enough for the job or sufficient for the large size of some of the debates. As the project grows, PEA needs to reconsider what type of equipment is most appropriate.

Stations have also constantly pointed out how challenging transport is in rural areas, and raised the possibility of the project providing motor-bikes. This was done for a parallel project, the Human Rights project, and PEA should seriously consider it. Stations also complain that the funding from the project to cover transport to the communities is too small.

These are difficult questions to resolve. PEA needs to consider whether a more generous budget – increasing the funding for transport, possibly contributing to staff salaries - would increase the performance of the weaker stations, and thus increase their buy-in to the project and its sustainability; or would it have the opposite effect, undermining stations' ownership of the project?

Summary point on the methodology's potential:

- The level of financial and equipment contribution so far has enabled some stations to establish and run the project very strongly and take ownership of it, which augurs well for their continuing to run debates or use similar concepts and skills in other programme to deepen democracy.

Summary point on lessons learned:

- Some stations have not been able to run the programme so strongly. PEA needs to consider whether increasing the level of resource inputs would increase performance and impact, or undermine it in the longer term.

Section 3: Results and impact

The purpose of this section is to assess the extent to which the project is on course to achieve its objectives and purpose and contribute to its goal, as far as such assessment is possible at this stage just over one year in to the project. In the first part of the section I discuss what the goal, purpose and objectives are. I go on to discuss each objective in turn, suggesting what kinds of results can be expected at this stage: what are some usable indicators for the kinds of change the project aims to bring about? For each objective, I then review the emerging evidence of results and impact. A list and summary of all the specific instances of short-term results gathered from project documentation and interviews is attached, Annex 6. There are 46 examples of actions taken immediately as a result of debates, and 51 examples of new learning acquired or of new decisions, resolves or promises made for future action.

Taken together, these results add up to convincing evidence, in my view, that the RRD methodology is highly effective in achieving its intended purpose.

Project goal, purpose and objectives

The overall goal of the project, and of the funding programme which supports it, is “Deepening Democracy”. In order to assess whether results at this stage (eighteen months into the project) demonstrate progress towards this goal, we must break it down into separate elements. What does “deeper democracy” consist of? What actions and processes, and what relationships between which stakeholders, need to be in place for us to be able to say “deeper democracy” exists?

For the purpose of this evaluation, the consultant has re-formulated (but not substantively

changed) the purpose and objectives of the project as follows⁶:

Purpose: To strengthen the capacity of rural people to engage actively in decision-making at national and local levels and to hold power-holders accountable

Objective 1: Strengthened capacity of selected rural communities to voice their concerns, debate development and political issues, influence decision-making and demand accountability

Objective 2: Strengthened culture of responsiveness among power-holders

Objective 3: Strengthened capacity of selected rural radio stations to facilitate such engagement and responsiveness.

The content of the debates can be divided broadly into the two strands highlighted in the Purpose statement above: national and local. Of the 350

⁶ The project goal as stated in project documentation to date is “To contribute to a free media promotion of accountability by providing rural communities with platform to voice their views and engage with leaders on issues of democracy and development.” The purpose statement is “Strengthening the quality of news and information through ensuring that quality news and information reach more people.” The expected outputs are stated as: 1) the capacity of partner radio stations to promote meaningful and inclusive debate and dialogue among the people through citizen journalism is enhanced; and 2) More citizens are provided with reliable and impartial radio news and information through improved dialogue and debates programmes in issues that concern and involve the people. In this consultant’s view these formulations are insufficiently focused and analytical. In particular the Purpose and Output 2 imply a blurring of the project’s focus, from voice and debate to information sharing. In practice, project implementation has followed an implicit set of objectives closer to those articulated by the consultant (main text above). Providing a flow of news has not been a specific objective: it is happening but as part of the process, one of the tools for achieving the objectives rather than a focus and objective itself. The “theory of change” underlying the project design has not been stated as such, but a sufficiently detailed theory is implicit in the introductory “problem statement” section of the original project proposal (2008).

debates for which information was available to the consultant, 70% took as their topics issues of *local* governance, service delivery and resource management – and in some cases, local culture and social behaviour issues. 30% were about *national* issues related to the forthcoming February 2011 elections. The majority of the results described here and detailed in Annex 6 are changes at local level – from village to district, with just a few reaching national level politicians and institutions. Whether the local results have ripple effects outwards and upwards, it is too early to say. It is certainly possible – especially where certain issues have been raised and discussed again and again by different communities, such as the lack of drugs in health centres, or people’s disappointment with the NAADS programme. The election-related debates had a largely educational purpose, fostering understanding of the meaning of elections in a multi-party system, the roles and responsibilities of elected representatives, and the conduct of elections. While participants often indicated changes in their voting *intentions* as a result of these debates, actual change could not be seen at this stage, before the elections took place, and will never be easy to discern or measure, either in the behaviour of voters or of elected representatives and political actors.

Results: towards achieving the objectives

There is clear evidence of positive results for each objective – both short-term results consisting of actions to resolve problems and bring immediate practical development gains to the participating communities; and indicators of longer-term results, consisting of observable changes in attitudes, behaviour and processes among the various stakeholders which are likely to bring further practical gains in due course. The richness of the results already found at this early

stage justifies the view that the methodology is effective and relevant to Uganda at present.

The ‘results stories’ in Annex 6 are listed in two categories: first, examples of actions taken, and second, examples of promises made, steps taken, changes in attitudes, etc. Most of the first group illustrate progress towards Objective 2, ‘Strengthened culture of responsiveness among power-holders’. This is not surprising as one of the indicators for Objective 2 must be ‘actions taken by power-holders’, exactly what the stories show. In the second group, stories about promises, steps and changes in attitudes, some of the stories also illustrate progress towards Objective 1, ‘Strengthened capacity of selected rural communities to voice their concerns, debate development and political issues, influence decision-making and demand accountability’.

The following discussion looks at the results at the level of the project objectives as stated above, taking each objective in turn; and ends with some reflection on what can be said about the wider ‘impact’ at the purpose and goal levels.

Objective 1: Strengthened capacity of rural communities to debate development and political issues, influence decision-making and demand accountability

Debate Empowers: New toilets in a taxi park

A new taxi park had been built in Kyenjojo town but the authorities didn't have enough funds to build toilets, and were planning to install them next year. However the taxi drivers were protesting and threatening to move back to the old taxi park. After a debate on the problem, a local business person made a loan to the authorities, and a toilet has been built. During the debate it had been suggested that someone should be employed to maintain and clean the facility and users should pay a small amount for this. This has been set up: the taxi drivers set up a committee, which hired someone to clean the toilet, collect money from users and hand it over to the committee. The radio station has followed the story in its news programmes, and through the monthly review programmes and the debate, when listeners phone in with updates. The reporter who moderated the debate has become well-known and welcome in the area. (Life FM)

Indicators for Objective 1

What does the 'capacity' consist of? It can be broken down into a number of indicators:

- a) Voice:** willingness, ability and opportunities to speak out about concerns
- b) Information:** information about key development and political issues and

how they are managed; and the habit of seeking information and engaging in discussion about its meaning and value

- c) Skills in debate:** skills and habit of discussing issues within the community or with power-holders, including skills such as listening to and respecting others, focusing on specific topics, aggregating views, pursuing arguments, and moving towards solutions
- d) Using radio as a partner in development:** for this project, communities' capacity includes embracing local radio as a partner in development – listening and learning from it, trusting it, recognising neutrality as a journalistic value, recognising the power of radio, and actively seeking to recruit radio as an ally
- e) Empowerment:** both recognition that communities and individuals have some responsibility themselves for some aspects of social life and development, and sense of agency - recognition that through discussion, individual and collective action they can influence change
- f) Participation of opinion-leaders:** opinion-leaders bring legitimacy within the community, and contribute to effective, solutions-focused debate
- g) Demanding accountability:** confidence, knowledge and opportunities to demand change and accountability from local and national power-holders (elected representatives and officials)
- h) Women gaining voice:** within their communities and on wider platforms

Results for Objective 1

- a) Voice:** willingness, ability and opportunities to speak out about concerns

Voice brings action

In ten years, the road between Mabaale and Mguuse had not been repaired. After a debate, the community and leaders sent a petition to the District Secretary for works, and then work on the road began. (KKCR, 5 Nov 2010)

Voice in developing a local market

Discussing the reduced size and new location of Iyagaza market, participants identified the need to elect a committee for development of the market; agreed to send a delegate to the district planner and community development office for advice; and resolved to write a petition letter to the District Chairperson and RDC (KKCR, 20 Aug)

When community members are asked at the end of debates what they have gained from it, the first response recorded in reports is usually “We have made our voices heard.” For most rural individuals and communities the experience of expressing their concerns at a level where they will be heard beyond the immediate neighbourhood is a new one. The fact that the voices may be broadcast is highly valued, and is probably the incentive for many people to speak out.

It is not possible to track and quantify any growth in people’s confidence to speak – partly because the numbers who can actually speak in a debate are limited by time. The microphone may only be passed to a dozen or so community members during one debate, even if 500 are present at the event. However, there are indicators of increasing confidence: frequent observations by journalists and regional editors in their reports that people were “rushing to the microphone”

or “clamouring to speak”; and an observed increase in the numbers of people phoning the radio stations during the call-in session of the broadcasts. Most significant, perhaps, is the fact – reported by most of the stations - that communities phone the stations asking for debates to be held in their areas.

*“People are seeing that speaking out freely is something that can be done.”
(Producer, Mighty Fire FM)*

There is no detailed information on the extent to which the most marginalised members of communities are enabled to speak out, but it is clear that efforts made in some debates to include the voices of uneducated and poor people and of disabled, young, and HIV-positive people, are appreciated. For example, one listener interviewed in Gulu recalled vividly a debate broadcast he had heard in which a local opinion leader called on uneducated people to speak out.

“Before, we thought that only educated people could speak out, but Radio King is asking you all to. An uneducated person can speak as much truth as an educated one. The HIV virus doesn’t care whether you went to school or not, the uneducated person may be able to protect himself better than the educated one.” (Local opinion leader cited by listener, Gulu)

At first communities may have had a rather naive feeling that if they simply speak out some change will result. In debates held at the start of the project speaking out may have been all that was achieved, and one or two of the partner stations appear not to have moved far beyond this level - but though limited it is still a useful achievement. People’s willingness to speak must be valued, since passivity and a culture of not

speaking out in front of superiors/power holders are prevalent among rural Ugandans, and are of course major factors keeping people powerless.

b) Information: information about key development and political issues and how they are managed; and the habit of seeking information and engaging in discussion about its meaning and value

Learning about local government structures
Participants in a debate about the perceived ineffectiveness of their long-serving District Councillor said afterwards that they learned about the different roles of members of the bureaucracy and leadership at different levels. (Radio Apac, 20 July 2010)

Regular flow of information
In one of many debates on the lack of drugs in government health centres, the District Health Officer was asked to ensure that the public is informed when drugs are received from the national medical stores. (Mighty Fire FM, 26 Aug 2010)

Any change in rural people's tendency to seek and use information is immensely important, and is at the core of the project's concept of empowerment.

As with Voice, it is not possible to quantify an increase in people's interest in obtaining information. But there are a number of indications:

- Partner radio stations say that audiences for the debate programmes have increased through the year. (Rural stations, without the resources for systematic audience surveys, generally

judge the size of their audiences by the number of listeners who call in to phone-in programmes)

"People are not in the habit of seeking information. They don't go to meetings called by their local councillors. For instance in one community they didn't know that they, not the district, were responsible for maintaining the feeder roads. Now they are learning that it is worth getting information, they realise they are missing a lot." (Producer KKCR)

- Audiences are interested in listening to debates in other places than their own communities. The evaluation did not measure audience figures or the quality of their listening, but in one community visited near the DRC border a high percentage of the gathering said they listened to the debate programmes regularly, and their recall of topics was good.
- Feedback from debate participants to the radio stations frequently states that "We learned..." something new. (See list of Results, Annex 6)
- Some partner stations have reported a reduction in community members' expectation of receiving payment in cash or food and drink for their participation in a debate. Expectation of payment has been a problem reported by all the partner stations, and any diminution in this would be a significant indicator that people are valuing the activity for its own sake and feeling personal benefit and ownership.

c) Skills in debate: skills and habit of discussing issues within the community or with power-

holders, including skills such as listening to and respecting others, focusing on specific topics, aggregating views, pursuing arguments, and moving towards solutions

The project's concept of Debate has problem-solving at its core. A debate should not be just a litany of woes, 'voices' should not be just complaints. To be deemed a success in the project's terms, the discussion may start with getting people's complaints on the table, but it must move on to identify possible solutions, ending where possible with agreement, resolutions and commitments. The ability to discuss with a purpose is a key skill for empowerment and democratic participation.

Managing a debate like this requires great skill from the moderator and also buy-in and discipline from the participants. Some stations have noted that, whether from participating in person or from hearing broadcasts, people are gaining skills – sticking to the point, not repeating what others have said, and moving the topic on from personal anecdotes and complaints to solutions. Listening respectfully to the opinions of others and accepting disagreement are also key skills.

"At first it was hard for people to believe in discussing real issues." (Producer, Mighty Fire FM)

"Communities are enlightened on how best to handle meetings, arising out of how the debates have been handled." (Regional Editor's report, KKCR, July)

"The community are getting observant – they see when someone is straying from the topic, see who is speaking best."

"Women, when they phone in now, they don't just complain, they have

solutions ready."

"Lively debate, participants were criticising each other without fear." (Radio Apac, of a debate on the right to vote)

"The debates have sparked off debates among individuals on topical issues especially at national level." (KKCR, Regional Editor's report)

- d) Using radio as a partner in development:** for this project, communities' capacity includes embracing local radio as a partner in development – listening and learning from it, trusting it, recognising neutrality as a journalistic value, recognising the power of radio, and actively seeking to recruit radio as an ally

Radio for accountability

A week after a debate in Masaka district on poor sanitation and the shortage of latrines, the Masaka District Director of Health Services toured the area with a team of officials for an on-the-spot assessment of the situation and to verify what he had heard on air. They promised to provide the communities with EcoSan toilets. The radio team was asked to follow up to ensure they deliver on the promise. (Equator FM)

The project's Objective 3 - to build the role of rural radio stations in deepening democracy - needs communities to accept and welcome the role and take ownership of it. It is clear that this is happening, from the frequency with which communities phone stations asking them to bring debates to their areas, and suggesting new topics. Other signs are the big audiences and increased popularity of and trust in the stations

since the debates began (see page 47); the fact that some of the journalists involved have become well-recognised and popular figures in their communities; and in one case the reported popularity of the debate programme's signature tune.

In Uganda many radio stations are reportedly owned by political figures and broadcasting is often assumed to be political propaganda. It is therefore significant that the debates' (and PEA's) core principle of political neutrality, objectivity and balance is gaining recognition. At the start of the project many in communities as well as political figures assumed the debates had a political agenda and often stayed away or stayed silent. (The government's banning of live debate broadcasts – 'Ekimeeza' – at around the time the project was starting gives an idea of the prevailing atmosphere, and indeed may have intensified it.) It seems this fear is starting to change. This is important for democracy in Uganda. People need to know there are neutral spaces where they can speak without fear of the consequences.

"People feel they own the programme." (Journalist, Rock Mambo)

"Before, journalists were seen as destroyers, people wouldn't talk to them. Now, we don't have to hide in the corner to find the story – people understand we are bringing them value, they've realised that when they talk to us there is follow-up." (News Editor, Voice of Lango)⁷

e) Empowerment: recognition that communities and individuals have some responsibility themselves for some aspects of social life and development, and sense of agency - recognition that through

discussion, individual and collective action they can influence change

As mentioned earlier, passivity and scepticism about change are widely seen as characteristics of poor rural Ugandans. Just like an individual's depression, such characteristics militate against active engagement in development and individuals' or communities' belief in their own abilities to achieve social or political change. Underlying the project's vision of 'deepening democracy' is that this sense of disempowerment must be overturned. 'Participation' is a key element of good governance (see methodology chapter), and participation requires action. At a minimum, government must invite people to participate and they must take up the invitation. More actively, people can initiate demands, to which government must respond.

Empowerment implies people being able to identify and believe in changes they can make and actions they can take, individually and together – such as demanding solutions from service providers and responsiveness from elected leaders. Each time a listener hears a debate that shows a result, the point is reinforced that ordinary people can do this; and each debate that helps people see how to do it – who to turn to, what to ask – makes it easier for them to do it. The 46 documented examples of specific actions that have resulted from debates (see Annex 2) indicate the extent to which the debates are providing models of success; and the 53 examples of learning and resolutions offer many more illustrations of ways in which people have learned or reinforced their knowledge of their own responsibility and agency. Many more of the debates for which no short-term result was documented were in fact focused on important empowering learning – how the bureaucracy works, how the parliamentary system works and so on.

⁷ Voice of Lango is not a partner in the Rural Debates project, but in the Human Rights project, which uses essentially the same methodology.

The topic of education is an example of how communities realised that they as well as government have important responsibility. The subject of 26 documented debates, the topic was often framed as “the problem of the poor performance of schools” or “the poor performance of children in schools”. In either case, though the provision of adequate buildings and teachers and curriculum is essential, the attitudes of parents and pupils and the willingness of parents to insist on their children’s attendance were recognised in the debates as equally important. Participants in many debates said “I realised how we as parents have a responsibility.” Indeed, schooling is a clear example of the theory of change implicit in the project: changed attitudes and higher expectations from parents and pupils should help to drive higher standards of service provision.

Some of the problems selected by communities for debate were problems for which the solution lay in the hands of the community as much as or more than with the government. Excessive drinking, for example, for which individual resolutions and changed cultural attitude are likely to have more effect than changing the bar licensing hours. For this kind of topic, the public debate forum may help bring into the open issues that are normally not discussed in public, enabling communities to reflect on and perhaps start to change their own behaviour (as the principles of Social Change Communication hold). However, at this stage of the project, there is no evidence as to whether this kind of change is happening.

“There are people in villages who could help solve issues but they neglect to because no one is helping them from outside. Follow-up by the radio station is key.” (Journalist, Radio King)

“At first people just rang to complain, but it has matured, now they can explain how to do things. They have learned.” (Producer, Mighty Fire FM)

“Someone said ‘It is not for our leaders to solve this, it starts in our own homes.’ Coming from the people themselves, that is more powerful.” (Radio King, of a debate about high rates of teenage abortions).

f) Participation of opinion-leaders: opinion-leaders bring legitimacy within the community, and contribute to effective, solutions-focused debate

Reports suggest that in many areas, opinion leaders are overcoming their initial hesitation about participating in debates, and are putting their weight behind them. The presence of opinion leaders and elders of the community and their willingness to speak first is often described in the radio stations’ and regional editors’ reports as an important factor in encouraging community members to speak out, as well as giving the debate legitimacy. The presence of opinion-leaders is one of the indicators tracked by the project’s monitoring system: reports show that debates regularly have at least one or two present, though there are exceptions, and sometimes they are present but do not speak.

“Opinion-leaders participated well and are getting used to the fact that the debates are also ideal for them.” (Radio Pacis, Regional Editor’s report, May 2010)

“The debates still lack the blessing of opinion-leaders.” (Radio Kitara, September 2010)

g) Demanding accountability: confidence, knowledge and opportunities to demand change and accountability from local and national power-holders (elected representatives and officials)

Transparency from MPs

After a debate in which participants demanded that their MPs explain how they had used the CDF money, the MPs for Bukonzo East and Bukonzo West and the woman MP for Kasese responded with public disclosures. After this there was an overwhelming demand for the same in all constituencies. (Kasese Guide Radio, 13 May)

At first participants were nervous about challenging their leaders and representatives, but the combination of experience of doing it, hearing others do it, education in their rights and the duties and roles of power-holders, and opportunities created by the project for it, as well as the increasing readiness of power holders to be transparent and respond to demands, is encouraging more and more communities to start demanding accountability. Most of the 46 examples of actions resulting from debates (see boxed examples above and Annex 6) show communities successfully holding district-level service providers accountable for supplying what people are entitled to. Many of the examples of resolutions and promises also show communities at earlier stages of demanding and achieving accountability.

Accountability of district leaders

A debate was held in Kapir parish on the occasion of the mandatory annual publication of the district budget. "This being the first budget conference that got everyone involved right from the grassroots, it was very explosive and exciting and full of emotions. The presentations from the technical heads of departments left a lot to be desired and many loopholes, and this generated debate from all sectors of the people - the disabled, women, opinion leaders, political leaders and youth.....People learned that it was their right to know and to demand accountability, and that their contribution and participating directly in issues of planning and monitoring of government programmes is key....Both men and women spoke without fear and they questioned every report or presentation from each technical staff." (Kyoga Veritas Radio, 11 April, Monitoring report)

It is possible that the pre-election period provided a favourable context, with politicians more than usually anxious to be seen to be responsive. PEA should monitor this through 2011, once the incentive of the election has gone.

h) Women gaining voice: within their communities and on wider platforms

Women in Uganda are traditionally subordinate to men. Traditional culture, still strong in rural areas, holds that women should not challenge their husbands, speak out in public or engage in public and political matters. In the pre-election period, the expectation that men dictate how their wives vote was frequently mentioned. In this context it is important that a project like this should make efforts to ensure that women participate fairly, and should track and analyse their participation. The project has indeed made

considerable efforts to document women's participation (for instance, requiring that every report on a debate includes an observation of the quality as well as the numbers of women's contributions).

The reports show that the proportion of women present at debates has generally ranged from around a quarter to half or sometimes more. Totalled over the year, stations vary – one having a roughly 50/50 total over the year while another has 30/70. It is not possible to identify patterns and clear trends in their attendance from the information available. If there is a pattern, there could be many different reasons for it – local cultural factors, or mobilisation efforts more targeted at women, or the popularity of the station among women listeners. More investigation is needed to know this.

One might expect some topics to attract women more than others, but this is not clear. In debates on health services, one of the most frequent topics requested by communities, women were sometimes the majority (400 women, 300 men in one held by Pacis) and sometimes the reverse (9 women and 62 men in one of Rhino's). The same was true of education. For instance a debate held by Pacis on the performance of a local primary school attracted 100 men and 200 women, while one on a similar topic by Spice drew 430 men and 50 women. NAADS, another popular topic, shows the same inconsistency. It seems that other factors than the intrinsic interest of the topic must be at work, but we do not know what they are.

Even for topics on which one would have expected women to far outnumber men, there is the same inconsistency: for example, child labour drew 27 men and 49 women; but child killing drew 20 men and only 7 women. Even socio-cultural gender issues don't attract a

particularly large proportion of women: debates on teenage pregnancy drew 3 men and 21 women in one location, but 80 men and 70 women in another. Perhaps this suggests that women are inhibited from being seen to speak in public about these matters, or that their husbands prevent them from participating. This needs further investigation and steps to address it if necessary.

It is often assumed that women take less interest in political topics than men, and the proportion of women is indeed generally smaller, but there are exceptions even here – for example, a Mighty Fire debate on "What do you want your elected leaders to do for you?" drew 85 men and 102 women.

What about the content and quality of women's active participation in debates? Reports show the numbers of women who speak are often only slightly smaller than the numbers of men, which is in itself good, but this may be due to the efforts of the moderator. We know that some of the partner stations make deliberate efforts to get women to speak – sometimes sitting with groups of women informally before the debate begins, sometimes watching their faces during the debate and handing the microphone to anyone who looks as if she has something to say. Spontaneous contribution would show a higher level of independent agency, but speaking when invited is already good progress, considering the cultural context. Reports describe women speaking with emotion, confidence and effectiveness on their own experiences – poor health services, particularly. But whether there is growth in their capacity and willingness to analyse, to challenge leaders and suggest solutions, we can't tell with the available information. There are occasions noted – for instance, "*women were eloquent and precise*" in a debate for Apac on the influence of multi-party

politics on service delivery - but no consistency is visible. Sometimes reports say that women were inhibited by the presence of authority figures or staff whom they might not want to offend; on the other hand sometimes *“they were able to share without fear, even though the health centre staff were present,”* or *“talked very confidently, believing that what they said would be forwarded to the concerned authorities.”* Equally, we can't say whether there is a growth in their engagement on 'men's' topics. Generally, the reports describe them as having a rather low level of knowledge and confidence to speak, but some also mention that women were *“intensely interested”* and *“listened carefully throughout the debate”*.

When women do speak, responses to them vary as well. In one debate on eligibility for support from NAADS, women *“were applauded thunderously by the crowd”* (mostly women on that occasion). In another on the perceived failings of the woman MP, *“almost every woman was struggling to express her view - many men still boo women down and do not believe in what women say.”* In one debate on voter registration, *“women were pushed to the back. The Returning Officer was there, and the political crimes person. They want men to be in front, because they know men influence women's votes.”*

Objective 2: Strengthened culture of responsiveness among power-holders

There are clear signs that through the debates power-holders are responding to communities' needs and demands – whether reluctantly because exposure forces them to, or voluntarily because they see the power of the radio debates to enrich relationships between the people and elected representatives or office-holders. It would be wrong to paint too rosy

a picture: pressure from politicians is still a regular experience for some stations, and there were several reported occasions when leaders had interfered to prevent or obstruct debates. Officials are often still reluctant to participate, afraid of being challenged or forced to speak against the government or their superiors. But there are enough examples of different attitudes and behaviour to suggest that real change is occurring.

Indicators for Objective 2

I suggest the following indicators for a culture of responsiveness:

- a) Actions taken in response to debates
- b) Commitments made in response to debates
- c) Participation in debates (in person at debates, through coming to studio to speak, phoning in, or seeking radio airtime later)
- d) Responding to the debates
- e) Embracing radio as a partner
- f) Improvements in service delivery and engagement with communities

Results for Objective 2

a) Actions taken in response to debates

Of the 46 documented actions resulting from debates (Annex 6), around 40 were actions by power-holders - some by elected representatives but mostly by government and officials. At the top were the President and his office (intervening in two debates about creating new Districts), Uganda's ambassador to Rwanda (intervening to get a border crossing point to Rwanda open for 24 hours a day), and the State Minister for

primary health care (touring the health centres in a district and distributing goods and promises). The national drugs monitoring authority was sent to investigate charges of theft and sale of government-supplied medicines.

The great majority of the actions were by District-level officers and technical officials (repairing roads, posting head-teachers and teachers, disciplining staff of health centres). Some were by municipality authorities (for instance, ending corrupt construction or market-management contracts), sub-county and village-level councillors and officials. A few of the actions were by NGOs, CBOs or private companies.

The number of these actions that we know about – which is probably only part of the total, given the incompleteness of the documentation – is a powerful indication that the project's combination of people's voice, broadcasting of failings, focused demands and investigative journalism is very successful in persuading power-holders to respond where immediate action is called for.

b) Commitments made in response to debates

Of the 51 stories of learning, resolves and promises of future action, 12 describe promises made by authorities at district level and downwards to carry out actions in the near future (and in several of these, the radio station was expected to follow up to ensure that the promises were fulfilled). They include among others a municipality's promise to pay compensation to people whose homes have been demolished to make way for a road reserve; a school manager's promise to inform parents whenever the school receives funds; a head teacher's promise to seek NGO support for improving the fabric of the school; and a Division's promise to regulate bars in order to reduce excessive drinking. (Most of the

other stories in this group are of communities' undertakings to do something themselves or to seek further meetings with authorities).

Again, the number of these stories suggests that the debates are consistently having an immediate impact on authorities and communities' relationship with them.

c) Participation in debates

This is an important area of change that the project seems to be achieving in its target areas. At the start of the project local leaders, politicians and officials were almost universally suspicious and did not accept stations' invitations to participate physically in the debates or come to the studio to answer questions. They were suspicious of the whole concept of giving people a platform to speak, had little interest in sharing information and building people's capacity to engage, and were afraid they would be personally challenged. Indeed they often assumed the project activities were planned by political enemies to unseat or undermine them. Officials were often afraid to speak without permission from their superiors.

These attitudes are still widespread. Several stations reported that leaders were still avoiding participation, still afraid of being exposed or pushed into speaking against their superiors or the government. Some leaders came to debates, but not in order to listen to people and engage in dialogue: they expected to be given the floor themselves. This was the experience for instance at Pacis in one debate on NAADS, and another on the poor performance of a local primary school.

But through the year of the project, many reports of debates show evidence of change. There was a regular presence of officials and technical officers from village up to sub-county and district level; many more who were unable to travel to

the site of the debate accepted invitations to the studio for live talk sessions during the broadcast; others phoned in. Some were persuaded by radio station staff, who in some cases invested great effort in this. Others were forced to engage by the debates themselves – if they or their area of responsibility was debated, they had to respond, by phoning in, or even in some cases paying for airtime to present their own case. Gradually, it was reported, more were accepting the invitation straight away rather than waiting until exposure forced them to respond – which suggests that they were recognising that they had to engage. Through the first half of the year Rock Mambo repeatedly reported harassment by officials who suspected the debates were politically motivated. Yet by August the station was reporting: “Even the leaders in most areas are now realising the benefit of the debates and actively participating in the mobilisation of the people.”

“In the past inviting local leaders on radio was difficult, there were a lot of bureaucracies involved, they would even claim they need to seek permission from their bosses, but with the debates they know if they don’t come, the people will raise issues about them” (Kyoga Veritas Radio, producer)

“Local leaders have been forced to regularly go back to the people and explain to them what they are doing. “ (KKCR, Regional Editor’s report)

d) Responding to the debates

Officials are responding to the broadcasts in ways that vary from reluctance to positive enthusiasm. Some local leaders and politicians are taking the initiative to find out in advance what debate topics are planned so that they can prepare themselves.

“As it built up, the authorities felt they need to know. They ring to find out what the topic will

be and where we will be. If they can’t be there in person they will prepare to ring. They say it helps them, to know what is happening. We think they are just pretending, because in fact we are forcing them to respond.” (Producer, Rock Mambo Radio).

Another station says “We broadcast on a Sunday. On a Monday the local authorities meet and discuss how to respond.” Mighty Fire FM has spun off from the debates another programme promoting dialogue of a similar kind, persuading an initially reluctant police force to accept a free airtime slot on a Friday morning to discuss policing issues with callers.

e) Embracing radio as a partner

There are several examples of politicians and authorities in the areas where debates are happening actively embracing radio as a partner. This is a very significant change. Authorities’ and politicians’ attitude to media is a key indicator of the quality of democracy. Politicians in Uganda, as in many other countries, generally see journalists either as trouble-makers, out to expose and challenge them, or else as tools they can control. Leaders are accustomed to ringing stations to complain about coverage, sometimes using the excuse that the station is unprofessional and unethical. Now they are starting instead to recognise the possibility that media can be a partner for good governance.

One reason is that the debate broadcasts have credibility. They represent the real voices and concerns of people, and can’t be dismissed as the fabrications of politically motivated journalists. For example, in the case of Rock Mambo’s debate about a school that had 600 pupils and only two teachers, the producer said, “It was the confession by the children that hit the authorities hard.”

Another reason is that the debates give people information – either by providing a platform for stakeholders to present their positions, or through the journalists’ own investigation. Some politicians and officials are recognising that this can help them in their roles. For example, a district councillor who has participated in several debates confirmed the value of the debates for giving information: “The debates are helping the community learn what is affecting them and who is responsible for what, helping them task their leaders. Sometimes they blame the MPs for things they haven’t done, and we have to explain to them.” One station reported that a sub-county chairman, who had at first been surprised when people criticised him in a debate, came to appreciate the opportunity they gave him to tell his side of the story.

The producer at KKCR observed that some officials and leaders are even starting to take initiatives for transparency and accountability themselves, without waiting for the radio to criticise them. He mentioned the district NAADS coordinator, CAO, and chairperson: “For instance, when they receive funds they buy airtime to come and talk about it.”

Another function of the debates, of course, is to provide information flow in the opposite direction, from the people upwards to authorities. Some politicians and officials appreciate that the debates enable them to know what people are thinking and experiencing. An opposition parliamentary candidate in Kasese Municipality who had participated in two debates explained why he valued them: “The programme has helped us evaluate government programmes. Before we only had information from the RDC, which was always positive and defensive. Now we can hear from people on the ground with real information. We hear about community problems that may be major but the government

has neglected. I have added to my manifesto the issue of encroachment by wild animals. As an urban person I didn’t know about this.”

Some leaders, once they have recognised the power of the debate programmes, have begun to recommend the programmes, and the stations that broadcast them, to one another. The District Chair in Tororo, a regular caller into Rock Mambo’s programmes, refers to the station in his public speeches, as does the District Education Officer. In Kitgum, Mighty Fire was pleasantly surprised when both the ruling party and the main opposition coalition rang asking to buy advertising time, due to colleagues’ recommendations. “Our women MP had recommended us to the IPC – she had often participated in debates and knows people listen.”

In general, in the run-up to the 2011 elections, radio partners observed that candidates were expressing a greater commitment to media and transparency. One said, “Now in the campaigns you hear all the politicians saying ‘We want transparency, broad daylight.’ This is because of the radio.”

f) Improvement to service delivery and engagement with communities

It will never be possible to safely attribute any improvement in service delivery and responsiveness to communities to the project, and it is certainly too early to attempt to do so now. However, partners in the project believe they are observing changed behaviour among politicians and officials.

“Service delivery has improved. Leaders are now focused on positive development, and are treading cautiously, trying to avoid errors.” (Producer, Rock Mambo Radio)

“Leaders are questioning themselves a lot, and challenging their colleagues – Have you done this, have you done that?” (Producer, Mighty Fire FM)

“We give people information, and the leaders know this, they know that any mistake they make, it will be on air. They used to make promises they could never fulfil, now they don’t.” (Mighty Fire FM)

Objective 3: Strengthened capacity of selected rural radio stations to facilitate such engagement and responsiveness

This objective relates to the expected lasting impact of the project. This evaluation was not attempting a full and systematic survey of stations’ capacities, but it included an informal assessment of the results of the project for participating stations, based on visits to eight of the 20 partner stations. The information gathered, while impressionistic rather than rigorous and quantified, seems to confirm quite strongly the project’s starting assumption that the methodology can bring clear benefits to partner stations. This is very important for the validity and future replicability of the RRD methodology. The project must be perceived positively by partner and potential partner radio stations, and if possible it must be shown to build lasting skills and capacity.

Station staff contacted were strongly positive about the results of the project for their station. This augurs very well for the future spread of the methodology. But it should be noted that the sample included mainly stations that seem to be performing strongly in the project, and it did not include those that appear to be the weakest performers. It seems likely that stations that have struggled to implement the project or have not been very committed to it have felt fewer positive effects than the stronger performers.

However, the experience of the strongest stations is valuable because it shows what the methodology can achieve at its best.

Also worth noting is that in several cases the station’s management were sceptical about the project at first, and it was only as the project got going that they began to see the benefits and put the whole weight of the management into supporting it. This was the case with Mighty Fire, for example: after a hesitant start “the management has picked up the programme. They regard it as ours. They make budget available and sometimes extend the time-slot when they see the issue is important.”

Indicators for Objective 3

The information has been grouped around the following suggested qualitative indicators:

- a) Increased audience
- b) New partnerships
- c) Trust and credibility
- d) Stronger relationship with community
- e) Enhanced fulfilment of community service mission
- f) New sources of information, enriched news broadcasting
- g) Journalism skills
- h) Improved relationship with politicians
- i) Sustainability

Results for Objective 3

a) Increased audience

Increased audience was the first or among the first benefits mentioned spontaneously by staff of eight partner stations. The broadcasts themselves attracted listeners, who also began listening to the stations’ other outputs.

Audience surveys carried out during the year for other organisations put one partner station in first place and another rose to second place in their respective regions' audience ratings. Mighty Fire FM's community used to regard the station as a religious one with a niche audience, but the debate programme – *"one of the biggest programmes we have"* – is said to have transformed it into one of the most popular stations. Because the programmes reflect people's lives and voices, *"they feel this is the radio that cares more about them"*, according to Kyoga Veritas – but the audience is broad and also includes leaders and officials. For Kyoga Veritas, the project makes the station stand out from others.

Increased audience – which is not often formally measured through surveys but observed informally – brought more advertising revenue, particularly from NGOs, government departments and – especially in the run-up to the 2011 elections – politicians. In some cases, NGOs were said to have concentrated all their advertising on the partner station instead of sharing it among all the stations in the area. In one case a woman MP who had participated in several debates and knew the programmes' popularity recommended it to her political colleagues: "Recently the IPC rang to ask us to broadcast their slots. The NRM also send us their advertisements, due to recommendation."

b) New partnerships

For some stations the project has provided a means for strengthened partnerships with NGOs in their region. (See Section 2). Sometimes they work together to co-host debates, and sometimes the partnership extends into other areas of the station's broadcasting – with the NGO inviting the station to cover their events, for instance, or buying airtime for other broadcasts.

Rock Mambo is optimistic that this will happen in future with an important potential partner, Plan International – who have seen the debates and are thinking of adapting the concept for their own objectives.

c) Trust and credibility

It is not only that audiences enjoy or identify with the debate programmes. They also believe in them, and this influences their feelings about the stations' other programmes. For example, Spice FM said: *"Our listeners feel Spice is the most reliable source of information in the mid-western region. They come to us rather than the other stations for issues."*

d) Stronger relationship with communities

The project's partner radio stations, whether their ownership is private, NGO or religious, have a mission to develop their community, and their programming is mainly talk-based rather than music, entertainment or religion. It is therefore important for them to have a relationship with their community, and as local and community-based stations this relationship should be two-way, with communities regularly contacting the station as well as being at the receiving end of broadcasts. Five of the eight stations visited during the evaluation identified strengthened links with the community as one of the important results of the Debates project:

"Communities are now able to identify with the radio as far as their needs are concerned. It has cemented the relationship between the radio and the communities. Local communities are no longer media shy." (Rock Mambo)

"The project has made the radio station more popular at the grassroots and it is looked at as part of the solution to some of the problems in the community." (Radio Kitara)

“We have won the hearts of the community. They look at the station as their voice and enlightener.” (Kasese Guide Radio)

“I have gained contact with the community. I feel the community owns me.” (KKCR)

“Good feedback from our listeners” (Spice FM)

e) Enhanced community service mission

Several stations’ staff noted that the project’s objective of building the capacity of communities matches closely with the station’s own mission. Radio Pacis noted what they had heard from one community: people had previously felt the station aired too much talk and not enough music, but “now they realised the need for information that is passed on the radio and need less music.”

“The station got a boost in doing what it was supposed to be doing. We have helped community members know how to demand their rights, and stakeholders know how to respond. We have led to the rescue of poorly-performing projects – a road mended, a water project fixed.” (Kasese Guide Radio)

f) New sources of information - enriched news broadcasting

The project gives partner stations much more regular contact with rural communities than they can afford otherwise. (Before the project, few if any of them were running any regular programme that involved going out into the field. Their talk shows were mostly studio-based.) They have maximised the value of this by gathering information and stories to enrich their news broadcasts at the same time as organising the debates. This is done in various ways, but all further enhance the stations’ mission to reflect

the lives of their communities. Sometimes issues emerging from the debates become news stories – with recorded material as well as tips and leads being passed on by the project staff to the news team; sometimes the news teams are requested to do follow-up investigations, for instance to see whether commitments made during a debate are being fulfilled; sometimes news reporters accompany the debate team to the field and scout for stories while they are there; in some cases the debate team are themselves also news reporters. (This permeability between the debate programmes and the news enriches the debate project as well as the news, by putting communities’ voices and issues onto the news agenda, and by offering a mechanism for follow-up and accountability).

“Each community you go to, you hear other stories.”

g) Journalism skills

Project partners appreciated a number of different skills and insights they or their staff had gained. One was knowledge and appreciation of rural communities, which as urban-based news reporters they had lacked before.

“It has broadened my understanding. I know the community have ideas that can be better than the technocrat or leader.”

“In journalism school we learned that ‘big people make big news’. Now we have learned that small people can.” (Rock Mambo Radio, News Editor)

“I was shy at first, ‘How will I talk to people? but I gained confidence, because the programme is popular. You meet different types of people, you have to listen a lot and be able to respond.”

“I have got to know people’s problems.”

Technical skills in interviewing and reporting have also been strengthened, partly through the training events and partly through experience. But a debate, to be done well in this project, also requires thorough research into the history, causes, and various interests and stakeholders in a problem – an approach that is very different from the unquestioning repetition of information that is the usual task of a news reporter. In the stations that have thoroughly mastered the challenge of organising a debate, the journalists and staff are very appreciative of the research skills they have acquired.

Also fundamental to the RRD concept is a set of complex and sophisticated skills that distinguish the debate programme from investigative journalism. These are first the intellectual skills to interpret and frame a community's problem in terms of governance, and to move beyond describing the problem to looking for solutions. Second, the 'people skills' of shaping, leading and managing the debate itself. In those stations that have most fully mastered the process, staff and journalists expressed their appreciation of the skills they had acquired in different ways: *"I have learned not to leave the issue hanging;" "I understand the debate concept;" "I have more understanding of the concept of democracy/governance. It is important to understand the depth. Many people can't break down 'democracy', but we can see it in the structure of different services."* These skills enrich the work of an editor: *"Before I just focused on the issue. Now I look for links between one issue and another."*

h) Improved relationship with politicians

Rock Mambo Radio has seen a great improvement in its relationship with politicians. Some at least of the politicians have accepted the debate programmes as legitimate and non-party-

political, and are comfortable with the notions of transparency and accountability, and they respect and value the journalists connected with the debates. This is a reversal of the previous relationship of threats, fear and harassment, and adds enormously to the journalist's and the station's power and role in the community. *"[The producer] was the most hated man in town. If he hit a fact it was true. The community was on our side, but the politicians were our enemies. But from the start of this programme, we are at the centre."* *"It has reduced pressure on me, the chair has realised that we tell the truth."* *"We work as partners with him. He has been encouraging fellow-leaders to do the same."* *"The sense of the power of radio to force action has increased."*

None of the other stations had experienced such a consistent change. For most of them, politicians are occasionally confident and open but still sometimes suspicious and hostile. For some stations, it seems the debate project is experienced mainly as a risky venture that exposes the station to unwelcome attention and pressure. (None of the stations has indicated that they regret participating in it, but we don't know how much their participation has been inhibited and shaped by this fear.)

It would be nice to think that it is just a matter of time before more politicians are won over to accept and even welcome the project. If this was happening, PEA would be able to claim the project had made a significant contribution to strengthening Uganda's culture of democracy. However, there are many unknowns and it is too early to make such a claim. For instance, it is possible that in the run-up to the 2011 elections some politicians may have deliberately cultivated a better image with the media, and will revert to type once the elections are over. While the experience of Rock Mambo should be promoted as an example of the best that can happen, PEA

should also carefully track and investigate the changing relationship of the project with the political class over the coming years.

The best outcome would be that the benefits of the debate project are so strong, and the skills and concepts become so integrated into stations' work, that they will continue to run the debate project after Panos support has come to an end. One or two station managements have indicated they plan to do this: they have taken ownership of the debate method to such an extent that they will fund it from their own resources, or will look for other development partners to support it. Even where this does not happen, many stations are likely to have gained a vision, skills and public profile which will enable them to carry on some elements of the project in some way. It will be important for PEA to track these longer-term outcomes.

Results: impact

Project purpose: strengthened capacity of rural people to engage actively in decision-making at national and local levels and to hold power-holders accountable

Project goal: deepening democracy

It is clear from the foregoing that the project is achieving good results in the short term, while the activity is going on, mostly at local and district level. Eighteen months into the project, these are promising short-term results at the level of project objectives which already contribute to the project's goal and purpose.

Results already often reverberate beyond the separate events and individual communities and stations. Communities hear one another's debates, and initiate a debate themselves. Some debates have generated a lot of talk in

the community after the debate itself was over. Some neighbouring non-participating radio stations are taking an interest in the debate methodology. Pressures on local officials and politicians for transparency and accountability pass upwards from the local area of the broadcast through the bureaucratic and political systems, sometimes reaching as far as the President. (A note of caution: the pre- election year may have stimulated all the project stakeholder groups - communities, radio stations, power-holders - to be more than usually responsive. PEA should monitor whether results seem to drop off once the election is over.)

Some observers have commented that during the period of the project so far, people in Northern Uganda were strikingly optimistic, demanding more accountability from government and concerned about holding perpetrators of abuses during the LRA war period accountable.⁸ This may suggest that the project has come at a good time for Uganda, when people are ready to take up opportunities such as those the project provides.

What is needed for these short-term results to be translated into longer-term and larger-scale changes that contribute more substantially to the purpose and goal of the project? To changes in the character of political processes and governance in Uganda?

First, what would such changes look like?

- People all over the country would be continually engaged with governance processes - participating in local development projects and decision-making, demanding transparency and

⁸ This observation was made in the attitudes survey *Transitioning to Peace: attitudes to social reconstruction and justice in northern Uganda*, Dec 2010, Human Rights Center, University of Berkeley School of Law

accountability, scrutinising power-holders, demanding that political party programmes and manifestos reflect their needs. This type of engagement is particularly effective at local level, where results are easier to achieve. (It has been observed that although the media's role in exposing corruption is essential, it can have a negative effect of increasing public cynicism if the corruption continues unchecked after exposure. This is more likely to be the case in national-level cases where the corrupt actors are too powerful to be touched. At local level, the corruption can be more easily dealt with, thus building hope and confidence rather than despair and cynicism.)

- Public office-holders would be continually receiving and responding to feedback from communities; they would be alert to communities' needs and views, aware of their duties and accountability, and pro-actively building transparency and engagement.
- Political leaders would be shaping policy in the light of the people's needs, would be aware of their need for legitimacy, and would pro-actively seek to strengthen people's understanding and engagement.

The key actor in this vision is the people of Uganda. The energy and intensity of their engagement is what will keep office-holders and political leaders responsive and responsible to them. So what will enable and stimulate the people to maintain a high enough level of engagement? Media will certainly be an important empowering factor – demanding transparency, providing information, scrutinising and highlighting governance issues, alerting people to opportunities for engagement or abuses that need resolving, facilitating

debates and dialogue, proving a platform for representations and demands.

The key to the larger-scale and longer-term impact of the Rural Radio Debates project, therefore, will be its success in building the lasting capacity and commitment of the media, especially local media, to fulfil this role. The Debate programme methodology does not need to continue for ever in its project form, but there needs to be embedded in the culture of stations and their communities the habit and expectation of media's role of scrutiny of power-holders and engagement with communities, the habit of good high-quality independent local journalism – and the capacity and resources to carry these out.

Panos should seek to continue the project to ensure the media's strengthened capacity is embedded in as many stations as possible. It should consider whether any adaptations can be made to maximise the results of the methodology for weaker stations whose capacity is stretched by it (as mentioned elsewhere in this report). It should consider other activities to broaden the impact such as creating a bigger pool of trained journalists. In particular it should promote the methodology and its results widely, linked to the media capacity-building efforts of other development and governmental organisations, to contribute to mobilising more resources and raising the capacity and standards of the radio sector overall.

Section 4: Implementation constraints and challenges

When this project was launched in late 2009 the Rural Radio Debates methodology was new and untested. It is important therefore at this early stage to monitor its implementation, to identify areas where the methodology itself might lack clarity or not fit the context perfectly, as well as to assess the management resources, structure and processes that are needed to support it. Project implementation has experienced some challenges, but the PEA management team have been flexible and creative in responding to issues as they emerge. Nonetheless, as we approach the end of the first two-year phase it is appropriate to reflect on implementation issues and propose improvements that could be incorporated into the project design in the next phase. This section highlights four significant areas where resolving issues could strengthen the impact and replicability of the methodology in the future.

4.1 Partner radio stations' commitment and capacity

A key factor in successful operation of the project is the commitment and capacity of the partner radio stations. To be done well, the project demands vision, skills, staff time and resources that are well beyond what most rural stations have previously experienced. PEA provides input and support in these areas, but does not and cannot provide everything needed. For instance, PEA does not pay the salaries of the journalists and producers working on the project. PEA's intention is to offer stations a methodology they can take up and own, not to create dependency and run a "Panos project" that will end after a year or two. The *quid pro quo* of this goal of sustainable impact is PEA's reduced control over how the partner stations implement the project.

PEA can *ask* a station to deploy the number of staff needed, add its own funding to bolster the running costs, or ring-fence airtime, but has little leverage over whether the station does so. The factors are: a) commitment - whether the station management is fully committed to the project; and b) capacity - whether the station is stable and well-managed enough to sustain a commitment of this length and intensity. Funding crises, staff turnover, overstretched staff, vulnerability to disruption by outside events or actors – all undermine the station's capacity to run the project well and develop it to its full potential.

Some of the partner stations are performing very well, with strong project teams able to spend the time needed, building their own skills and the benefits for the station. These examples show that the methodology is viable and valuable. But this ideal level of performance seems to be achieved by few. The range is wide, with some stations holding debates less regularly, and of less good quality, and some apparently holding few. PEA must monitor and investigate levels of performance, in order to learn under what conditions the project succeeds, and whether additional support might help improve outcomes. For instance, is a church-or NGO-funded station more likely to succeed than a commercial one? Would more financial support improve performance?

Number of debates held

The simplest indicator of performance is how many debates each station holds and broadcasts. Tracking the numbers of outputs from so many partners and over such a wide geographical area is not easy, but it is so important that PEA needs to make every effort to do it as accurately as possible, both to enable learning and for its own accountability to its donors.

The project proposal, as agreed and funded by the donor, envisaged that each station would hold a debate and broadcast a debate programme weekly. If this has been achieved, the number of debate programmes produced to the end of 2010 should be about 40 per station, taking March 2010 as the starting point, or more for those that began earlier. With some flexibility to allow for unavoidable interruptions and challenges – such as a debate having to be called off at the last minute, or political broadcasting interfering at the time of the NRM primaries – we might expect around 35 debates from each station. We do not actually know which if any stations are achieving this number. The highest number reported by any station is 32 (see Annex 7) but many have reported far fewer than this, as few as six and seven in two cases. They may well have carried out more than they have reported – several say they hold debates weekly, one said they hold an average of three a month - but we have no evidence apart from their own statements. Where the number reported is less than half the number expected, I suggest there are real questions about how many are actually being held.

What has PEA done to address the issue of the number of debates? Achieving high numbers has not been a priority for PEA, or at least not consistently with all the partner stations. Quality, skills building and participation were higher priorities, quite justifiably. In some cases, the regional editors have investigated and helped resolve problems, and have reported their interventions to PEA, but in other cases they do not seem to have done so. The project management team in PEA have also devoted considerable effort to understanding and resolving poor performance by some stations, but seem to have left others alone.

I suggest the approach has been a little too

laissez-faire, overall. For the reasons mentioned above – accountability, and understanding the methodology – PEA should be more rigorous in establishing the numbers expected (which need not be the same for every station) and holding the partners to this. Only then will it be possible to better understand the challenges the stations experience and more systematically learn how effectively Panos interventions can increase the number of debates and lead the stations to a higher level of commitment, ownership and performance.

Recommendations

- In the coming months PEA staff should visit every partner station and, in a spirit of learning and improving the project rather than criticism, attempt to have an honest discussion with station managers and debate-project staff about the numbers achieved and the factors influencing this. PEA will then be able to review its expectations for future rolling-out of the methodology.
- Levels of station performance could perhaps be improved through tighter project management, at least in the early months of a project to establish expectations and routines, then more consistent holding of partners to the terms of their MOUs. I was not looking into financial management and the accountability of the stations to PEA, so these comments are tentative, but there appears to have been a lack of consistency on PEA's part in holding stations to their MOUs – both about actual numbers of debates, and about reporting on them. There also seems to have been inconsistency in holding

the regional editors to their reporting and project management tasks. More regular contacts between PEA, regional editors and partner stations would help achieve consistency.

- Looking to the longer term, PEA should think hard about how the project can and should be adapted to the reality of some stations' lower levels of capacity. To a great extent low levels of performance are due to a shortage of station resources and staff time. It may be impossible for a smaller or weaker station to make enough staff and resources available to implement the project fully. (The original project proposal document seems to be based on an ideal scenario in which all the stations are problem-free. This is far from the case.) Could more financial resources be put into the weaker stations? Or could a 'two-tier' project be feasible, in which different levels of performance are expected from different partner stations? Or should only the strongest stations be selected as partners?
- PEA should pursue ideas of promoting the project and its results to station managers and owners, to increase commitment at this level. Publications, the website, face-to-face meetings and seminars could be used. If the project achieved more visibility and reknown, stations would be competing to be chosen as partners.

4.2 Training and skills development

In the foregoing section, the level of performance

was considered only in terms of quantity. Of course quality is equally important – perhaps more so as regards achieving impact.

An important element of the project is to provide and reinforce skills. At the start of the project, PEA had not clearly articulated the characteristics of a successful debate and its various elements, and so had not designed the training needed to enable the partner stations to conduct them. Debates held early in the project are generally said by PEA staff and partner stations not to have been of the expected quality.

The need to reinforce partner stations' grasp of the concept and skills quickly became clear to PEA, and the gap was addressed in April 2010 with a training workshop that focused on aspects like how to frame issues to move them towards solutions, and moderating skills. This and subsequent training events were highly valued by the radio partner staff who participated in them. They also appreciated the contact with experts and senior practitioners, and the contact and exchanges with other partner stations in the project.

By February 2011, some of the partner stations have developed highly skilled teams and effective systems for running the project. It is clear however that others have not done so, or have not consistently maintained a high standard. Evidence for this comes from the stations' own debate monitoring reports as well as from some regional editors' reports. Debates are described in which a broad range of topics was touched on superficially, for example, or speakers made many complaints but did not identify solutions – suggesting inadequate preparation of the debate and perhaps weak grasp of the concept. Sometimes station staff complain in their reports, "This debate was hard to manage, tempers flared, people strayed from the topic"

- suggesting weak moderating skills.

The cause of poor quality may often be that station staff are overstretched and have too little time to prepare the debate properly. To address this, the answer is not further training but other approaches to building stations' commitment and capacity (see previous section). But lack of skills and inadequate grasp of the concept also contribute. PEA should monitor and analyse the extent to which training can help improve quality, and should design a continuous approach to reinforcing and enhancing skills.

Now that training workshops have been held, and have been successful, PEA should focus on capturing and codifying the training 'curriculum', tools and approaches that have evolved. This will contribute to the project's consistency, continuity and replication. A workshop bringing together trainers, regional editors and some of the partner station staff to review and analyse the learning experience so far could be one way of starting this process.

Prior to that, the first step is to articulate and analyse the debate concept and its components. A start has been made on this with the development of the *Step-by-step guide to holding a rural debate*, but it would be useful for the project implementers, the partner stations' staff themselves, to discuss and contribute to this document before it is finalised, to make sure it captures all the different stages from their points of view.

Training workshops, however effective, cannot be the only form of training: stations and individuals have different levels of need, skills learned in a classroom need to be reinforced on the job, and there is the problem of staff turnover and ensuring that skills are continuously passed on to new people joining the project.

One response to this, already being planned by PEA, is in-house training – in which an expert trainer will spend time in a station with the debate team training them and helping them on the job. There are advantages to this approach, but also disadvantages. The strengths are that such an approach can be flexible, specifically targeted to the needs and capacities of different stations, their staff and resources. It will be hands-on, immediately linked with the experience of working rather than class-room based. On the downside, the very stations that need it most may find it hard to accept it – it will be hard for a small and busy station to make staff available for the amount of time needed to participate in training. There is also the problem that training, however good, would be wasted on a station whose staff are always chronically overstretched and have too little management support to put what they learn into practice.

If a programme of hands-on training is introduced, the relations between the trainer, the training curriculum, and the regional editors and their role will need to be very carefully managed. It could be equally important and useful to strengthen and systematise the training input given by the regional editors.

The core function of the regional editors already includes training/mentoring support, and the process for delivering this support has been modified through 2010, based on experience. It is not clear to this consultant how effective this modification has yet been. In some cases it has, and station staff report positively on the contribution their regional editor is making. However, in other cases it seems from their reports the regional editors simply observe poor quality debates without identifying the reasons or intervening to improve them.

Steps to strengthen the role of the regional editors could include: establishing and holding them to clearer expectations; developing training tools for them to use, based on the “Step-by-step guide” and the codification of training mentioned above; strong support for the training role from PEA. It may well be that the skills of running a debate are not within the experience of the regional editors themselves, and PEA should pay attention to ensuring that they do have the required skills, confidence and training tools.

Recommendations

- Write up the curriculum, tools and approaches developed in the experience of training so far
- Analyse the causes of weak performance and quality in order to identify which stations will benefit from intensive training
- Careful planning of the training curriculum and tools for the next phase, based on the previous experience and with input from the regional editors so that they feel ownership of the training process and willingness to build on it in their own interactions with the stations.
- Design the training curriculum to fit closely with the step-by-step guide, so that this can be used as a resource during and after the training
- Establish clearer expectations of regular training input from the regional editors.
- Ensure the regional editors feel familiarity and ownership of the Step-by-step guide, so that they can use it in their interaction.

4.3 Monitoring and Reporting

Regular reporting is essential to enable PEA to monitor:

- For accountability - tracking outputs and performance
- For management - identifying problems early and being able to intervene
- For learning - enabling rigorous analysis and learning about the methodology, how it works, in what conditions for what kinds of stations
- For documenting - building up a picture, documenting the project.

As mentioned above, the number of reports on debates submitted to PEA varies widely from station to station. The chart (Annex 8) shows the number of debates about which we have some information, ranging from 32 per station to 6. This data comes from different sources such as regional editors’ reports, presentations to meetings, and conversations with the evaluator: the number of formal reports submitted by the stations according the agreed project processes (*Monitoring Reports*) is smaller, ranging from 24 to 1.

Considering the participants’ resistance to reporting, the number of reports gathered is quite impressive. But it is not enough. For the nine stations for which we have information on fewer than half the expected number of debates, it would be rash to claim that we know how well they are performing.

PEA has been very aware of the need to improve reporting and has made continuous efforts to address it. Reporting has been discussed and urged in workshops, and has been the subject of a number of the Regional Editors’ interactions with their stations. Changes have been made to the reporting format in order to enrich the quality

and usefulness of the information captured; and to a certain extent PEA has used the leverage it has of making the release of payments conditional on submission of reports. However, though stations' reluctance to report may be surprising it is obviously real, and PEA's efforts do not appear to have made very much difference – there is no steady trend of improvement over the year. Further efforts are needed – while at the same time guarding against the danger that the issue might poison relationships, with PEA being perceived just as a policeman.

Recommendations

- One idea that PEA is already trying is to build stations' own commitment to documenting their experience. Substantial documentation would support staff in the station in 'selling' the project to their managers, and station managers in selling it to other partners.
- As mentioned previously, PEA should be more consistent in establishing what level of reporting is acceptable and sticking to this – with the stations and with the regional editors. It would be unrealistic to insist on 100% compliance, but a higher level than at present could probably be achieved. For example, in the July 2010 review meeting, the workshop report shows that stations stated figures for the number of debates held that were far higher than the number of monitoring reports held in Panos files would suggest. PEA could have insisted at that point that the stations produce evidence to back up the number they were announcing. I am not suggesting that stations gave false information, but pointing out that an opportunity seems to have been missed for reinforcing the reporting requirement.
- The monitoring report format that has been developed over the course of 2010 elicits valuable information about the content and quality of the debate. This inevitably makes it fairly demanding to complete. I suggest that reporting could be separated into two strands – reporting *numbers* of debates held, in order to monitor performance as above; and separate reporting of the *content and quality* of debates.
- Tracking the numbers could then be made easier. For instance, minimum information such as the date, place, topic and numbers of participants of every debate could be sent by SMS, or through a weekly phone call from the Regional Editor, if the station staff do not have access to email. If a debate was not held during the week, the explanation could be given the same way.
- The content and quality information that is so valuable for assessing the results and impact of debates could be required less frequently – say once a month, or through case studies required every quarter, or in monthly reports from the regional editors. Case studies to be produced every quarter would include information about staff input into the preparation of the debate, and information about follow-up and results. To enrich learning, case studies could be prepared of a station's most successful debates but also its less successful ones.
- The regional editors' reports have also

gone through modifications through the year – and appear to have been weakly enforced. The current situation seems to be that there are a number of different reports required, and that sometimes the editors’ monthly reports simply repeat information that has already been given in the stations’ monitoring reports. The process could be simplified, and duplication reduced, with a single monthly report required from the regional editors, explaining the reasons where debates were not held, recording their contacts with the stations, and reporting on their mentoring and problem-solving.

- At present the gathering of success stories/results stories is quite ad hoc. It could be made a feature of review meetings – for instance, having a session of gathering little stories on post-it notes, grouping them and discussing them.
- More regular contact among the regional editors, PEA and the stations would smooth the flow of reporting information. More regular review meetings would also boost the exchange of information and learning.

4.4 *The role of the Regional Editors*

Assessing the role and performance of the regional editors was not a priority for the consultancy. I met three of the editors, gathered a little information from the station staff interviewed, reviewed the documentation available, and gathered more from informal conversation with the project manager. Given their importance in the structure of the project – they are key providers of input as well as in the

project management and information flow – PEA should as a matter of urgency conduct a thorough review of their role and its effectiveness, in time to revise the role if necessary in proposals for a new phase of the project. This review should gather information from PEA staff, from the radio station partners, and from the regional editors themselves.

Judging from the documentation seen by the consultant, their commitment to their role has varied considerably. The total number of monthly reports submitted, an obvious indicator of their performance, is less than half the number that should have been expected (47 out of 100 expected, taking March as the starting point). (It may be that several of them took up the post later than March, and that I have not recorded all the available reports - in which case the discrepancy is less.) The most diligent in this regard submitted 11 reports, the least submitted none – though he has done a good job in other respects. The content of the reports varies widely, with some doing no more than listing debates while others detail the editors’ observations on the progress of the project in the particular context – as PEA expects from them - or detail the contacts between the editor and the station. Taken together, it appears to the consultant that some of the editors have fulfilled their roles substantially, in terms of building the stations’ skills and grasp of the methodology; some (not always the same ones) have fulfilled their expected role in terms of feeding back information to Panos; while some of done neither of these, or at least have not provided any evidence to show that they have.

In the coming months, PEA should try to hold the regional editors more firmly to their TORs, keeping in closer contact with them and insisting on compliance with the agreed procedures. At the same time, a review should be conducted and

the reasons for less-than-expected performance should be investigated. These might include: lack of commitment to the project; lack of sufficient commitment for the project to win out over competing demands on their time; insufficient financial incentive; lack of clarity about what is expected of them; lack of appropriate skills and grasp of the project; lack of cooperation from the stations under their remit; failure to build good relations with the stations; lack of support from PEA. It may be challenging to gather the true picture. Once the reasons have been mapped, PEA will be able to assess whether the role as designed is feasible (for instance, whether sufficiently skilled people are available, and for the rate PEA wishes to pay), and take the steps needed to strengthen or redesign it. The fact that some of the Regional Editors have been able to fulfil their roles effectively, and have contributed strongly in the most important respect which is building the partner stations' capacities, shows that the role as designed is not impossible. It seems to be an implementation problem rather than a fundamental project design problem – but this does need to be tested through more thorough investigation than I was able to do in the time available.

4.5 Project management issues

The project is undoubtedly successful in many ways, producing very visible and impressive results, and its pioneering methodology is very promising. There have been some weaknesses in the implementation, inevitably given the lack of experience of the methodology. Many of these have been resolved since the start of the project, but some have not.

When it began the goal and objectives of the project were not clear, the methodology concept was rather broad-brush, there had been too


little needs analysis and thought about what was actually needed to get it going, and there were unrealistic expectations of the capacity of partner stations to deliver. It is also not clear whether there were clear and rigorous criteria for the selection of partner stations.

PEA project staff responded to address some of these weaknesses as needs emerged – for instance, thinking through the methodology in much more detail and addressing the need for training. Some of these weaknesses should be addressed now as PEA prepares to develop a new phase of the project – such as clarifying the goal and objectives (see Results section) and establishing more realistic and experience-based expectations of stations' capacity (see earlier in this section).

Issues remaining – which have already been mentioned previously – include:

- continuing poor performance and low quality of work of some partner stations
- patchiness of monitoring and management information
- uneven performance of the Regional Editors

These issues all indicate a lack of management capacity in the project team in PEA (in terms of time, not skill). The existing management structure with one person managing down through regional editors might be enough if everything went smoothly with the stations or the regional editors performed their functions regularly, but that never happens in reality – certainly not in Uganda, with rural stations quite fragile and facing a range of technical, political, financial and managerial challenges. Many of the foregoing suggestions require closer management of the project, but at present there is not enough management time



in the PEA team for the manager to take steps to resolve problems when they become visible. For instance, given the lack of reporting coming from some stations, the project manager should have been able to go to visit them to understand the situation. Of course there are limits, as already observed, to the project manager's power to influence the behaviour of voluntary project partners like the radio stations and consultants

such as the regional editors, but in my view a closer relationship, closer scrutiny and more regular contact would be very likely to redress some of the problems.

Recommendation

- Management capacity for the project in PEA should be increased.

Debate topics

(All dates in 2010 unless otherwise stated)

Governance and accountability (mainly local), including law enforcement and land issues

ACCOUNTABILITY			
	<i>Station/place</i>	<i>Primary topic</i>	<i>m/f</i>
1	Apac, 20/7	Accountability	16, 7
2	Apac, 25/5	Access to Information	33,28
3	Kasese Guide 6/5	Constituency Development fund expenditure	20,15
4	Kasese Guide 13/5	Constituency Development fund expenditure	8,3
5	Kitara , 13/5	Expenditure of revenue that comes from sub-county to parish level (25%)– lack of accountability, leadership failure	115, 13
6	KKCR 13/8	How effective is management of public assets?	90, 30
7	KKCR, no date	Poor construction by contractors (corruption)	n/a
8	Kyoga Veritas, 11/4	Statutory annual district budget publication	40,25
9	Life, 16/6	Is the new national budget favourable to the local population?	6, 8
10	KCCR, 9/7	The role of leaders in Community-Driven Development	40m 20f
11	Mighty Fire,14/7	Do LC chairs deserve to be paid by govt for their work?	74, 32
12	Kasese , no date	Failure to disburse, and disappearance of, tax revenue and Belgian development cooperation funds for an admin centre.	n/a
13	Spice, 6/3	Should govt pay whistle-blowers, to reduce corruption?	190, 97
14	Rock Mambo, 10/2	Reinstatement of two corrupt council officers	50, 20
15	Kyoga Veritas, no date	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) – improper recruitment for jobs advertised	n/a
LAND ISSUES			
1	Apac 15/7	Land dispute: Disputed ownership/occupation of land by IDPs	22,21

2	Equator 13/8	Land dispute	40,30
3	Kitara, May	Corruption in eviction of squatters from land	100, 30
4	KKCR 20/8	Sale of market land	70,50
5	Spice, 1/1	Land wrangles and the land act	30, 20
6	Spice, 22/5	Threatened eviction of informal market	5, 15
7	Kigezi, July	Construction of market on private property	n/a
8	Kasese, 9/3	Minority tribes, land and marginalisation	46,70
9	Open Gate, 14/12/09	Land grabbing	20,2
10	Open Gate, 17/4	Land issues – which legal regime is best?	49,0
11	Mighty fire, 26/3	How to resolve land disputes in the IDP return process	28,33
12	Kinkizi, 2/10	Land acquisition by minorities	n/a
13	Kyoga Veritas, 19/10	Who is responsible for compensating those who have lost their land?	70, 15
14	Kasese, no date	Squatters in an old mine area	n/a
SECURITY			
1	Nenah, 13/3	Insecurity, especially raids	26, 13
2	Nenah, 29/4	Insecurity, especially from use of bows and arrows	13, 9
3	Nenah, 11/8	Insecurity	25, 7
4	Equator, 25/8	Security	78, 54
5	Equator	High crime rate in town	20, 17
6	Bushenyi 27/4	Insecurity affecting boda-boda riders	14, 0
7	Rock mambo, 17/8	Insecurity, causes and solutions and how it affects development	70, 30
8	Victoria, 1/8	Do people know the roles of the police?	15, 7
9	Rukungiri, 28/3	Problems with local security personnel	10, 3
10	King, July	Does govt have the capacity to protect citizens from terrorist attacks?	342, 103
11	Mighty Fire, 21/7	Terrorist attack has shown govt inability to protect its citizens	156, 87

CREATION OF NEW ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS			
1	Bushenyi Feb/March	Proposed splitting of district	n/a
2	King, April	Creation of a new district	40, 15
3	Open Gate, 11/7	Is the creation of local administrative units a driving force for service delivery?	50, 20
4	KKCR, 12/11	Creation of a new sub-county: Does it stimulate development?	284, 152
5	Spice, 26/6	Proposal to sub-divide district to improve services	40, 20
6	KKCR, 9/1	Proposal to sub-divide district to improve services	22, 7
7	Spice Oct?	Proposal to sub-divide district to improve services	n/a
CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS (KINGDOMS)			
1	Kasese Guide. 7/7	Cultural institution (Kingdom) and its impact on development	52, 32
2	Life, 26/11	Causes of conflict in the Tooro kingdom palace	15, 0
GENERAL			
1	Victoria, Oct	Should Uganda be celebrating 48 years of independence?	n/a
2	Apac, June	Community participation	45, 35

Service delivery

HEALTH			
	Station/place	Primary topic	
1	Rukungiri , 3/4	Lack of drugs and poor staff attendance at a Health Centre 2	n/a
2	Rukungiri , 13/4	Lack of drugs and poor staff attendance at a Health Centre 2	n/a
3	Rhino , 3/7	Theft of drugs	62, 9
4	Kyoga Veritas, Nov	Theft of drugs from a hospital	n/a
5	Kyoga	“Numerous” debates on poor state of health centres, esp lack of drugs	
6	Bushenyi , 20/11	Lack of drugs	20, 19
7	Kasese Guide, 26/2	Theft of drugs from health centres	7, 8
8	Mighty Fire, 26/8	Inefficiency of govt health units: what are the authorities doing about it?	43, 28
9	Bushenyi, 10/4	Health services in remote areas	66, 43
10	Bushenyi, Feb/ march	Lack of transparency of expenditure	n/a
11	Open Gate, 2 March	Problems at health centre – improper charges, sanitation, etc	20, 7
12	Apac, 4/5	Poor standard of health centre (corruption)	9m, 18f
13	Mighty Fire, no date	State of health centre	n/a
14	Victoria, 11 May or une	Health service problems	26, 20
15	Kasese Guide, 1/11	Health services in mission hospital	300, 400
16	Kasese no date	Drug shortage in hospital	n/a
17	Rhino, 1/12	Health services	58, 43
18	Kinkizi, 26/9	Poor health services	n/a
19	KKCR, no date	Antenatal services	n/a
20	Kigezi, July	Mismanagement of health centre	41, 67

21	Equator, 19/4	Poor security, infrastructure and health	54, 17
22	Rhino, 24/7	Access to health services	37, 13
23	Kyoga Veritas, no date	Neglected health centre (Asuret?)	n/a
24	Kitara, 3/6	Health centre demolished by sugar cane loader (Debate aborted)	n/a
25	Rock Mambo	Health Centre building taken over by s/c admin	n/a
26	Pacis, July-Sept	Ethnic divisions in service delivery, state of health centre	n/a
27	Kyoga, no date	Health Workers have abandoned health centre	n/a
28	Victoria. 1/9	Relations between staff of health centre and the community	10, 24
29	Life, no date	Absenteeism by hospital doctors	n/a
30	Equator, 18/2	Health services for water-borne diseases	6, 12
31	KKCR, 16/1	Services for HIV/AIDS-affected children and their mothers	12, 21
32	King, 15/4	Problems accessing health services, esp ARVs	32, 20
33	Kitara, 8 June	Tsetse flies	17, 6
34	Nenah, 23/5	Recent cholera outbreak	20, 16
35	Nenah, 4/6	Recent cholera outbreak	58, 30
36	King, 4/4	Lack of malaria drugs	45, 26
EDUCATION			
1	Pacis, 17/3 (or later?)	Poor staffing and admin of local primary school, Nebbi	
2	Pacis, 21/3	What has been done to address the problems in the local primary school?	100, 200
3	Pacis, 1/4	Follow-up to previous	165, 200
4	Rock Mambo, no date	Bishop Okello primary school	n/a
5	Open gate, 11/9	Management of local primary school	7, 13
6	Mighty Fire, 13/8	Why has govt failed to address issues affecting performance in schools (focus on local primary school)?	97, 43
7	Rhino, 6/12	Report of local primary school monitors re management issues	20, 9

8	Kyoga Veritas, 4/4	Who is to blame for poor performance of local primary school?	40, 25
9	Kitara, 16 June	Closure of local boys primary school by parents due to poor latrines	30, 12
10	Kitara, 26 June	Follow-up from previous	n/a
11	Rock Mambo no date	Collapsed building of school that had hosted Kenya refugees	n/a
12	Mighty Fire, 26/4	Poor education provision in remote sub-county	50, 20
13	Open Gate, 25/2	Poor primary school results	37, 22
14	Rhino, 29/4	Poor educational performance – causes and solutions	19, 22
15	Victoria, 13/7	Challenges of education and possible solutions	26,20
16	Bushenyi, 7/11	How to improve education	27, 11
17	Kyoga Veritas, 10/8	How good is UPE?	40, 15
18	Bushenyi , No date	Poor primary education standards, despite UPE	24, 10
19	Mighty Fire, 22/10	Obstacles to success of the thematic (mother tongues) curriculum	10, 12
20	Life, 21/5	Holiday teaching	10, 0
21	Spice, 29/2	High rate of school drop-out	430, 50
22	Nenah,6 /10	School drop-out	32, 12
23	King, March	Poor school attendance	n/a
24	Rhino, 5/7	Corporal punishment and a safe school environment	50 pupils
25	Life, 12/6	Strengths and weaknesses of USE and how to make it work	20, 20 (pupils)
26	Mighty Fire, no date	Teachers' pay	n/a
WATER AND SANITATION			
1	Rhino, 2/9	Water shortage	54, 31
2	Life, 31/3	Water crisis and Bilharzia	20, 4
3	Nenah. 26/1	Water shortage	20, 14
4	King, March (?)	Water shortage and sanitation	40, 30

5	Rock Mambo, 8/9	Water shortage	30, 15
6	Equator, 3/3	Inadequate water supply	2, 25
7	Equator, 22/3	Inadequate water supply	23, 49
8	Kasese Guide, no date (late 2010?)	Water crisis at Rusese trading centre	n/a
9	Apac, 4/5	Access to water	25m, 36f
10	Kinkizi, 30/6	Water supply, need for local organisation	13, 12
11	Spice, 5/11	Poor maintenance of water sources	30, 7
12	Kinkizi	Contamination of water sources	50, 24
13	Kitara, 9/9	Water source conflict: what should be done to solve it, and who should do it?	30, 40
14	Rhino, 15/5	Damage to borehole of IDPs	n/a
15	Kasese Guide, No date	Corruption in Mahango water supply project	n/a
16	Equator, June (?)	Low latrine coverage	n/a
17	Spice, May	Sewage lagoon in residential area	58, 8
18	Kinkizi, July	Poor management of market-place garbage	n/a
19	Rhino, Aug	Market-place sanitation	20, 30
20	Kitara, 29/5	Market-place sanitation	n/a
21	Victoria, 24 June,	Dirt and poor sanitation of market place - who is responsible?	32, 7
22	Life, 12/3	Dirty market	31, 18
23	Victoria, Oct	Garbage problem	n/a
24	Equator, 11/2	Garbage disposal and sanitation	20, 15
25	Spice, 22/8	Kaveera	23, 8
26	Life, no date	Lack of toilets in taxi park	n/a
NAADS and other government programmes			
1	Kitara, 24/3	Effectiveness of and access to the NAADS programme	18,11
2	KKCR, 1/5	Poor performance of NAADS programme (corruption)	40, 3
3	Rock Mambo, 2/3	Ineffectiveness of NAADS programme	15, 5

4	Open Gate 20/3	Problems with NAADS	40, 7
5	Bushenyi, Feb- March	Weaknesses of NAADS	n/a
6	Bushenyi, 12/10	NAADS	20, 25
7	Spice	NAADS	n/a
8	Pacis, 9/3	NAADS	55, 110
9	Pacis 26/4	NAADS	65, 340
10	Life, 13/2	NAADS	5, 9
11	KKCR, 2/12	NAADS Phase 1 – has it benefited farmers?	114, 38
12	Nenah, Oct	Have you benefited from NAADS and the Prosperity for All programmes?	40, 32
13	Apac, no date	PRDP/NUSAF: how are people benefiting?	n/a
ROADS			
1	Bushenyi ,3/10	Poor state of roads and poor services	15, 17
2	Apac , 23/3	Roads	15m, 12f
3	Rock Mambo, no date	Poor roads	n/a
4	Equator, 17/5	Poor roads hinder marketing produce	47, 36
5	Kasese Guide, 15/7	The impact of poor roads on development	30, 8
6	Kasese Guide, 18/10	The role of community roads in development	100, 70
7	KKCR, no date	Community roads – who is responsible?	n/a
8	Kitara, May?	Does the road network support development? What are the weaknesses?	15, 5
9	Rhino, June?	Lack of effective road network	33, 26
10	Rhino, 26/6	Benefits expected from road rehabilitation	25, 20
11	Spice, May	Who is responsible for shoddy repair of road?	48, 13
12	Spice, 12/6	Poor road improvement works	31, 10
13	KKCR, 5/11	Failure to repair a road	147, 53

14	Equator, 31/5	Request govt help to solve problems of roads and health facilities	27, 38
15	Open Gate, 14/1	Road construction altered course of river	6, 4
16	King, 6/11	Rains made roads impassable: what can be done?	27, 9
17	Kitara, 27/3	Collapsed bridge impacting on transport of goods for sale (sugar)	n/a
18	Rock Mambo, 4/2	Shoddy installation of street lights	50, 10
19	Equator, 2/9	Road safety, linked to corruption	9, 25
20	Rhino, 19/8	Effect of river crossing on the local communities	26, 6
21	Rhino, June?	Loss of life at canoe river crossing	n/a
22	Nenah, 20/1	Road accidents	13, 11
23	Life, 15/12/09	Road accidents	18, 0
24	Life, Feb 2011 (planned)	Accident blackspot	n/a
POWER			
1	Rhino	Rural electrification – failure of promised supply despite contributions from community	13, 11
2	Mighty Fire, no date	Power supply (Lamwo)	n/a
NATURAL DISASTERS			
1	Kigezi, 6/3	Landslides and local relief efforts	23, 19
2	Kigezi, May	Aftermath of landslides, effectiveness of relief efforts	31, 30
3	Kasese Guide, no date	Effects of landslides	n/a
4	Equator, 7/10	Drought	9, 25
5	Nenah, 5/8	Drought and poor harvest	15, 25
6	Kasese Guide, 8/11	Impact of floods on urban slum	66, 41
7	Kyoga Veritas, no date	Climate Change and its effects	n/a

8	Equator, 7/6	Recovery of a village after destruction by a hailstorm in Sept 09	19, 24
VARIOUS			
1	Nenah, 3/4	Housing shortage	4, 14
2	Nenah, 11/8	Access to govt services	16, 10
3	Kigezi , May	Uganda-Rwanda border not open 24hrs as per EAC ruling; and poor sanitation of border post.	21, 7
4	King, 1/10	Govt payment of pensions to old people and orphans	39, 19
5	Kasese Guide, April (?)	Threat posed by wild animals	50, 25
6	Mighty Fire, 6/4	Service delivery in a new district	31, 11

Livelihoods

AGRICULTURE AND FISHING			
1	Equator, 7/5	Various agriculture problems	22, 15
2	Rukungiri , 26/3	Farming problems inc lack of marketing	30, 10
3	Rukungiri, 10/3	Theft of agricultural produce (law enforcement)	24, 5
4	Spice, 12/11	Plight of tobacco farmers	
5	Pacis, Oct 2 and 16	Weak enforcement of conservation law (fallow period)	n/a
6	Open Gate, 1/6	Fishermen ill-treated by security agents and beach managers	60, 10
LOAN AND SAVINGS SCHEMES			
1	Pacis, 1/7	How safe are the methods VSLAs and SACCOs are using in mobilising loans and savings?	150, 250
2	Mighty Fire, 17/5 or 17/6	Women's saving schemes	14, 25
3	Life 14/2	SACCO	15, 7
4	Spice, 14/8	Impact of 'Prosperity for All' campaign	28, 3

VARIOUS			
1	Kitara, 3/3	Taxation of market traders: demand for fair assessment	60, 70
2	KKCR, 19/12,09	Taxation of market traders; Conduct of contractors, hygiene	20, 3
3	Mighty Fire, 27/5	Lack of profitability of market for women traders and poor facilities	0, 38
4	Might Fire, Nov?	Market management contract	n/a
5	Rock Mambo , no date	Insecurity in market	n/a
6	Kitara, 16/3	Falling price of maize: should government intervene?	30, 5
7	Equator . 31/11	Fuel price rises	23, 4
8	Equator, 31/5	General poverty	27, 38
9	Kasese, June	Illegal hunting in national parks	150, 80
10	King, 21/5	Anti-poverty fund – will it help?	42, 3

Social issues

CHILDREN			
1	Rukungiri, no date	Child sacrifice	n/a
2	King, 25/6	Child killing	20, 7
3	Kigezi, April-May	Street children, causing problems. Failure of district officials and NGOs to address	26, 8
4	Apac, 18/7	Child abuse	24, 27
5	King, 16/5	Child-headed families	21, 15
6	Kitara, 12/1	Child labour: Laws against	14, 24
7	Equator 1/12	Child labour and neglect	14, 16
8	Apac, 4/3	Child labour	27m, 49f
9	Victoria, 13 Feb	Responsibilities of bringing up children	19, 13
10	Mighty Fire, 15/10	What should be done to preserve the Acholi culture and ensure that children live a morally upright life?	44, 32

YOUTH			
1	Kyoga, 9/ 5	Youth as leadership in governance	40, 16
2	Rukungiri, 22/4	Youth crime and unemployment, modern/traditional culture clash	32,8
3	Apac, 21/7	Youth unemployment Failure of government to plan creation of youth jobs	46, 35
4	Victoria, 13/6	Theft and hooliganism by youth at landing site	16, 8
5	Bushenyi Feb-March	Youth dropping out of school, becoming motor mechanics.	n/a
6	King, 14/10	Corrupt (immoral) lives of youth	13, 16
7	Pacis, 8/4	Morals of youth	500, 200 (and 300 youth)
8	Pacis 24/4	Drug abuse among youth	250, 300 (and 400 youth)
WOMEN, MARRIAGE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE			
1	Spice, 13/3	Early marriage: raising the age of consent	200, 115
2	Rhino, June	Marriage and Divorce bill 2009	150, 30
3	Kasese Guide 12/2	Polygamy, its proposed abolition	20, 30
4	Victoria, 4/6	Responses of community (largely Muslim) to Domestic Relations Bill that outlaws polygyny	23, 15
5	Kasese, June	Abolition of bride wealth	40, 70
6	Pacis, 17/3	Widow inheritance	1000 in all by the end
7	Rock Mambo 8/3	International Women's Day: how can women be empowered?	50 f
8	Kasese 14/2	Teen pregnancies	40, 37
9	King, 17 Nov	Rise in abortions and abortion-related deaths among school-age girls	17, 25
10	Rhino, 20/7	Challenges of child mothers	3, 21
11	Apac, June	Child mothers	54, 65
12	KKCR, 23/7	Causes of school drop-out and child pregnancy	80, 70

13	Mighty Fire, 12 May	High rate of school girl drop-out	60, 78
14	Victoria, 21 March	Women's domestic problems, violence and alcohol	11, 15
15	Rhino, Aug	Domestic violence	45, 40
16	King, 16/5	Violence, including domestic	35, 23
17	Rhino, 27/3	GBV: Imprisonment of rape suspects	25, 30
18	King, no date	Rape	n/a
19	Victoria, 7/7	Has women's emancipation driven our country towards development or disaster?	4, 74
ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE			
1	Kasese Guide 11/10	Causes of heavy drinking	20, 32
2	Spice, 19/3	Strategies to curb heavy drinking	88, 32
3	Rock mambo, 13/8	Drinking undermines development	17, 40
4	Mighty Fire, 10/11	Can a born-again Christian marry a non born-again and live happily without violence? (This was largely about drinking, it seems)	74, 86
5	Pacis, 18/5	Effect of drug use on productivity	500, 150, (300 youth)
IDPs and LRA ISSUES			
1	Rhino, 26/6	Challenges of resettlement for abductees	7, 22
2	Mighty Fire, 3/6	IDPs not returning to native villages	20, 38
3	Mighty Fire, 2/7	Conditions at an IDP camp where elderly people have been abandoned by their families	n/a
4	King, 4/3	Lack of care for old people in IDP camps	32, 1
5	King, 10/6	Food security for vulnerable people, mainly IDPs	29, 20
6	King, 2/7	Children born in LRA captivity: are they accessing their basic needs?	15, 30
7	King, 29/7	Should govt compensate families who lost children in the LRA war?	39, 56

HIV/AIDS			
1	Equator, 1/12/09	Causes of HIV/AIDS and how to fight it	15, 70
2	King, 4 Dec	An HIV+ person can cause 2 new infections: how can this be addressed?	18, 10
3	King, 14/5	Should children be told their HIV+ status?	5, 3
4	Apac , June	Youth and HIV/AIDS	9, 5
VARIOUS			
1	Kitara, 24/9	Withdrawal of company sponsorship from the football club: what can be done?	35, 7
2	Mighty Fire, 9/6	Sale of family possessions without permission of family members (women) and clan	20, 38
3	Nenah, 18/2	Standard of living of local community	15, 13
4	Nenah, 3/11	Why are we experiencing famine?	14, 33
5	Pacis, 24/4	Reasons for failure of development projects	250, 300
6	Pacis, 18/5	Why group cohesion is failing, despite calls for people to form groups to access services?	250, 130
7	Pacis, 18/5	Are leaders responsible for the poor take-up of development activities by local people?	200, 300
8	Pacis, July?	Reasons for failure of development projects	200, 330
9	Life, 4/3	Homosexuality bill	12, 6
10	Apac, June	Rights of disabled people	14, 18

Election-related political

VOTER REGISTRATION			
1	King, 18/6	Is Uganda ready for a general election?	23,12
2	Equator , 12/6	Voter registration exercise	20, 15
3	Kasese, June	Voter registration	60, 42
4	Life	Voter registration	n/a
5	KKCR no date	Voter registration	n/a
6	Rhino, 31/8	Display of the voter register: successes and challenges	50, 30

UNDERSTANDING ELECTIONS AND THE MULTIPARTY SYSTEM			
1	Apac 11/5	The right to vote, and how vote-buying undermines confidence in the system	50, 47
2	Kasese Guide, 3/3	Multipartyism – affects service delivery?	15, 3
3	Kyoga Veritas, 14/9	Do you prefer multiparty system or a system of voting for individuals?	100 in all
4	Kitara, 16/9	What is the future of multi-party politics, based on the recent NRM primaries?	55, 25
5	KKCR, 20/11	Are losers in the NRM primaries justified in standing as independents?	Studio
6	Kyoga Veritas, 28/10	Independent candidates and their relevance in the 2011 elections	30, 17
7	Mighty Fire, 4/8	Is it proper for a candidate to campaign for his colleague?	123, 64
8	Apac, 27/4	Influence of multi-party politics on service delivery	35m, 18f
9	Mighty Fire, 7/9	How fair are the primaries for opposition parties?	33, 44
10	KKCR, 20/7	Election of special interest groups (PWDs)	Studio
11	King, 6/1/2011	Why have citizens lost confidence in their votes? What can be done?	35, 15
12	Mighty Fire, 8 May	Conduct of elections	386, 128
13	Victoria, 21/8	Has govt done enough civic education about the elections?	26, 7
14	Rock Mambo, 17/2	Ineffective electoral sensitisation exercise	45, 20
UNDERSTANDING THE ROLES OF VARIOUS ELECTED LEADERS			
1	Kitara 3/8	What do you expect from your Masindi Woman MP?	50, 10
2	Kitara, 20/7	What do you expect from your local council leader?	30, 3
3	Kitara, 3/8	What features should you consider in voting for an LC5 chair?	50, 10
4	Kitara.31/7	What do you expect from the MPs you are going to vote for?	30, 3
5	Mighty Fire, 3/11	What do you want your elected leaders (esp LC5) to do for you when in office?	150, 138
6	Mighty Fire, 17/11	What do you want your elected leaders to do for you when in office?	85, 102

7	Mighty Fire, Nov	What do you want your elected leaders to do for you when in office?	119, 150
8	Pacis, 1/7	What kind of leaders would you vote for in the 2011 election?	120, 50
9	Kyoga Veritas, 12/10	What kind of leader would you want to have?	15, 3
PERFORMANCE OF ELECTED LEADERS			
1	Rock Mambo, 17/3	How the district has suffered from having elected an opposition MP	?, 12
2	Rock Mambo, 25/3	Have women in this sub-county benefited from their woman MP?	?, 50f, 17 youth
3	Rock Mambo, 3/4	Demand MPs account for their performance, inc CDF	27, 18
4	KKCR, 16/7	Evaluation of leadership	70, 30
5	Victoria, 13/4	MPs' Failure to fulfil promises	27, 19
6	Victoria, 23/5	Roles of MPs and how we can improve their performance	95, 30
7	King, 8/7	Do the current leaders deserve re-election?	16, 48
8	King, 23/12	Are leaders or electors to blame for the repeated failure of elected leaders to fulfil their promises?	16, 30
9	Rock Mambo, 23/7	Is your MP fulfilling his/her responsibilities?	147, 30
10	Spice, 27/8	How have elected leaders performed?	53, 27
11	Kitara, 8/3	Have MPs performed according to expectations?	50, 40
12	Kitara 2/9	Do your leaders consult and represent your views?	30, 19
13	Bushenyi, no date	Why do leaders not listen to the concerns of the people they represent?	20, 25
14	Kyoga Veritas, no date	ALI parliamentary scorecard – was your MP fairly evaluated?	250, 50
15	Spice, Jan 2011	25 years of NRM rule a success	50 in all
MANIFESTOS			
1	Equator 29/2	The Citizen's Manifesto	21, 19
2	Kasese Guide, 28/9	The citizen's manifesto	50, 35
3	Kasese Guide, no date	The citizen's manifesto	n/a

4	Kyoga Veritas, no date	Launch of citizen manifesto	n/a
5	King, 25/11	Parties are promising poverty eradication: how can this be achieved? (Ciizen's manifesto)	9, 4
6	Mighty Fire, Nov	2011 elections – what should form the basis for your decision?	36, 28
7	KKCR, 17/12	The state of the campaigns: what issues are electorates going to vote for?	32, 13
8	Kinkizi, Aug	As we enter the election period, how do we decide who to vote for?	32, 24
9	Kyoga Veritas, 14/9	Choice of leaders for the next 5 years	15, 3
CAMPAIGN MALPRACTICE			
1	Mighty Fire, 23/6	Bribery of voters	30, 65
2	Kyoga Veritas, 12/11	Will the use of money in these campaigns influence how people vote?	40, 22
3	Rock Mambo, 28/7	Does vote buying affect serviced delivery?	15, 10
4	Equator, 17/12	The election and vote-buying	10, 12
ELECTION VIOLENCE			
1	Kasese Guide, 4/8	Police and the election process in multiparty elections	42, 22
2	Rock Mambo, 25/8	Are youth key drivers of electoral violence?	15, 8
3	King, 20/1/2011	Elections and how to keep them violence-free	40, 20
4	Mighty Fire, 8/10	Who initiates election violence, and what are the contributing factors?	55, 34
5	Spice, 3/9	Who was to blame for the chaos and voting irregularities in the August NRM primaries?	64, 43
6	Bushenyi, Feb-March	Youth and riots	n/a
VARIOUS			
1	Open Gate, 31/10	Challenges women face participating in politics	4,30
2	Kyoga, 9/5	Compensation for ex-servicemen – is it just to buy their votes?	80, 35
3	KKCR, 26/12/09	Creation of new polling stations	27, 8
4	King, 20/1/2011	Disputed results of national and local opinion polls on election prospects	47, 60

5	King, 28/1/2011	The 20 million for monitoring NAADS: should MPs hand it back?	17, 1
6	Mighty Fire, Jan 2011	Leadership for intertribal reconciliation	n/a

Results of Rural Radio Debates 2010

List of specific results, as known Feb 2011. This information comes from reports from the staff of the radio stations, who gathered it from their own observations, from their investigations and follow-up after debates, or from local residents phoning the station with updates after debates. The information has not been independently verified by the evaluator.

Actions resulting from debates

1. Bushenyi, Feb-March: After a debate about whether sub-dividing the district would result in better service delivery, the community's majority view in favour of sub-division reached the office of the President. He ordered the local government department to investigate further, and a proposal to sub-divide the district was tabled and agreed. (See case study prepared for PL PPA report)
2. Equator, 7 May: District agricultural officers provided veterinary medicines, in response to a debate on the problems and poverty facing farmers.
3. Equator: A week after a debate on poor sanitation and the shortage of latrines, the Masaka District Director of Health Services toured the area with a team of officials for an on-the-spot assessment of the situation and to verify what they had heard on air. They promised to provide the communities with EcoSan toilets. (The radio team was asked to follow up to ensure they deliver on the promise.)
4. KKCR, August: After a debate on the election of representatives of disabled people, in which allegations of electoral malpractice were made, the NRM party's returning officer cancelled some of the results, even though he had not received formal protests from the victims.
5. KKCR, 5 Nov: The government had failed to repair the Mabaale – Mguuse road. As a result of a debate, the community and leaders sent a petition to the District Secretary for Works. After this, work on the road was started. (The broadcast of this debate generated a lot of political discussion around the district.)
6. KKCR, no date: A debate on poor performance by a construction company contracted by the town council, Mega Construction, persuaded the town council to end its contract with the company. (The performance of Mega Construction was an issue all over Uganda).
7. KKCR, 2 Dec: After a debate in Kyanaisoke sub-county on people's dissatisfaction with the NAADS programme (National Agricultural Advisory Services) (Phase 1) (one of many on this topic), farmers sent a petition to the district NAADS coordinator, asking him to look into their demands. Subsequently, all sub-county NAADS coordinators have been raising farmers' awareness of Phase 2 of the programme.
8. Kasese Guide, April: A community living along the edge of the Queen Elizabeth National Park discussed the problem of wild animals from the park (such as elephants) encroaching on their fields. The debate participants selected a 5-person team to visit the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) offices to raise their concerns. Subsequently the

RDC directed that the 20% of its revenue the UWA has to share with communities around the Park should be used to dig and maintain a trench along the boundaries of the park. A further 16 million shillings from the Luwera-Rwenzori reconstruction program would also be spent on maintenance of the trench. (This solution has not proved entirely successful, and other measures such as an electric fence are being discussed, as of Feb 2011).

9. Kasese Guide, 13 May: Several debates were held about how MPs spend their Constituency Development Fund⁹. After one such debate, in which participants demanded that their MPs explain how they had used the money, the MPs for Bukonzo East and Bukonzo West and the woman MP for Kasese responded with public disclosures.
10. Kasese Guide: a debate about allegations of corruption in a water infrastructure project (Mahango) attracted the attention of the Kasese RDC, who halted the commissioning of the project after listening to the debate. He invited a team of water engineers from Kampala to find out if the project was delivering value for money. Changes were made in consultation with the community, who are now satisfied that the project will meet their needs.
11. Kasese Guide: One week after a debate on the poor state of the Malibu county road network, the district authorities deployed a surveyor, and construction work started soon afterwards.
12. Kasese Guide: After a debate on the suffering of victims of landslides in Kisinga sub-county, the district authorities provided temporary shelter at government schools, and planting

⁹ The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is a sum disbursed by the central government directly to MPs, for them to spend in their constituencies. Voters have no say in how the money is spent. Since the establishment of the scheme in 2005,

rules have been lax and accountability poor.

materials - cassava stems, beans and banana trees. An NGO, Caritas, also distributed relief items.

13. Kasese Guide: Building of a new District HQ had been on hold because the current District authorities said that some of the funds set aside for it by a previous local government were missing from the account. A debate helped to clarify a complicated situation which various actors appeared to be exploiting for their own political ends. The radio station sent its news team to follow up after the debate, insistently asking "When is the building starting?" and eventually the money was mobilised and work began.
14. Voice of Kigezi, April: a debate in the aftermath of landslides provided a platform for victims to criticise the perceived politicisation of aid (which they said was only given to supporters of the local MP) and to beseech the government to send more relief aid. The PM's office responded.
15. Voice of Kigezi: As part of its mission to facilitate trade between its member countries, the East African Community had agreed that border crossing points should be open round the clock. A community near the border (Katuna) held a debate to challenge the fact that the border crossing to Rwanda was only open from 8 a.m until 10 p.m. Uganda's ambassador to Rwanda participated in the debate and said he had not been aware of the problem. He promised to address it immediately. A few weeks later it was a key item on the agenda of talks between Kampala and Kigali, and within two months the border was open 24 hours a day. The community debate also challenged the inadequate and dilapidated state of the latrine at the crossing. Three weeks after the debate, Kabale district administration passed a resolution to commit 10m/= to build a latrine to modern standards.

16. Voice of Kigezi, July: A debate on mismanagement of a health centre in Bubare sub-county resulted in three new nurses being posted to the centre, and the drafting of new rules to be followed by district health officers.
17. Voice of Kigezi, July: After debating the alleged building of a market on private land in Hamurwa sub-county without the owners' knowledge, the aggrieved parties resolved to take the matter to court.
18. King, March: Local leaders in Alero started rounding up and fining parents who were failing to send their children to school, after a debate on poor school attendance.
19. King, April: After a debate in Mede village, Pabbo on the lack of care for elderly people remaining in IDP camps, an Italian NGO is helping them to build houses in the return sites.
20. King: A debate in Bobi on the prevalence of rape gave new impetus to an idea some community members had already had: to set up an organisation to support rape victims and educate the public. In the following months the organisation was set up and now runs a centre offering handcrafts and mutual support to victims. The radio station plans to go back and report on this success story.
21. Kitara: After a debate called attention to the poor management of a local market, with high charges and poor facilities including an overflowing latrine, work has begun to connect the market to the mains sewage system.
22. Kitara, 13 May: This debate in Kijunubwa village, Kimengo s/c helped residents understand that their village is supposed to receive a share of the District's revenue, for its own local development projects. The local council chairperson had not shared information about this money or accounted for its use. A month after the debate, residents passed a vote of no confidence in the chair. They set up an interim committee to manage the money and are now planning together how it should be spent. After this debate was broadcast, several other villages called inviting the radio station to come to them for a similar debate. A number of other local council chairpersons have made announcements on the radio calling their communities to attend meetings to plan for spending their funds – an indication that previously they had not been involving the communities in the decisions.
23. Kitara, May: On a Saturday, a debate was aired on the poor state of the road network. On the following Monday, the district engineer organised graders and repair work started immediately.
24. Kitara, 3 June: A Health centre had not been renovated since the destruction of its maternity wing the previous December by a tractor from the local sugar factory. A debate was planned to discuss this, but the local authorities intervened at the last minute to prevent it. However, the threat of calling attention to the issue seems to have been enough. By 29 June, the district and the sugar factory had reconstructed the damaged ward.
25. Kitara, 16 June: Parents had forced the closure of a school due to lack of latrines. After a debate about whether they were justified in this, the District authorities put up temporary latrines, and the school was reopened immediately.
26. Kyoga Veritas, November: After a debate on the alleged theft of drugs by hospital staff, District authorities called in the Drugs Monitoring Unit from Kampala to investigate. They found that senior staff had stolen 60

million/= worth of drugs, and arrested the hospital director. The investigation team then came to the radio studio to explain to the public what had happened.

27. Kyoga Veritas: Two weeks after a debate was aired on the poor performance of a health centre (Asuret), the officer-in-charge was transferred, and a nurse who had been transferred was brought back at the request of the community. The centre was refurbished and furnished with new beds.
28. Kyoga Veritas: the District Council ordered that jobs be re-advertised, with priority given to applicants from within the sub-county, after a debate highlighted improper recruitment practices.
29. Life: During a debate about the poor management and dirty state of a market, the mayor promised that the market would be cleaned up forthwith. The following day, work began to clear garbage and cut long grass.
30. Life: local people did not know they had a right to certain services, nor that they had the power to vote out the local council chairman if he did not deliver them. After a debate on the people's rights and powers, the chair of the sub-county council was voted out in the NRM primary elections.
31. Life: A new taxi park had been built but the authorities didn't have enough funds to build toilets, and were planning to install them next year. However the taxi drivers were protesting and threatening to move back to the old taxi park. After a debate on the problem, a local business person made a loan to the authorities, and a toilet has been built. During the debate it had been suggested that someone should be employed to maintain and clean the facility, and users should pay a small amount for this. This has been set up: the taxi drivers set up a committee, which hired someone to clean the toilet, collect money from users and hand it over to the committee. The radio station has followed the story in its news programmes, and through the monthly review programme for the debates, when listeners phone in with updates. The reporter who moderated the debate has become well-known and welcome in the area.
32. Mighty Fire: A health centre had gone for three months without essential drugs, and some staff were absconding from duty. After the issue was aired both as a news item and a debate, the district medical superintendent ordered the disbursement of drugs to the Health centre and directed the staff to report for duty.
33. Mighty Fire: As a result of the pressure on government through a debate (as well as other media coverage) the people of Lamwo finally have electricity, 20 years after a power supply project began.
34. Mighty Fire, Nov: Vendors of a market had gone on strike, closing the market for two days, alleging mismanagement and excessive charges. The management contract had been awarded to a private company owned by the District's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). The vendors were demanding that the contract be given to them (as the law in fact requires). During the debate on this issue, it was revealed that the council had disagreed four times on the contract. After the debate, the district leaders, with support from the RDC, resolved to end the contract and give it to the vendors – which they did.
35. Pacis, 21 March and 1 April: After two debates on the poor performance of a local primary school, the inspector of schools came to check on the state of school, and MPs and local councillors visited the school and pledged assistance. Parents have also

- raised funds to build teachers' quarters. One new teacher was deployed immediately and another promised.
36. Pacis: Immediately after another debate on the poor performance of a local primary school, the District Education Officer despatched a head teacher. Later more teachers were posted and more scholastic materials were provided.
 37. Pacis: After a debate on poor delivery of health services, exacerbated by ethnic tensions, the district health authorities visited the area. Now the local health centre has a signpost, it has been repainted, drugs had been supplied, and the old staff has been replaced.
 38. Rock Mambo: On Sunday the station aired a debate about a primary school that had 600 pupils and only two teachers. The next day new teachers were posted.
 39. Rock Mambo: A debate on insecurity in a market - theft and cattle roaming freely eating the produce – produced no solution, because of confusion in the local council. However, two weeks later the radio station went back to follow up the story for a news bulletin, and soon after that, new acting councillors took action to improve security and build fences.
 40. Rock Mambo, August: A District council chairperson promised, in a debate, to initiate maintenance work on a road “in two weeks”. The radio station visited the area again to follow up and broadcast what they found, and two days later a grader started work.
 41. Rock Mambo, 25 Aug: After a debate about the role of youth in electoral violence, local young people set up a network – Tororo District Peace Promoters Network (TOPNET). They quickly started working with young people, district leaders, religious institutions, schools, media, and the community. Some of the young people who joined it were previously well-known for violence. Tororo district leaders have embraced the network, promising financial support.
 42. Rukungiri, 8 and 13 April: A debate on the deplorable state of a health centre caught the attention of two of the area's MPs. They called on the State Minister for primary health care, who came and toured several of the health centres in the district two weeks later. He pledged drugs, delivery beds and mattresses, and gave one centre an ambulance and a solar panel, as well as promoting it to HC 4 status. He also promised mosquito nets to every family. He commended the good job done by Radio Rukungiri and was hosted on air to let the public know of his promises. He told listeners that all government-supplied drugs are labelled, and invited them to report immediately if they see any of these drugs on sale. He even gave out his personal mobile number – inviting people to call him if they have problems with their Health Centres and explaining that the effectiveness of health centres must be a collective responsibility of media, the public and government. (Shortly after this, two private clinic operators in Rukungiri town were arrested when clearly-labelled government drugs were found on their shelves). A month after the programme was aired, the communities in Ruhinda said there had been a noticeable change, with health centre staff now reporting for work as early as 8 a.m.
 43. Spice, May: A sewage lagoon in a residential area was a serious health hazard, but it was not clear who was responsible. A debate called attention to the problem but the two bodies responsible – the town council and the National Water and Sewage Corporation – blamed one another. (The producer interviewed an engineer in the local office of

the Corporation, who said the Corporation had asked for some land and this is what they were given; a speaker from the town council phoned in to the programme and blamed the Corporation for pressuring the council to make land available). In any case, action was agreed: after the debate the area was cleaned up and sprayed against mosquitoes. Future plans include moving residents away, with compensation, and improving sanitary arrangements.

44. Spice, 22 May: In a debate on the threatened eviction of an informal market, the market women reached clear resolutions on action. The town council came under pressure to respect tenants' rights, and since then the traders have been left in peace.
45. Spice, June: During two debates on shoddy road repairs, it emerged that the work had been carried out by a contractor in which the District Secretary of Works held shares. The council blacklisted the firm.
46. Spice: Two debates were held on the controversial question of whether splitting districts will result in better services. Demand for the creation of new districts increased, and the two new districts were announced, in one case after the President had made an unplanned visit to the area.

Improved knowledge, resolves and promises

1. Apac, 4 May: In a debate about poor water supply, a district water official explained the different steps people could take to get improved water supply. For instance, they could establish a 'commitment fund', bank it, and then write to the water office stating their readiness to share the responsibility of a water supply.
2. Apac, 18 July: and Equator, 1 Dec. After two similar debates, both heated, on whether authorities or parents are most to blame

for abuse of children and their rights, participants said they had learned more about their own responsibilities as parents in bringing up children, and the dangers of neglecting them.

3. Apac, 20 July: Participants in a debate about the perceived ineffectiveness of their long-serving District Councillor said afterwards that they learned about the different roles of members of the bureaucracy and leadership at different levels, and realised that they themselves need to be more active in demanding and participating in development improvements.
4. Bushenyi, Feb-March: After a debate on poor performance in the health and education sectors, Parliament's Public Accounts Committee used the issues raised as a case study in their resolutions on the way forward.
5. Bushenyi, Feb-March: A sub-county chief expressed dismay at the community's negative experiences of the NAADS programme and pledged to further investigate the issues, which included corruption in the supply of inputs. Since then, NAADS has changed the way it supplies chicks to participating farmers. It buys 1-day-old chicks, which have a standard and known cost, rather than month-old ones, whose cost varies and which are therefore prone to corrupt over-pricing.
6. Bushenyi, 27 April: A debate on insecurity affecting boda-boda riders at night gave the riders more understanding of where to turn for help and helped them see the value of speaking out, individually and collectively, about their concerns
7. Bushenyi, September: In a debate on the poor state of roads in the district and how public money was being spent, the district authorities explained their programme of work on the roads. The radio station promised to keep the public informed of whether the programme was being followed.

8. Equator, 13 Aug: This debate was requested by a sub-county councillor to help resolve a dispute between the purchaser of some land and community members who currently cultivate it. Community members learned about the law, and requested compensation for being moved off the land and/or suffering damage to their fields by the new landowner's cattle.
9. Equator, 25 Aug: a debate on insecurity in the parish led to a decision to hold a further meeting with more key people involved in the following month.
10. Equator, 2 Sept: A debate about the causes of accidents on a local major road enabled the community to identify where to turn for help, and they agreed as a first step to ask the National Road Authority to install speed bumps.
11. KKCR, 19 Dec 2009: This debate on high charges levied on market traders led to a call for the town council to meet with the contractors and make the management tendering process more transparent and accountable.
12. KKCR, 1 May: Another of the many debates on the perceived ineffectiveness of the NAADS programme, with more accusations of corruption in the supply of inputs, in this case heifers. Many key actors – the local NAADS coordinator, the supplier of the heifers in question, sub-county leaders – participated in the debate directly. At the end the NAADS coordinator promised to handle the matter; and the chair of the sub-county council was tasked with selecting a committee to investigate NAADS management in the sub-county.
13. KKCR, 9 July: In a debate about poor leadership in a recently-created parish, residents agreed to establish an investigative committee to identify barriers to development in the area.
14. KKCR, 16 July: In one of a number of debates on evaluating the performance of elected leaders as their term draws to an end, the sub-county NAADS coordinator promised the people and the leadership team that he would organise a general meeting on government development programmes in the area, before the upcoming NRM party primaries.
15. KKCR, 23 July: The District Education officer was asked to intervene in the management of a poorly-performing primary school with a high rate of dropouts and teenage pregnancies. Parents proposed to select new School Management and Parent-Teacher Association committees, without religious bias. An investigative committee was selected to work with police in fighting pupil-teacher sexual relationships. Finally, a five-person committee was elected by the people to be on the lookout for cases of drunkenness and discrimination and report them to parents and local leaders for action.
16. KKCR, 20 Aug: Discussing the reduced size and new location of the local market, participants identified the need to elect a committee for development of the market; agreed to send a delegate to the district planner and community development office for advice; and resolved to write a petition letter District Chairperson and RDC.
17. KKCR, 17 Dec: Participants debating what they should look for in choosing who to vote for in the upcoming elections resolved to attend the rallies of all candidates and analyse what they are offering. The debate reduced tension between different camps. After it, the political crime officer began civic education on electoral crime prevention and the rights of both voters and leaders.
18. KKCR: In a debate on road maintenance, people learned that feeder roads are their responsibility. They had not been aware of this, as a councillor had told them he was responsible for all roads, and people tend

- to think the government is responsible for everything.
19. Kasese Guide, 15 July, the impact of poor roads on development: By the end they knew it was the government's role to construct roads. Before they thought it was the role of the elected politicians.
 20. Kasese Guide, 11 Oct: A debate on how to curb heaving drinking produced a number of ideas: not issuing any new bar licenses; not allowing bars to open before 2 p.m; prosecuting anyone found drunk before 2; and setting up a 5-person committee to monitor bars. Some heavy drinkers promised to change.
 21. Kasese Guide, 18 Oct: Participants in a debate on the importance of community roads agreed the community should take its share of responsibility for maintaining them. Everyone should participate in the work every Thursday, and those who didn't like it had the option of moving or of suing the whole village!
 22. Kasese Guide, 1 Nov: Residents were unhappy that government health services had been folded into the functioning of a local mission hospital, which charged for things that should have been free in a government clinic. Recommendations from the debate included moving the government facilities into a nearby existing government clinic. Rates for services offered should be pinned on hospital notice boards.
 23. Kasese, 8 Nov: To avoid deaths and damage from floods in an urban slum area, a number of measures were identified. Parents must take care of children; people must build houses with drainage channels, and maintain them, and local leaders must enforce this. Residents with no channels should have them dug. The town planner should be called in to help with better building; and a village disaster management committee should be established.
 24. Voice of Kigezi, April: This debate was on whether the authorities are doing enough to address the problem of street children in Kabale. It attracted the attention of the Acting District Chairman, the District Secretary for health, and the probation officer, who vowed to lobby the central government for funds and permission to construct a rehabilitation centre for the children. They are proposing a place to house it.
 25. King, 4 April: Displaced people (from the LRA war) who were HIV-positive had access to ARVs while they were living in camps, but once they return to their villages access to the drugs is difficult. After this debate, concerned people formed groups to monitor and lobby for access to drugs.
 26. King, 8 July: One outcome of a discussion on whether the current leaders deserve re-election was a resolution by the community to restore communal work on roads, with fines for those who don't participate. The meeting also recommended that the local public works department should be restored, and should employ local people to work on roads. They urged local leaders to regularly convene village meetings.
 27. King, July: in the aftermath of the Kampala terrorist attacks in July, several communities expressed their fear and concern by requesting debates on the topic "Does the government have the capacity to protect its citizens?" Security personnel raised awareness of safety measures.
 28. King, 4 Dec: What can be done to address the fact that an HIV+ person on drugs can cause two new infections? In this debate people realised that most of the responsibility lies with them. "People really need to be cautious about their lives."
 29. King, 20 Jan 2011: This was another debate in which people realised their own responsibility, this time for avoiding election

- violence. "Voters are the masters of their brains."
30. Kitara, 8 June: After a debate on the need for action by government to combat Tsetse flies, the community resolved to call the district entomologist to explain why no action is being taken.
 31. Kitara, 9 Sept: In a debate called to seek a solution to a conflict between two villages sharing one water source, participants called for the resignation of the local council chair and the establishment of a water-source management committee.
 32. Kitara, 24 Sept: The Sugar Works had suddenly announced that they were no longer going to sponsor the town's football club. In a debate to seek solutions, several suggestions were made: the national sports council should have rules and regulations governing sponsors; local fundraising is needed; support could be sought from the King; and the district council could be asked to intervene with the company.
 33. Mighty Fire, 26 Aug: In one of many debates on the lack of drugs in government health centres, the District health officer was asked to ensure that the public is informed when drugs are received from the national medical stores.
 34. Kyoga Veritas, 11 April: The occasion was the mandatory annual publication of the district budget. "This being the first budget conference that got everyone involved right from the grassroots, it was very explosive and exciting and full of emotions. The presentations from the technical heads of departments left a lot to be desired and many loopholes, and this generated debate from all sectors of the people - the disabled, women, opinion leaders, political leaders and youth." "People learned that it was their right to know and to demand accountability, and that their contribution and participating directly in issues of planning and monitoring of government programmes is key." "The women's participation was good.... There was overwhelming confidence, people (both m and f) spoke without fear and they questioned every report or presentation from each technical staff." Recommendations included that the sub-county chief should have copies of different departments' reports, and these should be circulated to participants a week before budget conference day.
 35. Kyoga Veritas, 10 Aug: Debating poor primary school performance, the participants agreed that parents must contribute money or food for feeding children at school, and money to boost teachers' pay.
 36. Kyoga Veritas, 19 Oct: Who is responsible for compensating people whose homes had recently been demolished after they had been living for years on land designated as a road reserve? The people affected learned of their rights, and demanded a clear explanation about their future and compensation from the council - as it was not their mistake to have lived there for years. This debate caused "a lot of panic" among the municipal councillors, who feared they might not be returned in the upcoming elections. The community recommended that the council should immediately stop demolishing homes in the road reserves, and the municipal authorities promised to work round the clock to provide compensation.
 37. Mighty Fire, 6 April: Debating poor service delivery in a newly-created district, participants recommended that civil servants should stay in the new district instead of commuting from the nearest main town. The CAO accepted this idea: he issued an immediate directive to civil servants to find rooms locally, and asked the District Health Officer to start unannounced visits to health centres. The RDC advised the CAO to recruit more staff.

38. **Mighty Fire, 13 Aug:** In a debate on poor performance of schools, including the local primary, participants resolved to work together to improve things. Accusations and counter-accusations should stop – shifting blame does not solve problems. The head teacher promised to seek support from NGOs for toilets etc; and an NGO, War Child, promised latrines. The coordinating tutor promised to post more teachers, including two women.
39. **Nenah:** in another debate on poor educational performance, participants urged CBOs, NGOs and the government to support children to go to school; and also agreed that parents who allow their children to loiter should be sued.
40. **Open Gate, 11 July:** The disputed location of the administrative HQ for a newly-created sub-county was the subject of this debate. The local leaders promised to visit the rival sites and resolve the problem, as well as agreeing to meet to discuss the challenges of the area.
41. **Open Gate, 11 Sept:** School managers and the School Management Committee agreed in this debate on poor school management to inform parents of all finances received by posting information on the school notice board. School management should use radio and mobilise local communities to champion the school activities.
42. **Pacis, 18 May:** Pacis held several debates on the problem of poor take-up and ineffectiveness of government development programmes in the region. People are called on to form groups to access services, but such groups are rarely lasting. Suggested solutions were that people need to study the available projects and look for others with a common interest to form groups. For their part, the authorities should ensure that available projects are properly communicated, with open meetings.
43. **Pacis, 1 July:** This debate on the risks of taking loans and joining savings schemes led to the village banks resolving to educate people thoroughly before offering loans.
44. **Rhino, 27 March:** In an area which has been waiting eight years for the completion of an electrification scheme, a proposal was made to appeal to the President through the district NRM chair, who was believed to be close to the government. The area MP was accused of not doing enough, and after hearing the debate on the radio he booked a two-hour talk show on the popular Perspective programme to respond to people's queries.
45. **Rhino, June:** In this debate on the reasons for delayed road building, the sub-county chairman promised that the council would not authorise payment for a road under construction until the work was fully completed.
46. **Rhino, 6 Dec:** Following the publication of a monitors' report on a poorly-performing primary school, the community debated the law regarding hiring and firing of School Management Councils, and learned how UPE funds are spent, and how the school head's rights to manage them had been violated. Participants accused officials of inactivity, and resolved to hold another meeting the following week with the Municipal and District education officers, the town clerk and other stakeholders to get them to address the problem of conflict between the head and the School Management Committee.
47. **Rock Mambo, 25 March:** The majority of woman callers in to a debate on the achievements of the woman MP claimed they had never heard nor seen her. The following day, the MP visited the sub-county, and said she had done a lot for the women in the district such as initiating IGPs in pig- and goat-rearing and giving start-up capital.
48. **Rock Mambo, 17 Aug:** Among "scores of recommendations" from a debate on the serious drinking problem in one quarter of town, Division leaders promised to put

- in place laws to regulate early and late drinking.
49. Rock Mambo: a debate was called in response to people's concerns that a health centre building had been taken over for use as the sub-county HQ. The journalists researched the situation in advance with the District Health Officer and District and Sub-county chiefs, and established that the community was in fact misunderstanding the situation. The use of the building as the sub-county as HQ was perfectly legitimate, the land having been given for that purpose.
 50. Spice, 3 Sept: In a debate on the question of who was to blame for the chaos and voting irregularities in the Aug 31 NRM primary elections, the regional Police Commander was forced to call in during the broadcast to defend his name and the image of the police.
 51. Spice, 5 Nov: Discussing their water supply, participants resolved to resume community work to maintain the cleanliness of water sources. The local committee chair and the water management committee agreed to work together to organise this community service.
 52. Spice, 12 Nov: Tobacco farmers have often not been paid by the purchasing companies which contracted them—including BAT, which has been the subject of a high court ruling. This debate about their plight triggered the formation of a Tobacco Farmers' Association, with a ten-member committee charged with pursuing the high court case against BAT. The new Association resolved to petition the President and parliament and to lobby the tobacco companies to establish more purchasing points and improve payment logistics. Farmers also agreed that they should practice mixed farming. They said the debate taught them to work in groups.

Annex 3

Numbers of Debates reported

Station	Number of debates known about by consultant	Number of debates for which a Monitoring Report was found
Mighty Fire	32	19
King	30	24
Kasese Guide	28	15
Kitara	22	15
Equator	21	19
KKCR	20	15
Kyoga Veritas	20	11
Rhino	20	13
Spice	20	11
Rock Mambo	19	14
Pacis	18	12
Apac	16	11
Victoria	15	13
Life	14	10
Nenah	14	14
Bushenyi	12	4
Open Gate	10	10
Rukungiri	9	4
Kinkizi	7	3
Kigezi	6	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>353</i>	<i>238</i>

List of documents Reviewed

Project proposal document to Danida. 2009?

Report of mission to select radio station partners (late 2009?)

Quarterly progress report Nov 2009

Quarterly progress report Jan – March 2010

Quarterly progress report April-June 2010

Quarterly progress report July – Sept 2010

QP report Oct-Dec 2010

Summary of debate (two versions).

Status update report, July 09 (start of project) – March 2010.

Status update report, July 09 – May 2010.

Report of editors training workshop, April 2010.

Video DVD of same workshop.

Report of quarterly review meeting, July 2010

DVD of the meeting.

Monitoring reports from debates.

Monthly reports from regional editors.

Four field visit reports from programme manager, Lynn Najjemba

List of people consultant met during evaluation mission

Daniel Etiang, Acting Station Manager,
Rock Mambo
Juma Seyyid,
head of the RRD team
Baraza Boni, producer
3 reporters – Fausten Odeke,
Omolo Joseph, Rembo Nixon

Joe, news editor, Voice of Lango, Lira
(not an RRD partner, but in HR project)
Munira Suwed, HR debates , Voice of Lango

Kidage Emmanuel Mwaka, producer/presenter,
field reporter, Radio King
Okech Tabban, runs the HR project,
produces and presents on air+?
Journalist
Pauline, station administrator/studio
Okot Tony, listener and regular caller-in.
Otim Willy Lokwiri, listener and participant in
debates (and candidate for s/c council)

Fred Thembo, debates producer, Kasese Guide
Radio
Edward Mekanika
Rev Augustine, station founder/director
KALI – Karambe Action for Life Improvement
(NGO, Kasese area): Muhesi Nicholas, KALI;
Sinamakosa Isaac, Good Hope Foundation.
Residents of trading centre (Rusese?),
participants in a debate and listeners
Moses, FDC candidate for Kasese Municipality
MP

Life FM, Fort Portal
Nyanzi John, (0782 855732/0701 071864)
Accountant
Assistant station manager
Ambrose Mwesigwa, station manger

Robert Asimwe, Fort Portal regional editor

Robert, Asst station manager, KKCR
Patrick Zimulinda, programme producer and
presenter (and moderator?), KKCR

Denis, Journalist, Kyoga Veritas
David Opio, producer (and Regional Editor)
District councillor David Ejoku
Community member, listener, Alfred
Health centre staff, Asuret health centre

Stephen Komaketch, producer/moderator,
Mighty Fire, Kitgum
David Okech, station manager
Lucy Acii, journalist and news editor

Kenneth Agutamba, producer and moderator
, Spice
Fred Byenkya, programmes director
Hamuza Kitakule, Regional Editor

Panos Eastern Africa staff:

PANOS INSTITUTE EASTERN AFRICA

PROJECT: RURAL RADIO DEBATE

Increasing meaningful participation of rural communities in the democratic process

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PRODUCTION OF AN EVALUATION REPORT OF THE PROJECT'S FIRST YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION.

Background:

Panos Eastern Africa is implementing the Rural Radio Debate Project designed to give marginalized rural communities a platform (Radio Debates) to participate meaningfully in dialogue on issues of democracy and development with a view of creating media visibility for their concerns.

The project was conceived on the back drop that Radio being the most far reaching media which no doubt has played a very critical role in the promotion of democracy, it has still failed to reach out to the rural people to bring out their views and opinions on key issues.

Much of Radio news and information, discussions and debates are tailored in such a way that they are one way- communications with very limited participation of rural people (the main consumers of Radio).

Under this project Panos with support from the Deepening Democracy Program is working with 20 community Radio Stations spread across the main regions of the country who reach out

to the rural communities to illuminate their voices especially on matters of democracy and development, in what we term as, *Taking Radio to the People*.

The stations hold debates on a weekly basis with rural communities in their areas of broadcast which debates are recorded and later re-played in the studios.

Over the past one year of implementation the debates have not only given a chance to rural communities to bring out their issues and concerns but have also facilitated interaction between the local leaders and their communities and this has resulted in some meaningful and noticeable changes at community level.

It is against this background that Panos is now seeks the services of a consultant to evaluate this project. The evaluator will be expected to do the following:

1. **Develop a Profile the Debates and Emerging issues/themes:** by analyzing their content, evaluating their comprehensiveness and depth as well as identify the emerging and

common themes/Issues for example;

- Service Delivery Deficiencies (in education, health, agriculture, infrastructure etc)
- Transparency and Accountability (what are some of the issues emerging during debates in this area)
- Politics and leadership (are people discussing political processes, quality of leadership at local levels, communities understanding of politics and leadership, people's expectations when they are voting; election processes etc)
- Participation/Citizenry empowerment. (Diversity of voices in discussing local issues, access to information, actual participation in debates; representation; topic identification and selection (whose responsibility) etc)
- Other themes that the consultant may deem emerging

Note: It could be important if the Consultant explored the extent to which emerging issues/themes from the debate resonates with the wider issues being discussed and debated at National level or even related to the current presidential/party manifestoes put forward by the various parties in the run up to the 2011 elections.

2. Track and assess impact or changes/outcomes that have occurred as a result of the debates at;

- Community level
- Partner radio stations and their staff. ie benefits/ capacity
- Participants (both short and long term) form training and mentorship and the extent at which it resulted in better output.
- Gauge capacity of the radio stations to sustain the project after its life span

- Document case studies/human stories/ experiences that demonstrate that the rural debate is causing change

Note: It is very useful if the impacts/outcomes are documented based on the emerging thematic areas/issues so that conclusions can be drawn on areas that the project made more impact.

3. Provide an evaluation of the “Rural Radio Debate Approach” as a tool for providing voice (for women, men, youth, and children, PWDs, Local Leaders, and NGOs etc), reach (location of debates and play back and call in sessions), empowerment and therefore promoting democracy and good governance. On the whole does this concept of ‘Taking Radio to the People’ increase the ordinary citizens’ engagement in the democratic process and development?

Note: The consultant is expected to document key experiences, best practices and Lessons learnt from the use of this approach or methodology.

4. Document the salient constraints and challenges that may have been encountered during the project implementation. It is also useful to get an insight into how the various actors worked around some of these challenges. Specific interest shall on the following actors;

- Partner/ implementing radio stations
- Panos Eastern Africa
- Regional Editors (Mentorship approach)
- Selected Trainers during the project

Note: The consultant shall also be expected to review of assumptions and risks for the project

and evaluate the extent to which the held true and what implications they had on the project achievement of its objectives

Expected Deliverables from the Consultant

A comprehensive and insightful report that clearly outlines;

- A detailed and thematic profile of the debates so far carried with a synthesis of the issues that emerged
- Evidence of impact/or lack of it as a result of the rural radio debates based the themes and issues there were debated on. This should also reflect institutional changes or impacts as a result of participation in the rural debates project by the partner radio stations.
- A critique of the rural debate approach with clear lessons, best practices and evidence and reasons for its success or failures
- Salient constraints and challenges encountered by various actors during the implementation of the project as well innovative ways of overcoming some of them (if any)

Methodology;

The consultant shall adopt various methodologies as shall be deemed necessary; how some of the may include;

1. Literature Review which may require the consultant to review the following documents
 - Monthly Reports from the Radio Stations
 - Field and Mentorship visit Reports

- Quarterly Progress Reports.
 - Training and Project Review Reports
 - Audio Recordings of the Debates
 - Pictures or photos taken from the field
 - Other literature related to rural debate
2. Visits to Some of the Partner radio stations
 3. Meetings and Interviews with some of the project stakeholders (Donors, Trainers, editor mentors etc)
 4. Meetings and Interviews with Panos Staff
 5. Follow up with individual beneficiaries or participants of the programme
 6. Etc

Competencies:

- Relevant qualifications (Post Graduate training is preferable)
- Proven experience in carrying out assignments of this nature and magnitude
- Demonstrable excellent understanding of media for development work.
- Strong conceptual and analytical skills.
- Good report and technical writing skills

Duration of the Assignment

The assignment is expected to last 30 days from the date of official engagement



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