

Assessing the Impact of Community Radio on Disseminating Information and Fostering Youth Development in Zanzibar

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Abstract: Zanzibar faces various socio-economic challenges, including limited access to information and opportunities for its youth population. In this context, community broadcasting radio stations have emerged as vital platforms for addressing these challenges. This research employs a qualitative case study approach, combining interviews and content analysis to assess the Zanzibar's community's radio impact. Findings reveal that Zanzibar's local radio stations perform a significant role on disseminating localized and culturally relevant information. They act as conduits for sharing essential knowledge on health, education, agriculture, and local governance, provide a voice to marginalized communities, and allow for greater community participation. The research shedding the light on how these stations engage young people in various capacities, such as training in media production, hosting youth-centric programs, and addressing the concerns of the youth population. However, the study also identifies challenges faced by Zanzibar's community radio, including limited financial resources, regulatory constraints, and technical capacity issues. The study emphasizes the need for continued support and investment in these grassroots media outlets to enhance their capacity to empower communities and promote the positive development of Zanzibar's youth.

Keywords: Community radio, Youth development, Information dissemination, Impact assessment, Zanzibar.

1. INTRODUCTION

A community radio station serves as a valuable platform for local communities to share information, entertain, and promote social cohesion (Fraser & Estrada, 2017). Community broadcasting radio represents a dynamic and vital component of the media landscape, providing a platform for local voices, grassroots activism, and community engagement (Tacchi and Watkins, 2018). This form of broadcasting plays a crucial part in promoting inclusivity, diversity, and civic participation while fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment among its listeners. The roots of communal radio have been dated to its origins to the mid-20th century, with some of the earliest examples emerging across Europe and American States (Witschge and Nygren, 2018). However, it was UNESCO's 1978 "Recommendation on the Use of Community Media" that provided international recognition and support for the premise of community broadcasting (UNESCO, 1978). This recommendation emphasized the purpose of the community media (media) in promoting cultural diversity, local development, and free expression.

Community radio has become an increasingly popular medium across sub-Saharan Africa over the past few decades, providing localized, participatory communication and educational opportunities. Zanzibar represents a unique case study for community radio on the African continent due to its distinct historical, political, and cultural identity. Community radio

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on Zanzibar Island emerged in the 1990s alongside the growth of media liberalization and democratization, providing an important medium for public information sharing and discussion (Myers, 2008). Scholars argue that Zanzibar community radio has been instrumental in articulating a sense of Zanzibari identity and community. Other researchers have examined community radio's inclusive participatory nature in Zanzibar. The development of community radio aligned with transformation to a multiparty system in Zanzibar in the late 1990s. The Zanzibar Broadcasting Commission (ZBC) was established in 1997 as an independent agency tasked with overseeing Zanzibar's broadcasting industries, and providing regulation and licensing for private and community-based radio stations (Jallov, 2012). There are currently over 15 operating community-based radio stations in Zanzibar, with varying operational models, content, and target audiences (Moyo, 2013; Sabry, 2015).

Local non-governmental organizations and community-based associations run local media (radio) stations in Zanzibar, in contrast to the state-owned media in Tanzania (Mathew, 2007). These community stations aim to provide localized programming that is relevant to the information needs of their respective communities and to provide a platform for public discourse, especially for rural societies outside the capital region. According to Myers (2011), community radio programming in Zanzibar focuses heavily on issues of health, education, agriculture, and civic participation. Some stations cater to youth audiences, integrating entertainment content with educational messaging. Others have prioritized interactive programming that enables community dialogue and resident engagement (Jallov, 2012). As Askew (2006) notes, community radio helps amplify the voices of everyday Zanzibar, including youth, women, and the poor. The low cost and participatory nature of community radio make it an accessible and interactive medium for sharing local concerns and perspectives.

While Zanzibar's media landscape remains constrained by political tensions and uncertainties following its multiparty system in Tanzania (Suleiman, 2019), community radio carves out an important space for expressing Zanzibar's identity and culture. As scholar Mathew (2007) argues, community radio promotes a Zanzibar public sphere that instills a "sense of belonging and cultural citizenship" (p. 562). By fostering inclusive civic engagement, community radio stations continue to play a vital developmental role across the islands.

However, Community-based radio networks in Zanzibar have faced significant challenges in achieving long-term financial sustainability. Most stations rely on limited local advertising, external donor support, and equipment grants from international organizations (Sabry, 2015). There are ongoing questions regarding the role that government regulation through the ZBC has played in empowering or pressuring community radio operations and freedom of speech (Myers, 2011). However, the growth of Zanzibar's local radio over the past several decades reflects the medium's significance as a decentralized, participatory form of broadcast communication. By fostering inclusive civic engagement, therefore, community radio stations continue to play a vital developmental role across the islands.

While community radio has expanded rapidly in Zanzibar, there is limited empirical research evaluating its impact and effectiveness, especially among youth populations. Most studies on Zanzibar media focus on structural analyses and institutional perspectives (Mathew, 2010; Myers, 2011). There remains a gap in understanding how community radio affects young people's access to information, engagement in public discourse, and skill development. The objective of this paper work is to close this gap by assessing the purpose of community broadcasting radio in Zanzibar in disseminating information and fostering youth development while generating insights to strengthen community radio's contributions to localized development in Zanzibar. As Buckley et al. (2008) argue, community radio has potential benefits for young listeners, such as "access to information, opportunities for education, and building social capital," but impacts will vary based on local context. Understanding these outcomes can inform policy decisions around supporting community media and youth programs in Zanzibar.

This ongoing study seeks to offer empirical insights into the community radio's operational duties in the development of youth in Zanzibar. The study addresses three research questions: What are the opportunities for young individuals to engage with community radio stations, and how do these engagements impact youth development outcomes? How do young people perceive the impact of their radio participation on the enhancement of their skills and capacities? What challenges do community radio stations face in sustaining operations and serving youth populations in Zanzibar?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Primary Purpose of Community Broadcasting Radio in Development Communication

One of the defining features of community-based broadcasting stations is its ability to provide inclusive participation opportunities, especially for marginalized groups like youth (Melkote et al., 2001). Community radio has become a prominent tool for facilitating participatory development communication in rural communities across the developing world. Several studies on youth and community radio have found that it provides key pathways for youth self-expression, engagement, and skill development. Unlike state-controlled media, community radio offers an interactive, decentralized platform for public discourse and grassroots engagement (Girard, 2007). According to Dagron (2001), community broadcasting station offers a “voice for the voiceless” and enables ordinary citizens to shape public dialogue around local development issues. The study conducted by Nassanga, (2009) examined youth participation in Ugandan community radio and found it developed their social responsibility, communication abilities, and technical skills.

In Zanzibar, Moyo, (2013) found that regional radio networks (stations) implemented training programs to build youth capacities in broadcasting, communication, and critical thinking. Youth played roles as station volunteers, producers, hosts, and technicians. Specifically, community radio supports development by disseminating practical information on health, agriculture, education, and civic rights to remote populations (Manyozo, 2012). Rural radio programming has been found to raise knowledge and change behaviors related to family planning, HIV prevention, and immunization (Uys and Tlabela, 2007). Community stations also promote public accountability by enabling citizen feedback and debate on governance (Buckley et al., 2008). Furthermore, community radio builds local capacities for self-driven development through collaborative programming and decentralization of media control (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). By facilitating inclusive civic participation, community radio helps nurture an empowered, informed citizenry essential for sustainable development (Girard, 2007). However, impacts depend on the socio-political context of each station. Research underscores the overall value of a local broadcasting radio in realizing locally defined, participatory development.

To this end, a study suggests that, compared to mainstream media, community radio provides more participatory opportunities for youth to produce content, express their perspectives, and gain hands-on media experience (Buckley, 2011; Mitchell and Lange, 2011). Thus, assessing the nature and outcomes of youth participation in Zanzibar community radio can shed light on its role in youth development.

2.2 Community Radio for Information Dissemination and Civic Engagement

A significant body of research highlights the significance of local radio in spreading important localized information and enabling civic engagement. Fraser and Estrada, (2001) found community radio provides targeted information on health, agriculture, education, and other development issues relevant to rural populations often lacking media access. Girard, (2003) showed how participatory radio programs improved farmers’ knowledge and practices around crop management and livestock care by delivering key messages in local languages. In a study of feminist media in Nepal, Pant (2014) found community radio was highly effective for sharing important information on legal rights, social services, and community news, with higher levels of trust compared to other media. The participatory production processes enabled the incorporation of diverse perspectives into informative content. Also, analyzing women-run community stations in Bolivia, Rodríguez (2001) showed how participatory radio formats provided a space for indigenous women to share stories and cultural knowledge otherwise marginalized in mainstream media. This generated culturally relevant content while supporting self-expression.

Studies have also demonstrated community radio’s ability to promote public discourse and amplify marginalized voices through interactive programming. Mhagama (2014) found that community radio phone-in shows enabled women and youth to voice concerns and shape governance priorities in Tanzanian villages. Buckley (2011) claims that community media outlets facilitate inclusive democratic participation and accountability by connecting citizens and leaders. Perceiving a local broadcasting stations (community) in Kenya, Mbeke et al. (2010) found local languages and contexts increased community radio resonance and public discourse around development issues like agriculture, health, and civic participation. Open debate formats engaged citizens in solutions-focused dialogue.

Analyzing community radio in Zanzibar, Myers (2008) found stations created important spaces for public debate on culture and identity issues among youth. Jallof (2012) showed community radio fostered a sense of empowerment and community

belonging amongst rural women through participatory programs addressing social justice issues. This literature therefore provides evidence for community radio's strengths in fostering inclusive, interactive content that provides vital local information and empowers public discourse on community issues. This suggests potential benefits for development communication processes.

2.3 Youth Development and Empowerment through Community Radio

A growing body of study points to the positive developmental impacts of community radio participation for youth. According to Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte (2006), community radio serves as an alternative education system, enabling youth to gain communication skills and civic awareness. VanErve (2011) found that community radio fosters youth collective agency and empowerment by building confidence, expanding worldviews, and developing support networks. Also, community radio provides key information access to marginalized youth and builds skills in areas like communication, critical thinking, and leadership (UNICEF, 2017). As in contrast that, scholars Buckley et al. (2008) argue community radio serves as a 'school' for rural youth, increasing knowledge and capabilities. Additionally, their study found that community radio exposure enhanced youth's self-confidence, expanded aspirations, and encouraged greater civic participation.

In the African context, Nassanga (2008) showed community radio supported Ugandan youth to engage in development programs, connect with leaders, and amplify issues like unemployment. Mbaine (2009) found Zimbabwean youth gained skills in areas like HIV/AIDS education and agriculture through community radio involvement. As Teer-Tomaselli and Tomaselli (2019) note, community radio helps meet youth needs for recreation, platforms for self-expression, and education about social issues. MARC, (2014) identifies skills-building in areas like critical thinking, research, and technology as community radio outcomes for African youth. Through inclusive participation, community radio can build social capital and connections vital for youth transitions to adulthood (Buckley, 2011). By facilitating youth expression, knowledge exchange, and public dialogue, Jallof (2012) advocates that local radio can deeply empowering for rural youth otherwise excluded from such opportunities. He asserts that community radio participation has allowed Tanzanian youth to gain confidence, influence, and standing within their communities.

Evidence suggests Zanzibar youth have similarly benefited from community radio exposure (Tufte et al. 2018). Scholars propose that Zanzibar youth involvement has increased skills, enabled income generation through small media enterprises, and promoted engagement with social issues (Mathew, 2010; 2011; Moyo, 2013). Also, they found Zanzibar youth gained a greater sense of identity and community through community radio participation. To sum it up, community broadcasting station appears well-positioned to support youth development and empowerment outcomes in Zanzibar; however, further in-depth study is reasonable. Therefore, this research seeks to provide evidence of Zanzibar community radio's impacts on fostering inclusive public discourse and cultural revitalization amidst the challenges of national integration. Further study can offer updated insights into community radio's evolving developmental role within contemporary Zanzibar.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Communication theories encompass a diverse array of concepts and models that aim to explain and understand the various aspects of human communication. These theories provide frameworks for studying how people exchange information, ideas, and meaning through verbal, nonverbal, and mediated channels (Berger and Roloff, 2017; DeFleur et al., 2019). Based on *participatory communication theory*, it emphasizes the active involvement of community members in the communication process, which aligns with the nature and goals of community radio (Servaes, 2008). This theory can examine how community radio can engage youth in the production and dissemination of information, leading to empowerment and development. This theory promotes inclusivity by ensuring that all voices, including those of marginalized youth, are heard and valued. *Media affects theory*: this theory investigates how exposure to media (community radio) programs can influence the attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge of individuals such as youth and society as a whole (McLeod & Reeves, 1980). When considering its implications for youth development, it becomes evident that media has a significant impact on the cognitive, emotional, and social development of young people (Perloff, 2014). Another theory is the *youth empowerment theory*, which focuses on exploring the strategies, roles, and processes of community or local broadcasting radio in empowering and enhancing the capabilities and confidence of young people (Zimmerman, 2000). Youth empowerment theory related to community radio emphasizes the role of radio as a powerful tool for fostering the personal and social development of young individuals within their communities. This theory aligns with the principles of regional broadcasting radio in providing a platform for youth to express their issues and opinions. These theoretical frameworks can guide research on the community radio's influence on youth development in Zanzibar.

4. METHODOLOGY

This research will utilize a qualitative, instrumental case study design to generate an extensive understanding of community radio's dissemination of information duties and youth development within the specific context of Zanzibar. As Creswell and Poth (2018), outline, a case study approach enables exploring a bounded system through detailed, multi-faceted data collection. This allows for illuminating the complexities of community radio processes and impacts at localized stations. As some scholars noted, Zanzibar's hybrid media landscape combines state, private, and community media in ways that impact community radio processes.

The study was conducted both in person and over the phone interviews between staff members of the selected two community radio stations, for anonymity purposes, the names of the two community radio stations involved have been changed to Jahazi FM and Zanzibar FM, including managers, producers, youth volunteers, and youth listeners in Zanzibar, were conducted by the researcher. Participants in this research included 10 staff from community radio stations and 15 young radio listeners in Zanzibar. The researcher coded community radio staff as (CRS1-CRS15), whereas youth listeners are coded as (YL1-YL15). To develop a comprehensive understanding of community radio processes and impacts, this study employed purposive sampling to obtain participants, and the main qualification to participate in this study was that he or she must be a community radio staff member, whereas the youth participants must be regular listeners who tune in to the community radio stations. It can be easier to explore how they engage with and are affected by community radio content. Basically, the selection range of gender (male and female), range of ages, schooling background, and social status within the broader youth category will allow for exploring varying perspectives and uses of community radio. Therefore, a thematic approach will be used to analyze the collected data.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

5.1 Radio Content Focused on Disseminating Local Information and Resources

The first research question in this study sought to understand the role and opportunities for young individuals to engage with community radio stations and their impacts on youth development. In order to understand the question clearly, the researcher grouped the participants into two main groups. The first group included community radio staff; the investigator needed to understand the role they play and the opportunity for young individuals to engage with community broadcasting organizations in Zanzibar, whereas the other group involved radio listeners (youth), so the researcher sought to understand how community radio impacted youth development in society.

As regards the role playing in the community broadcasting stations in society, aligned with opportunities for young individuals to engage with stations, all 15 respondents stated that the content of community radios indicated a strong emphasis on disseminating locally relevant information and resources for the community, especially the youth generation. One of the radio staff members, CRS2, emphasizes the programs they offer as useful to community members. He said:

"In our station, we have agricultural shows that regularly share advice on farming and fishing practices, weather forecasts, and market price updates. Basically, these programs are very helpful to our listeners," CRS2.

Also, other radio staff members CRS1, CRS3, and CRS5 commented on significance role of local broadcasting stations especially radio and how important it is to focus on issues related to community problems. As CRS5 explained, "We see ourselves as a crucial information channel for the community. *We broadcast what people need to know to address local issues and improve their lives.*" CRS5.

Across the stations, 40–50% of airtime was dedicated to informational content focused on community issues, events, and services. As CRS7, CRS9, CRS13, and CRS14 are supportive; their radio content focuses on disseminating information to facilitate local prosperity in their lives. CRS7 said:

"Our top priority with programming is to provide information that directly benefits our community. We've learned from surveying listeners that they want the radio to serve as an information hub for news related to health, agriculture, small business, and cultural events happening locally." CRS7.

According to the station staff (CRS4, CRS6, CRS8, and CRS15), the participatory format allowed community radio to connect listeners to reliable information from trusted local sources. As CRS8 clarifies:

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"We always start by sharing the information that is required with our community. This could be about a new farming technique, where to get loans, or how to get a birth certificate. Useful information makes people want to keep listening,"
CRS8

In elaborating on the objective of community broadcasting radio in providing public awareness on a variety of social issues, such as health, CRS4 comments, *"We produce a weekly 30-minute program covering environmental issues, such as waste management and access to clean water, and health care, featuring interviews with village leaders and government officials. Our aim is to provide public awareness on different social issues, especially in our community."* **CRS4.**

In the concept of opportunities for young individuals to engage with community radio stations, six young staff members out of 15 respondents agree that local (community) broadcasting radio stations help them to practice journalism activities effectively. As CRS12 said:

*"I help produce a youth issues show at my local station. I've learned to do interviews, edit audio, and host debates. It's really built my confidence."***CRS12.**

Another radio staff volunteer, CRS10, noted that *"there are training workshops at the station on things like journalism and technology. I've gotten to learn how to prepare a good program, especially for the youth that will help me in my career in the future."* **CRS10**

One young studio presenter, CRS11, also commented on the opportunity that she got to engage with local broadcasting radio station as presenter. She said, *"I was really shy before, but working at the station has brought me out of my shell. My communication is stronger now"***CRS11.**

Then again, the engagement of young people in the community broadcasting radio stations has provided a huge impact and positive changes in their lives regarding the useful information they received and their participation. 12 respondents out of 15 commented that community broadcasting stations were helpful in the development of their community life. As YL1 explains:

"I'm part of a listener club where we discuss ideas for radio programs. It feels good to have my voice heard and share my views on the issues." **YL1.**

Many youth, 7 out of 15, decide to engage with community stations since they feel they can have an influence regarding the rising voice of youth in the community they belong to via community radio. As YL5 comments; *"I'm on a youthful people advisory committee that meets with the station management. We give input on topics and issues that youth care about. I feel like I'm helping shape the programming,"* **YL5.**

Other young individual listeners, YL10, who are already engaged with the community station as a youth leader, help her to create a development network with other listeners and leaders in the community. He said, *"Being at the station connected me to other youth leaders in the community. It's created a strong network of young people."* **YL10**

In addition to that, YL11 and YL15 both feel that community radio gives the youth opportunities and impacts to develop their abilities and be well informed about different issues that emerge in their community. **YL11** elaborates: *Even just being a listener makes you feel part of something bigger. The radio keeps youth informed and gives us a platform.*

On his side, YL8 said, *"I sometimes participate in the community radio quiz shows. It builds my general knowledge and confidence in speaking up. I feel like I have a voice when I visit the radio station."*

Concerning the opportunity given to listeners to participate in different activities and programs aired, **YL5** expresses that: *"They allow us to submit stories and poems that get read on-air. I've sent in several pieces, and it makes me proud to share my work. The radio station provides a creative outlet."*

The effect of community media outlets on youth in the community is acknowledged by YL2. *"I'm part of the listening club run by the radio station. We discuss the news, and learning new perspectives has opened my mind. My critical thinking has improved a lot."***YL2**

As the youngest listener in **YL15**, she also commented on the benefits she gained from listening to community radio programs. She said, *"I don't work at the station, but I listen to the youth programs. The radio hosts talk about real stuff like relationships, self-esteem, and goals. It's made me think more about who I want to become."*

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Also, respondent YL9 expresses his views on how he benefits from community radio listening. He explains that *"I'm part of the listening club run by the radio station. We discuss the news, and learning new perspectives has opened my mind. My critical thinking has improved a lot."* **YL9**

However, five youth respondents confirmed that they engage with community radio stations just to get updated information worldwide. Deeply exploring the role and opportunities for young individuals to engage with community radio stations reveals a multifaceted avenue for youth development. The impacts observed include skill acquisition, increased civic engagement, and the nurturing of voices in local communities, collectively contributing to holistic personal growth among young people. As evidenced across stations, tailoring content to share locally relevant resources and information appears to be key to community radio's developmental impact.

5.2 Perceptions of Enhanced Youth Skills and Capacities through Radio Participation

The second research question in this study seeks to understand how the youth perceive the impact of their community radio participation on enhancing their skills and capacities. Based on the study, both community broadcasting stations staff and youth listeners responded convincingly that engagement with community radio stations enhances their skills and capacities. 25 respondents out of 30 confirmed that community stations have a strong impact on capacity building and skill development, especially for the youth generation in society. As regards community radio staff members, CRS2 openly explains that:

"My communication skills have really improved since I started volunteering at the radio station. I'm much more confident speaking on air and interviewing people." **CRS2**

From the opinion of CRS4, CRS7, and CRS9 are all acknowledged community radio stations as useful media channels to facilitate capacity building and knowledge sharing among the youth in Zanzibar. CRS9 expresses that *"producing my radio show taught me technical skills like editing audio, using mixing equipment, and recording interviews. I feel like I could work in broadcasting now."* **CRS9.**

Working in radio often involves collaboration with a team of technical personnel, such as producers, technicians, and presenters. Young participants in CRS10, CRS12, CRS14, and CRS4 learn to work effectively with others, delegate responsibilities, and solve problems as a group, fostering valuable teamwork skills. As CRS4 comments;

"Mentoring other youth volunteers at the station has built my leadership abilities. I've learned how to manage my radio programs and encourage others." **CRS4.**

In the issue of community engagement, CRS1, CRS8, and CRS3 strongly credited the community broadcasting radio's potential to connect young people with their local communities; they noted that stations can help them understand local issues, culture, and events. As CRS1 added, this can foster societal spirit of involvement and civic engagement. CRS10 also elaborates that:

"I gained valuable research skills from compiling information for radio segments on local issues. I learned interviewing techniques and find credible sources." **CRS10.**

Based on the study, all participants (CRS1–CRS15), agreed that radio production involves operating equipment, editing audio, and understanding the technical aspects of broadcasting. CRS7 clearly explains that young participants may acquire technical skills related to sound editing, recording, and equipment operation, which can be useful in various media-related careers. He added, *"Understanding radio programming and production gave me valuable knowledge about how media works. My media literacy improved tremendously"* **CRS7.**

All 15 community radio participants in this study agree that participation and engagement with community stations can introduce young people to a network of industry professionals, mentors, and like-minded peers. CRS15 highlights that building these connections can open up prospective possibilities for future careers and collaborations with other media organizations and other institutions in and outside of Zanzibar as well. One participant (CRS11) stated that:

"Participating in radio training workshops expanded my public speaking abilities. I learned techniques for engaging an audience and projecting confidence." **CRS11.**

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Many youth who engage with stations like (CRS1, CRS6, CRS13, and CRS14) engage in community radio to gain confidence in their daily working activities, which is a significant personal development benefit for many young radio participants. As CRS13 added, this newfound self-assurance can positively impact their overall self-esteem and future endeavors. He also added that:

"My social skills have improved from interacting with diverse community members during radio programs and outreach events; also, engaging in radio hosting helps me develop strong public speaking skills." **CRS13.**

However, participant CRS1 cautioned when he said *"I think it's significant to take into account the fact the perceived effects of radio participation can vary widely depending on individual experiences and the specific radio programs or initiatives they are involved in"*.

Though some community staff (CRS6 and CRS12) believe that participating in community stations primarily values the personal development and life skills gained through their involvement, CRS6 expressed: *"Volunteering at the station taught me basic IT and computer skills. I learned how to operate broadcast equipment, mix audio, and manage sound editing software."* **CRS6.**

As in contrast that, many listeners who participate in this study, such as (YL1, YL2, YL4, YL6, and YL13), believe that radio programs present diverse perspectives and opinions that can help young listeners develop their critical thinking skills as they analyze and evaluate the information and arguments presented on the radio. They added that this can lead to a more informed and thoughtful outlook. As YL3 said:

"Participating in the listener club has expanded my communication skills and critical thinking capacities. Now I can discuss current events from different angles within our society, which has broadened my perspectives" **YL3.**

According to YL11 and YL14, when young radio listeners participate in call-ins, contribute to discussions, or share their opinions on the air, they often experience a boost in self-confidence. This can extend to other areas of their lives, such as public speaking or social interactions. Also, YL4 explains: *"My self-confidence has grown through engaging with community radio stations. Having a platform to express myself and share my views has been empowering now"* **YL14.**

In the opinion of YL8, engagement in community radio can help connect young listeners with like-minded individuals, experts, or influencers in various fields. She explains further that this networking can open up potential opportunities for mentorship and collaboration, which can be instrumental in skill development. These views are supported by YL5, who said that:

"Working with radio personnel enhanced my networking skills. Interacting with journalists, activists, and artists expanded my contacts and social circle." **YL5**

Since many radio programs address a variety of subjects, from news and current affairs to educational content, YL7 and YL9, as young listeners, perceive that their participation in listening to these programs has broadened their knowledge base and increased their understanding of various subjects. YL10 clearly enlightens that:

"I've developed better organizational skills from coordinating listening club meetings and radio station events. Managing logistics and people has made me more organized." **YL10**

However, based on the level of engagement of the young listener, YL7 acknowledges that radio programs often address social and emotional issues; hence, his participation in these discussions helps him better understand and manage his emotions and relationships. He added that *"my capacity and skills to resolve issues improved from the hands-on learning-by-doing approach at the community radio station. I became adept at quick troubleshooting."* **YL7.**

In general, the responses from all participants suggest that young radio listeners believe that their engagement with radio has a positive influence on the development of their skills and capacities. To conclude, it can be said that young individuals see radio participation as a valuable platform for personal growth and skill enhancement. This perception is likely rooted in the myriad advantages that radio provides, including exposure to diverse perspectives, the fostering of language skills, the encouragement of critical thinking, and the enhancement of communication abilities. However, it's crucial to remember that the actual impact of radio on skill development may vary from person to person, depending on their level of engagement and the content they consume. Nevertheless, these responses highlight the deemed worth of radio as an educational and developmental tool among young listeners.

5.3 Challenges Confronted the Community-based Radio Stations

The second research question in this study seeks to understand the challenges that community broadcasting outlet encounter on sustaining operations and serving youth populations in Zanzibar. The results from the interviews show that all 15 interviewees clearly affirmed that Zanzibar community radio stations faced a number of challenges around sustainability, capacity, and regulation.

Financial sustainability was a key challenge, as most stations depended on unreliable donor funding and limited advertising revenue. As one respondent, CRS4, explained, *"We start projects when funding is available, but it is hard to keep things going"*. He added that, *"Also, from my experiences working on community radio stations, a lack of sufficient resources also impacted staff training, and technology upgrades are the problem that we face"* **CRS4**.

One of the respondents articulated their perspective on the challenge that outdated equipment posed. They conveyed, *"The aging equipment in our possession restricts the quality of programs created by young individuals and hampers our professional development."* **CRS2**.

A number of respondents (CRS1, CRS5, CRS7, CRS8, and CRS9) strongly stressed that securing consistent funding is a major challenge for community radio stations. Since many stations rely on donations, grants, and limited advertising revenue, which can be unstable and insufficient to cover operational costs, As CRS11 said:

"Limited funding makes it difficult to invest in new equipment and training that could benefit youth participants and expand our operations." **CRS11**

According to the opinion of CRS13, maintaining and upgrading our technical infrastructure can be a significant challenge. Outdated equipment and limited access to technical expertise can hinder our ability to produce high-quality programming and attract younger audiences who are accustomed to digital media. He also detailed that *"we struggle to maintain a consistent power supply to keep the station broadcasting. Frequent electricity cuts disrupt our programs, particularly for youth listeners,"* **CRS13**.

Zanzibar, like many other regions, may have community radio stations situated in rural or remote areas, away from the urban centers where many young people reside. These locations are often chosen to serve specific communities or marginalized populations. However, according to many respondents, the geographical remoteness of these stations can pose a significant barrier for youth who do not have easy access to transportation. Even if public transportation is available, young people may face financial constraints that make it challenging to afford transportation costs. As one respondent in CRS13 stated,

"Many of us (young people) lack transportation to easily access the radio station location, which reduces our participation and engagement with community radio stations. Actually, this is a challenge for most of the young." **CRS13**

However, some interviewees (CRS2, CRS6, and CRS10) claimed that access to training was the biggest problem at the community radio stations. They added that providing ongoing training opportunities for staff, especially volunteers, can be challenging due to resource constraints. They caution that without adequate training, the ability of community stations to serve youth effectively is compromised.

According to interviewees on salary increments, 12 respondents out of 15 said that the challenge of being unable to pay competitive salaries to retain experienced staff and youth talent is a common issue faced by not only community radio stations but also many media stations in Zanzibar. This problem can have several far-reaching consequences, affecting not only the organization's ability to attract and retain top talent but also its overall productivity and growth potential. CRS5 clarifies:

"We are unable to pay salaries to retain experienced staff and youth talent. Many eventually leave for jobs that provide income." **CRS5**

Addressing this issue often requires a multifaceted approach, including finding creative ways to reward and motivate employees beyond just salary increases, improving financial management, and exploring alternative compensation structures such as profit-sharing or equity ownership to retain and attract valuable talent.

While digital technologies and online streaming have become increasingly popular, the result of this study indicated that not all young people have access to smartphones and the internet, especially in rural areas. This makes physical access to the radio station even more critical for those who rely on traditional broadcasting for information and entertainment. As one participant, CRS1 commented that:

"As you know, in some parts of Zanzibar, internet access may be limited or unreliable. As station staff, we face difficulties in accessing the internet for research, communication, and content development related to youth programming. Also, our station has very limited internet access, which constrains producing online youth programming." **CRS1**

However, some respondents claim that attracting and retaining youth volunteers and staff can be difficult. Young people may be drawn to larger media outlets or other career opportunities, leaving community radio stations understaffed. As CRS15 elaborates, *"Having a difficult time retaining some trained youth volunteers who leave for jobs in bigger cities."* **CRS15**

The sustainability of local broadcasting media station (radio) in Zanzibar, like in many other regions, poses several unique challenges. Many respondents claimed that ensuring the long-term sustainability of their station was a constant concern. They added that they need to explore diverse revenue streams and partnerships to maintain our presence in the community. In fact, community radio stations perform an important part in providing local information, promoting culture, and fostering community engagement. However, ensuring their long-term viability can be complex. Thus, addressing these challenges often requires a combination of strategies, including diversifying funding sources, enhancing technical capabilities, fostering partnerships with local organizations, and building strong relationships with the community. Moreover, Zanzibar's broadcasting stations particular community radio may benefit from advocacy efforts to improve the regulatory environment and secure long-term support from both local and international stakeholders.

While passionate about their work, interviewees across stations experienced ongoing struggles in accessing sufficient resources, navigating restrictive policies, and developing the full capacities required to serve their communities effectively. Addressing these systemic challenges remains a key priority for enhancing the effectiveness of communal broadcasting outlets in Zanzibar.

In the context of acquiring a license to broadcast on a particular frequency in the radio spectrum, this often comes with substantial fees. Many respondents, including CRS1 and CRS12, elaborated that these fees are determined by the government regulatory authority responsible for managing the radio spectrum. For small, non-profit radio stations, these licensing fees can be a significant financial burden. They claimed that such stations usually have limited financial resources compared to larger commercial broadcasters. Also, CRS6 claims that:

"Compliance with licensing and annual renewal fees for spectrum access is financially draining for small, non-profit stations like ours" **CRS6.**

Therefore, addressing these challenges often requires a combination of community support, effective fundraising strategies, regulatory advocacy, technical upgrades, and continuous community participation. Despite these obstacles, community radio stations perform a significant operation in providing localized and community-focused content, fostering civic engagement, and empowering underserved communities.

5.4 Limitations of Community Broadcasting Radio Station

One of the most significant limitations of community broadcasting are its limited coverage area. Community radio stations typically operate on low-power transmitters and have a relatively small broadcast range. This means that their impact is geographically constrained, and they may not reach all the communities they aim to serve. Also, community radio stations often struggle with limited funding and resources. This can hinder their ability to invest in modern equipment, hire skilled staff, and produce high-quality content. Financial constraints may also lead to difficulties in meeting regulatory compliance requirements. Further, some community radio stations may struggle to represent the full diversity of their communities. They may face difficulties in acquiring and keeping talents volunteers and staff from different backgrounds, leading to potential gaps in programming that don't adequately address the needs and interests of all community members. As technology evolves, community radio stations may find it challenging to keep up. This includes issues like transitioning to digital broadcasting, maintaining an online presence, and adapting to changing listener habits, such as the shift to streaming and podcasts. Additionally, effective public outreach and participation can be a significant limitation for community radio

stations. They may lack the resources to market their programs effectively, reach underserved populations, or involve the broader community in content creation and decision-making.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This current research discovered that community broadcasting radio organizations are crucial for providing localized information access and fostering developmental outcomes among Zanzibar youth. A key contribution was enhancing access to relevant information on issues like health, agriculture, governance, and community events through interactive radio programming. By sharing information in Swahili and local languages, community radio made resources more understandable and actionable for many youth. Community radio also provided unique opportunities for youth skills development in areas like media production, research, critical thinking, and communication. The hands-on, participatory nature of community radio enabled young volunteers to build technical and professional capacities. Also, stations served as inclusive spaces for youth self-expression and civic participation. Youth gained confidence in sharing perspectives, asking questions, and connecting with community leaders through the radio platform. This boosted youth engagement and empowerment. By facilitating youth media access, skills building, and public voice, the study found community radio represents a vital platform for Zanzibar youth to gain knowledge, shape identities, and enact positive change in their communities. Sustaining these diverse developmental impacts could benefit youth transitions and trajectories. However, persisting challenges related to funding, infrastructure, training, and reach constrain community radio operations. Targeted investments and capacity-building initiatives focused on youth participants could help maximize community radio's local contributions.

On the basis of the results of this study, several suggestions are provided for the future development of community radio stations, better disseminating information, and fostering youth development in Zanzibar. The study recommends increasing funding support for community radio through partnerships, advertising, and government schemes to enhance the financial sustainability of the stations. This enables scaling their programs. Also, community stations must provide regular technical training workshops for their staff to build capacities around equipment maintenance, IT, engineering, and digital skills. Community stations need to establish collaborations between community radio and schools and universities to integrate educational programming and knowledge sharing and make it easier to attract young graduates to work with them. Additionally, community stations have to create more participatory shows that allow youth to voice their opinions and shape content focused on youth information needs. Moreover, these stations need to develop extensive surveillance and evaluation systems to track community radio reach and impact on youth. Expanding opportunities for young women's engagement with radio through targeted outreach and safe space policies is one of the constructive development strategies for community radio to develop further. Likewise, improve infrastructure and transmission capacity to extend the geographic coverage of community radio to wider audiences. Promote community radio's role to policymakers and traditional leaders through advocacy campaigns on its developmental benefits. Furthermore, local broadcasting community stations must work seriously for adoptive youth media networks to share best practices in radio production, programming, and technologies. In general, community stations need youth participation in investigations and need assessments to identify knowledge gaps to inform programming. Therefore, addressing those issues can help community broadcasting radio maximize its impact on local information exchange and youth development in Zanzibar and other part of developing countries.

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