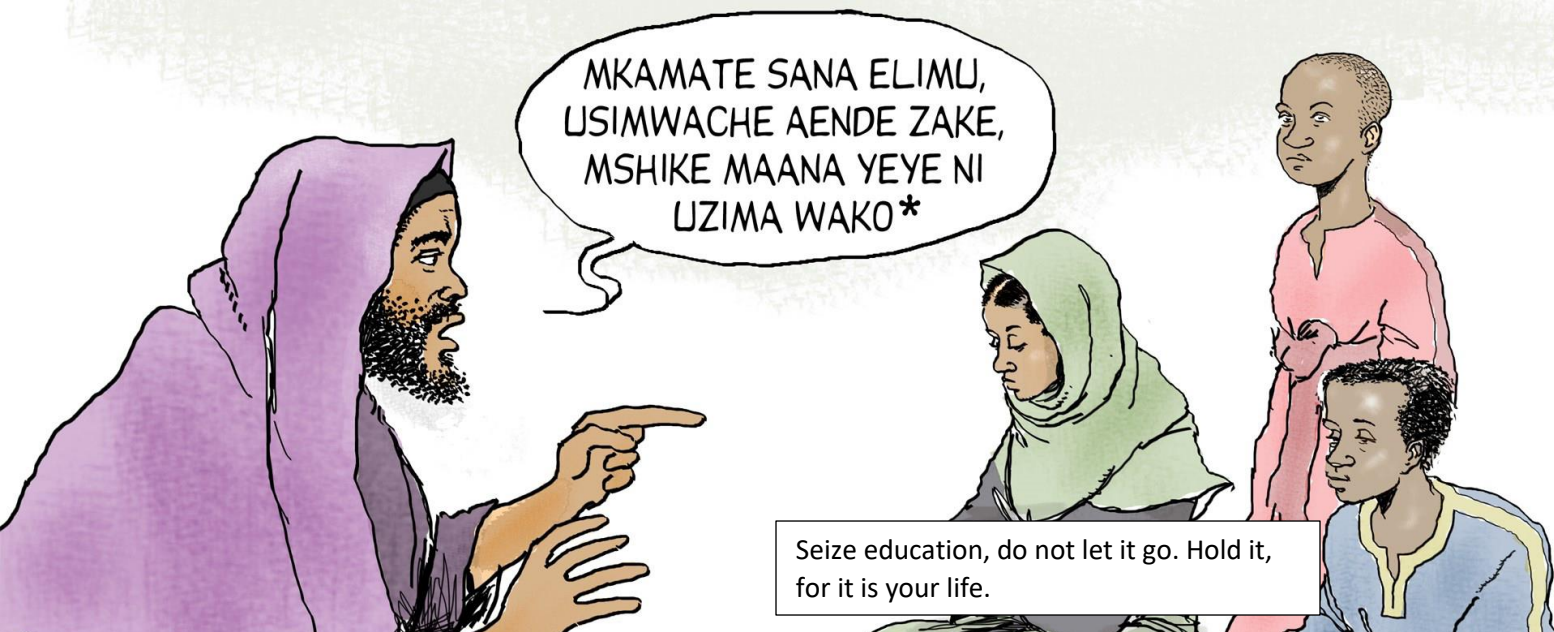


Infusing radio discussions with data

A Twaweza reflection





Introduction

As part of our effort to disseminate relevant and actionable information directly to citizens, Twaweza engages with partner organizations who have already established wide reach. One such partner in Tanzania is the Christian Social Services Commission (CSSC), a coalition of the largest church denominations in Tanzania including Catholic, Lutheran and Anglican churches. The aim of the partnership was to co-produce and distribute information about health and education services, focusing on the governance components. The purpose was to inform a large number of Tanzanian citizens on the quality of public services, to spark discussion about local services, and perhaps even motivate people to take action to improve those services.

Twaweza and CSSC co-produced 600,000 discussions guides for distribution among CSSC prayer groups (known as Jumuiya) by CSSC zonal offices. In addition, Twaweza and CSSC partnered with five popular Christian radio stations to support the printed information and encourage discussion. The contracted radio stations were Radio Maria, Sauti FM, Sauti ya Injili FM, Upendo FM and Ukweli FM, and the aim was to air 1,350 prime-time programs on health and education issues by January 2016.

The initial idea had compelling components:

1. Partner with an organization that has grassroots groups all over the country, and already brings people together for discussions
2. Infuse these discussions with compelling new materials, and reinforce and echo the messages through radio program discussions on stations preferred by the target audience
3. Provide the radio stations with materials they can use to enrich these discussions – to move from general to specific in terms of data, but also suggestions for action

However, from idea to implementation can be a rocky road. First, it took the collaborating organizations a very long time to agree on the content and design of the main guides. In the meanwhile, the implementation of the radio component proceeded, since these were independent contracts with radio stations. The original reinforcing aspect of the implementation was therefore lost. Still, we wanted to find out at least how the radio discussions fared. The monitoring data presented in this brief is focused on the radio component only, with some thoughts and commentary on the trajectory of the partnership and lessons learned about modes of implementation. Furthermore, the distribution of the guides has taken off in early 2017. When data on distribution and use of the printed guides becomes available, we shall update this brief.



Monitoring methods

There were two components to the radio monitoring: assessing the number of listeners (coverage), and assessing the quality of the programs.

We engaged two different companies for the monitoring. For media consumption (i.e. reach of the radio programs) we engaged Geopoll. They provided us with listener numbers across location, gender, and age, for three of the four partner radio stations: Radio Maria, Sauti ya Injili FM and Upendo FM. The company was not able to monitor the fourth station, Sauti FM.

For monitoring of quality we engaged a media monitoring company “*Push Observer*” to clip a sample of broadcasted programs from Radio Maria, Sauti ya Injili FM, Sauti FM and Upendo FM (Radio Ukweli was not part of the stations followed/monitored by the company). We provided the names and time slots of the programs when the relevant content was to be aired. The company provided the radio clippings as seen in table below:

Table 1: Distribution of radio shows clipped per month (total 52)

	Radio Maria	Sauti FM	Sauti ya Injili FM	Upendo FM
December 2015	3	2	1	4
January 2016	2	2	2	2
February 2016	2	3	-	3
March 2016	2	3	-	3
April 2016	-	-	4	5
May 2016	2	2	2	3
TOTAL	11	12	9	20

A total of 52 radio programs were clipped and reviewed by Twaweza. We received less clippings from Sauti ya Injili FM because the station was offline in February and March. The quality assessment was done independently by two Twaweza staff. Main components that were measured during coding and verification of the clippings were: (1) the length of the clip; (2) timing of when the clip was aired; (3) the topic and whether was it relevant to Twaweza discussion guidelines; (4) how the program was presented; (5) whether there was any mention of data and what the sources for this were.

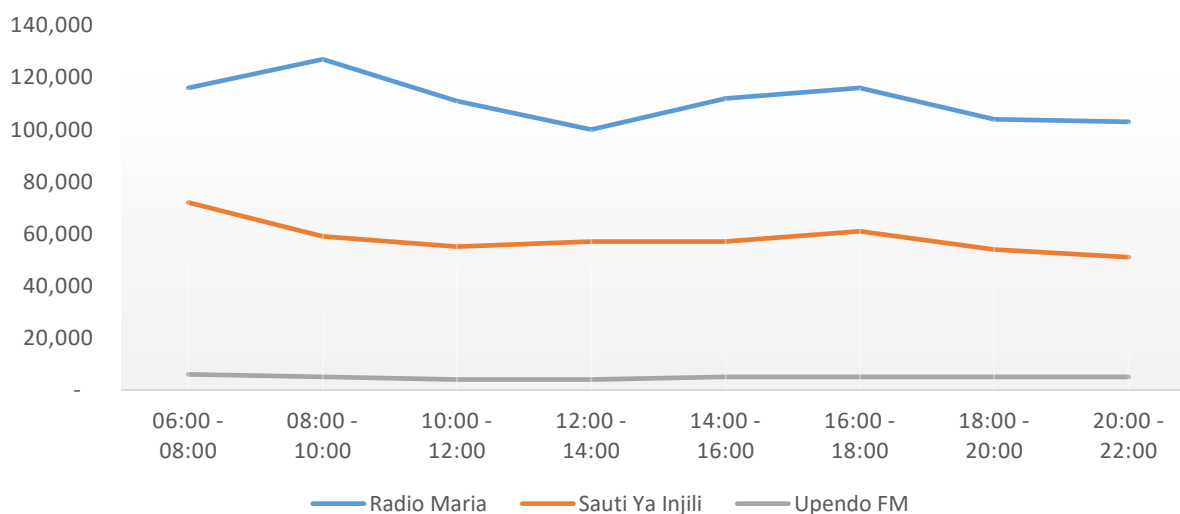


Findings

Fact 1: Together, these radio stations cover a small proportion of the radio market.

Geopoll provided daily average listener data for the period of December 2015 to October 2016. The data show that there are an estimated 21,399,603 total radio listeners per day. Of these, 889,000 or 4% listen to radio Maria, 466,000 (2%) listen to Sauti ya Injili and 39,000 (0.1%) listen to Upendo FM. Radio Maria, which has the most sizeable listener population of the three, has peaks of listenership during the morning slot 8-10am, and during the 16-18pm afternoon slot.

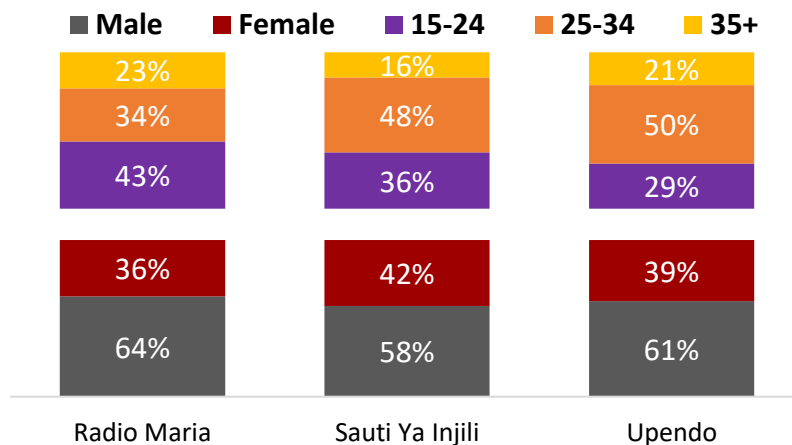
Figure 1: Average daily listenership (Dec 2015-Oct 2016)



Fact 2: Listeners are young (below 35) and mostly male.

All radio stations attract more male than female listeners. Radio Maria has more youthful listeners aged between 15-24 years old, whereas more Sauti Ya Injili and Upendo FM listeners are aged between 25-34 years old. A relatively low proportion of listeners are aged 35 or older.

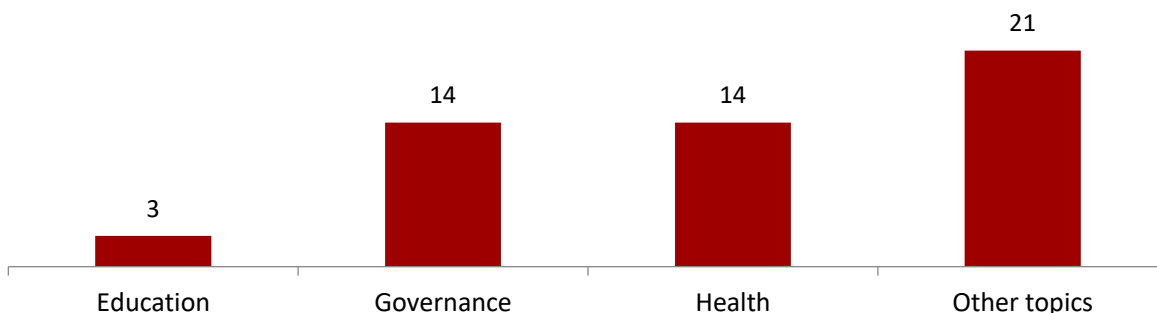
Figure 2: Gender and Age media consumption (Dec 2015-Oct 2016)



Fact 3: Quality was low: radio programs often did not cover the expected topics, and the discussion guidelines provided by Twaweza and CSSC were generally not followed.

The radio stations were supposed to discuss about issues on health, governance and education. However, nearly half of the shows did not cover the agreed topics. Partly this was because the wrong time slot was clipped for Radio Maria (covering an agricultural program “*Dira ya Mkulima*”). This issue was spotted through the quality checks and the program was replaced; unfortunately we were not able to recover the missing clippings.

Figure 3: Topics covered during the assigned shows



Twaweza also provided two additional inputs to the radio presenters in an effort to help shape the discussions. One input was discussion guidelines with suggested topics, questions, and prompts. For example, a program from Radio Maria on 8 December 2015 which followed the guideline had a discussion about how ordinary citizens can monitor health service delivery. Another input provided were relevant reports – such as *Sauti za Wananchi* briefs, and Uwezo reports – with the idea that the radio presenters could draw on the facts and figures from these reports to make the shows more interesting and stimulate discussion.

The quality checks of the radio programs revealed that vast majority (81%) of the programs did not follow the Twaweza discussion guidelines, and among the 52 clips not one referred to Twaweza reports or findings (though one program did cite health figures from the National Bureau of Statistics).

Reflections

So the idea was compelling, but the implementation failed in some core aspects. It's not an uncommon story. Still, there are lessons to be learned.

1. The radio stations chosen have a very small corner of the radio listenership market. However, they could potentially have very loyal followers – since these are individuals who choose the station presumably because it aligns with their values. Investigation prior to implementation confirmed that we had chosen the most popular Christian radio stations in the country, and in terms of absolute numbers they do reach a large number of people on a daily basis.
2. It is surprising how youthful the listenership of the chosen radio stations is. It could very well be that the topics we chose (accountability, health, basic education) are more relevant to a somewhat older generation (e.g. those who have school-going children are more likely to find a program on school accountability engaging). Similarly, it is interesting that listeners are more male than female. Again it is possible that the topics themselves as well as the way they were presented do not immediately speak to young men. The age and gender composition of the listenership is something we should have investigated up front, not as part of evaluation.
3. Simply sending what we consider compelling materials to the radio stations seems not to have done the trick of ensuring its use. At Twaweza we tend to shy away from heavy-handed training components, but perhaps there is something to be said to bringing the intended users of the information (i.e. the radio show commentators) together and discussing the relevance of the materials, practicing how to weave it into discussions, etc.
4. In retrospect, perhaps we should have insisted that the radio and printed guides proceed simultaneously, or not at all. The original idea of the “echo” of messaging through complementary channels was lost, and each component on its own is less powerful.
5. That said, the distribution of the printed guides to the prayer groups has begun in early 2017, and we do intend to see that through. We will indeed attempt to get feedback from a sample of these groups in terms of whether the guides are interesting and relevant, and whether they have been put to any use by the groups. When those insights are available, we shall update this brief.