EMPOWERING TANZANIAN YOUTH – ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

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Master’s Thesis
Communication for Development
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Sweden
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An experiment in Participatory Communication
This thesis is dedicated to my late parents Lisle Navarro Yarde and Celia Rosamond Yarde, neither of whom was able to witness the completion of my Master’s degree, but who have always and continue to inspire me with their belief in doing the right thing and doing it well.
**ABSTRACT**

Young people, I believe, are the future of every society because they are the ones who will inherit our mistakes and who can potentially drive the change that we all aspire to, through their ideas, creativity and belief. Yet all too often they are marginalised, disregarded, even demonised. In Tanzania, 50% of the population is under the age of 18 years but they are rarely given a voice. This thesis reports on an experiment aimed at giving a voice to a group of marginalised young people in Northern Tanzania – former street children living in the town of Moshi, being cared for by an organisation called Mkombozi. The aim of the research was to investigate whether participatory radio converged with new ICTs, such as mobile telephony and the internet, could be effective communication tools to enable Mkombozi strengthen its youth empowerment and community engagement agenda and thereby help it move from being a ‘provider’ of services to a ‘facilitator’ that helps the community to bring sustainable change. The four young people who took part in the experiment were given free rein to make a radio programme about street children, backed by my technical expertise as a radio journalist. The programme was broadcast on a regional radio station and the audience was invited to take part in a live discussion using the phone, text messages and email. The results showed this to be an effective way of empowering the participants by giving them a voice to articulate their hopes and dreams, by inspiring them with self-confidence and self-respect and by allowing them to formulate their own demands for a better life. The programme they made provoked an overwhelming audience response, which connected the street children through dialogue with the community and engaged them in finding solutions to the issues themselves. Subsequently, there was a widespread consensus on the need for more participatory youth programming and investigation into how these communication tools might be developed further in order to find sustainable solutions at the grassroots level rather than through a ‘top-down’ approach.
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### ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACTT</td>
<td>Affordable Computers and Technology for Tanzania</td>
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<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<td>AMDI</td>
<td>African Media Development Initiative</td>
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<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<td>BBCWST</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation World Service Trust</td>
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<td>CLTC</td>
<td>Community Learning Technology Centres</td>
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<td>Com Dev</td>
<td>Communication for Development</td>
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<td>Communication for Development</td>
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<td>FM</td>
<td>Frequency Modulation</td>
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<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communication Technology</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced People</td>
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<td>IEC</td>
<td>Information Education and Communication</td>
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<td>ID</td>
<td>Identification</td>
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<td>IFAD</td>
<td>International Fund for Agricultural Development</td>
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<td>ISP</td>
<td>Internet Service Provider</td>
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<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>PAR</td>
<td>Participatory Action Research</td>
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<td>SMS</td>
<td>Short Message Service</td>
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<td>TAMPS</td>
<td>Tanzania All Media Products Survey</td>
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<td>TCRA</td>
<td>Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority</td>
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<td>Tsh</td>
<td>Tanzanian shillings</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

‘......Good afternoon, dear listeners of Radio Sauti Ya Injili. My name is Deo Antipasi, a student from Mkombozi Centre. Welcome to Tulinde Watoto Sasa.......

In today’s programme we’ll hear why children flee to the streets......

About life on the streets........

And we ask, who should take responsibility for children’s well-being.....?’

Deo Antipasi, youth presenter, Tulinde Watoto Sasa radio programme, May 25th, 2010

This thesis is about an experiment in participatory communication that was carried out by four former street children in northern Tanzania, backed by my technical expertise as a radio journalist. My role was to observe how the process of making a radio programme might empower these young men and engage the communities in debate and solution finding on a social issue that is growing in Tanzania’s urban centres. This introductory chapter outlines the **background** to the experiment, an **overview** of the issues and **context**, the key **research questions**, **theoretical framework**, **methodology**, **thesis structure** and **conclusion**.

**Background**

For two years I was the director of a radio project in Sudan, run by an international media and communication for development organisation. We would devise and broadcast daily radio programmes to internally displaced people in the camps in the conflict zone of Darfur,
liaising with mainly foreign, non-governmental organisations working in the region. The approach we took was largely of the monologic, one-way communication diffusion model outlined in Tufte & Mefalopulos, (2009:8). The project’s main aim was to increase knowledge, raise awareness and promote attitude and behaviour change among IDPs about issues such as malaria prevention, gender based violence, hygiene, water and sanitation. The project was already running when I joined but from the start I had some concerns about our approach which, having spent the last two years as a Master’s student in Communication for Development, I am now able to understand, articulate and analyse better. With hindsight, I realise that we were taking a modernist approach, assuming that the ‘problem’ was lack of information, that ‘culture’ was an obstacle to the ‘development’ of our audiences and that the solution was for our ‘beneficiaries’ to catch up to where we were on the development scale, similar to Pieterse’s analogy of the ‘axis of progress’ (2001:19). So we focussed on individual behaviour change and produced content challenging prevailing attitudes and knowledge, based on the expertise of international agencies working in the field, that defined the problem and largely devised the solutions according to their own agendas and priorities. While there were some successes, I believe the impact was limited by a didactic approach that failed to promote sustainable change and which reinforced the power relations between ‘us’ as the developed, positionally-superior ‘First World’ experts and ‘them’ as the backward, undeveloped ‘Third World’ (Said: 1978:7).

During the course of the project, the organisation’s lack of local knowledge became woefully and fatally apparent. An example of this was the decision at the start of the project to use Egyptian presenters who broadcast in classical Arabic. Managers, based in London, were clearly unaware of the general deep seated suspicion in Sudan of Egyptians, who are widely perceived to ‘look down’ on the Sudanese. Equally, managers were unaware of the fact that
most Darfuris, particularly women who were a target audience, had difficulties understanding the classical Arabic the programmes were broadcast in. This was later remedied with the departure of the Egyptians and the introduction of Darfuri Arabic, however suspicions about the agenda of the project remained and it was eventually shut down.

This experience inspired me to use this project work to experiment with an alternative, participatory, grassroots approach to development communications.

This reflects a growing trend away from traditional ‘top down’ approaches, which are widely perceived to have failed. (Waisbord, 2005:84; Malikhao & Servaes, 2005:94) and towards ‘bottom up’ grassroots’ approaches. The participatory model, first espoused by Paulo Freire in the 1960s (1997), stresses that stakeholders should become involved in the development process, determining the outcome rather than it being designed by an external agency. The emphasis is on the quest for participation of the ‘voiceless’, along with questioning about the western domination of development agenda. Participation is viewed as a means to empower, engage and enable beneficiaries and communities by handing over to the grassroots, the means to set the agenda and find the solutions.

This thesis examines radio, which has been acknowledged to be the dominant medium in Africa and other parts of the developing world as well as being the most effective means of community expression (Rennie, 2006:4). However, unlike my previous project, this is an
experiment in participatory radio, involving participatory content creation (Taachi et al, 2009), interactive media and audience engagement through dialogue and debate.

**Overview/Context**

I have focused on a marginalised sector of young people in Tanzania – the street children of the Kilimanjaro/Arusha region in the north – and the work of one organisation, Mkombozi, a child-focused agency whose stated vision is ‘empowering children, engaging families, enabling communities’, through research, advocacy, education and outreach, targeting vulnerable children and youth. Mkombozi attempts to fulfil its vision through a range of strategies including traditional and new media interventions.

I chose this area of research because I believe that young people are the future of any country yet in Africa they are often marginalised. Helgesson (2006:3) describes youth as an important group to study, especially in the context of social and economic development; Filip De Boeck & Alcinda Honwana (2005:1), believe youth to be at the centre of societal transformations and interactions but are often placed at the margins of the public sphere and major political and socio-economic and cultural processes and are rarely given a voice and yet they tend to make up a large proportion of populations.

*The government doesn’t invest much effort in children. They are forgotten. I imagine becoming President one day....I’ll make the community aware of child abuse and child protection issues and reallocate funds to deal with these issues.*

Morgan Amani, 18, Mkombozi youth and radio programme-maker
I decided to base my research on street children because they represent the margins of a marginalised group and also because of the notion of street children being a symptom of underlying societal problems relating to poverty, education, family, conflict and child abuse which affect many young people in Tanzanian society to varying degrees.

I decided to situate my research with Mkombozi because they are the leading child-focused agency in the region, because they are pro-active, have a tradition of project development informed by regular research and also because my own research coincided with the beginning of a new 5-year strategic planning process within the organisation that will signal an emphasis on the key areas of my study – youth empowerment and community engagement.

**Research Question**

Mkombozı’s 2007 Annual Report, cites a 60% reduction in the number of children coming to the streets from the areas where the organisation conducts community engagement work. It also details successes in reducing truancy; involving children in formal, non-formal and vocational education programmes; reunifying some children with their families; and training children and young people in ICT skills and small business basics.

However, Mkombozi recognises that despite these achievements, it has not succeeded in engaging and empowering communities or even the ‘beneficiaries’ to the extent that they are able to define the issues themselves and build their capacity to find and implement their own long-lasting solutions.

Over the next five years, Mkombozi envisages moving away from being a provider of shelter and services to becoming a facilitator, helping communities to find their own solutions to the
issues at the heart of the problem of street children. This shift will mean examining its current strategies, finding new ways of communicating with communities and empowering the young people who, the organisation believes, can influence change. The research question therefore, was:

Would a participatory communication strategy be an effective way of strengthening Mkombozi’s youth empowerment and community engagement agenda?

More specifically, the research explored, in a qualitative, experimental way, the following question:

Can participatory radio, converged with new ICTs such as mobile telephony and internet, be used as effective tools to help bring the sustainable change desired by Mkombozi?

These questions were explored through the process of making of an experimental, participatory radio programme by a group of young people from Mkombozi, who formerly lived on the streets. Backed by my technical expertise, they were given free rein to set the programme agenda, decide the content, record, edit, present and then broadcast on a local radio station. The public were then invited to take part in a live studio debate that included one of the young producers as well as the Director of Mkombozi and the head of the municipality’s Social Welfare department.

Theoretical Framework

Even the most avid proponents of participatory communication have found it difficult to design a template that fits all participatory projects. (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001:25) Tuftp & Mefalopulos, 2009:17). Maybe because by its very nature of being ‘local’ and ‘grassroots’, participatory communication projects must be diverse, having their own unique qualities. Therefore it is problematic situating this research in a ‘cast iron’ theoretical framework. Common with the trend for a mixed ‘toolbox’ approach, this thesis will borrow from a range
of theories and key concepts while staying under the umbrella of participatory communication. The foundation of the theoretical framework lies in the pedagogy of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, (1997) whose central line of thinking was based on letting the stakeholders get involved in the development process and determine the outcome rather than have it pre-determined by an outside agency (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009:7). Here the focus is on empowerment and liberation through a dialogic rather than a linear communication process, with an emphasis on participation in research, problem identification, decision-making, implementation and evaluation of change. Much of the discourse in this thesis will be about the extent to which these multiple levels of participation, is possible or even desirable. Also embraced are the theories which have emerged from the discourse around the ‘Rockefeller Process’, in which social transformation is pursued through a process of public and private dialogue, in which people themselves define who they are, what they need and how to get what they need in order to improve their lives.\(^1\) As Gumucio-Dagron outlines, (2001:12), radio, specifically community radio, has been an effective platform for such dialogue in the developing world and most recently, research has been investigating the potential of convergence of old and new media as a platform for social change (Meyers, 2008:1) – an area which will also be examined.

The idea was not to do a comparative analysis of participation verses diffusion or participation verses IEC or even to ‘choose’ one model as a solution to the issues outlined in the introduction. Since the trend in development communications is away from the ‘one model fits all solutions’ approach and towards a convergence of several disciplinary and theoretical traditions, (Waisbord 2005:77; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009:13) this, I believe, would be mistaken. However, given the growing domination of participatory discourse within

\(^1\)[www.communicationforsocialchange.org](http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org)
the ‘toolbox’ approach, I intend to unpick some of the key ideas in the discourse, specifically focussing on the notion of participation itself, empowerment, engagement and social change. – these in the context of convergence of new and traditional media.

I chose this focus because, although there is no one model for participatory communication, empowerment, engagement and social change are recurring themes in most participatory projects, particularly community media, (Howley 2005; Rennie 2006). Traditional media, particularly radio, have historically been widely used as communication tools for social change and with the rapid growth of new media there is growing interest in how these may also be used as effective tools, (Meyers 2008). Together, these concepts have the potential to create the deep sense of grassroots ownership that is fundamental to the success of participatory communication for social change initiatives. (Gumucio-Dagron 2001:26). I worked with these themes throughout the field work and then used them as chapter headings of this thesis, as outlined below.

**Research methodology**

Rather than focus on one methodology, I used a variety of approaches similar to the ‘methods toolbox’ of ethnographic/participatory action research outlined by Taachi et al (2003:51). This was designed to produce a rich variety of information that was aimed at eliciting deep
levels of meaning and understandings of the above-mentioned themes, through the vehicle of the pilot participatory radio programme. The approaches I used were:

- **Policy and Archive Research**, which analysed quantitative and qualitative research already carried out by Mkombozi and other agencies which have contributed to its current strategic direction.

- **Participant Observation**, aimed at getting a rich insight into the environment and the participatory process from the perspective of the street children and the community while they were making the programme. Field notes were taken either contemporaneously or soon after.

- **Qualitative interviews** – both group and individual – before and after the programme was broadcast, with the boys who made the programme, Mkombozi staff, local authority representatives and radio station staff. The aim of the interviews was to elicit richer more sensitive, qualitative data (Hansen, 1998:258), (Kvale, quoted in Meyer, 1996:70), about the issues, how they affected communities and individuals, and the outcome of the programme-making process, relating to the themes outlined above.

- **Programme production** with the young people was a form of creative, experimental methodology, which produced deep insights into and understandings of the participatory process, the different levels at which it operated and questions arising from that process.

The overall research approach was an abductive one: This is a ‘twin track’ approach whereby on one track, existing theory is taken as a starting point which is either verified or falsified by empirical data. On the other track, the empirical data is taken as a starting point and used to
verify or falsify existing theories, (Schroeder et al 2003). As researcher and participant, I switched between each track, combining both processes.

Field Work

Participation

The field work mainly focussed on the process of helping a group of four, (originally five), young people from Mkombozi to make the recorded radio programme that was aired on a local radio station. The audience/community participated via SMS and phone, through the vehicle of a live studio discussion following the airing of the recorded programme. I also participated by giving technical advice, carrying out the editing instructions of the programme-makers, setting up interviews and coordinating with the radio station.

Youth empowerment

The young people were given the opportunity to voice their opinions and feelings through the creative process, (Taachi et al 2009:574-575) and to take ownership of the programme through discussion and decision-making.

Community engagement

The live studio discussion was set up to engage the audience in the issues raised by the young programme-makers and to encourage them to take ownership of the problem and the possible solutions.

Media Convergence

Radio was used as the main communication tool and the audience were encouraged to phone, text and email before, during and after the broadcast. The responses were recorded in notes.
Social change

The potential for social change was explored through participant observation, interviews, the outcome of the programme-making process, the broadcast and interactive studio discussion.

Thesis Structure

This thesis does not have a traditional academic structure but is organized along thematic lines which interweave context, theory, methodology, findings and analysis in each chapter. Participation is an umbrella theme that is explored and discussed throughout the thesis. The other themes outlined above are examined in specific chapters as follows:

Chapter Three: Youth empowerment

Chapter Four: Media convergence, community engagement and empowerment

Chapter Five: Social Change

Prior to the examination of these themes, Chapter Two will outline and analyse Mkomobzi’s current communication strategies in order to understand the institutional context of the thematic discussion.

Each chapter will include a methodology section specific to the theme, as well as context and a discussion of theory, findings and analysis. Integrated into each chapter are extracts of field notes, interviews and radio programme excerpts, so that readers can have an idea of what was produced, contemporaneous reflections on the process and a ‘feel’ of the voices and experiences of the young people.

The thread linking each chapter is the exploration of the participatory process through the production and broadcast of the radio programme. This is the concept out of which the other
themes spring from and which links them, therefore they build on and reinforce each other as the report progresses. The final chapter brings the themes together in a discussion on social change, through an analysis of the outcome of the radio broadcast.

**Conclusion**

It should be stressed that this was a qualitative and experimental research process, not designed to produce quantitative data or to scientifically measure impact. As a pilot study, its aim was to elicit layers of meaning of the key concepts and communication tools examined, to raise questions, provoke discussion and to encourage further research into media convergence and the participatory process.
CHAPTER TWO

MKOMBOZI COMMUNICATION MODELS

‘The communications sphere becomes an essential medium, through which individual participants and players identify, interpret and represent their social and cultural wants and needs. In doing this, they begin to shape development itself – orchestrating the process as opposed to having it simply thrust upon them.’ (Maharaj, Tawadros 2006:297)

Aim

The purpose of this chapter is to outline Mkombozi’s current communications’ and ICT strategies in order to establish the institutional context, to signpost the issues to be explored in the fieldwork and to frame the subsequent discussion and analysis. It is divided into the following section headings: research methodology relating specifically to Mkombozi’s communication strategies; an overview of Mkombozi’s current approach to communications findings and analysis of specific strategies and a conclusion summarising the issues

Mkombozi needs to address, specifically relating to the concepts of youth engagement, community engagement and social change in the communications’ sphere.

Methodology

Three research methods were used in the early stages of the fieldwork in order to establish Mkombozi’s current communication strategies:

a) Policy and Archival Research - Prior to the start of the fieldwork, I undertook a comprehensive search of relevant literature in the fields of participatory communication, community radio, ICTs for Development and media convergence, aspects of which are explored throughout this thesis. A large archive of Mkombozi
research reports also provided a rich source of information about the issues, strategies and approaches underpinning Mkombozi’s interventions.

b) Website review - All of the organisation’s research reports and findings are available for download on the Mkombozi website, www.mkombozi.org. This website forms an integral part of the organisation’s public information strategy and was reviewed as part of this analysis.

c) Qualitative Interviews - These were individual, semi-structured interviews with the Director, William Raj, the Communications officer Anna Thor and the Community Engagement officer, Amani Lucus, which were carried out prior to the commencement of the radio pilot. The purpose of the interviews was to elicit deeper background information to add to that gleaned from the findings of the policy and archival research. While working on the programme with the Mkombozi youth, I also took opportunities to have informal chats with Mkombozi staff as the opportunity arose. Some of these ‘chats’ produced extremely rich and relevant data which were noted soon after in my field diary:

Field Notes: May 20th

I was waiting for Charles to turn up so we could do the editing. While I was in the office, a small group of boys from outside came in with a young boy who, it seems, they found on the street. The staff member sent him round to the back office so they could get some information about the boy and his family. Apparently this happens quite regularly but not as often as it used to because they are trying to break the perception that people can just leave children here, so Mkombozi, rather than the community, can solve their problems. The member of staff told me that sometimes they wonder if their presence in Moshi is having a negative influence in the community
because it seems that being taken in by Mkombozi has almost become a life goal, like a step towards getting an education. Sometimes families even bring their children because they think they’ll get better opportunities here.

Overview/Context

Since its early beginnings as a soup kitchen, Mkombozi has recognised the importance of communication as an advocacy tool and has developed a slick, professional-looking communications and media strategy using a variety of communication tools including advocacy, press releases, website, e-newsletters, blogs and online petitions.

Mkombozi’s communications’ officer, Anna Thor, explained in an interview that communications have fulfilled an important role of advancing Mkombozi institutionally through the development of a brand ID, which plays an important part in fundraising. Its strategy has focussed on publishing write-ups, research findings and the children’s stories on its website, (http://www.mkombozi.org), which targets an international audience or the literate local audience with the aim of raising awareness, advocating on behalf of street children and raising funds from the mainly international donor community.

Previously, Mkombozi has successfully produced radio dramas as a communications’ tool but this has not been repeated on a regular basis. Street theatre has also been an effective way of reaching local audiences but again this has not been on a consistent basis. Communications’ strategies have been largely ‘top down’, despite some level of participation by the young people at Mkombozi. Overall, youth driven communications’ strategies have not been pursued actively. However Anna Thor said that they are now looking at how they can use
communications tools more in their interventions and how they can focus more on voices from the ground.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Public information, Advocacy and the Internet

An important tool in Mkombozi’s public information and advocacy strategy, is its very slick and professional-looking website, www.mkombozi.org. The site details the causes and background to the street children phenomenon, hosts electronic versions of all its research reports and publications, outlines its programmes and services, explains the organisations’ objectives and asks for donor support:

The website features pictures of children who have lived on the streets and stories about their lives:

Case Study: Juma
“..My father used to go drinking all day and would fight my mum....One day my Dad beat [my mum] in the dark so we couldn’t see and that morning my mum told us children she couldn’t take anymore. She left us all and it makes me really sad. After that our lives were so much more difficult. Our father would beat us instead of our mum....one day after we were beaten, we decided to run away and never come back...”

Case Study: Adam
"...It hurts me when I remember. When I was on the streets I could not sleep because I did not trust anyone and was scared because I saw the way other kids were being treated. One night a boy, Isenga, was crying. I saw the man called Koko raping him. I decided to run from there. I also saw the dead body of the street boy called Fogo. The other older boys killed him in a fight over money. I did not believe that there are human beings who can behave like animals. It hurts me when I remember."
However, while the website does feature stories like these, their voices and first hand experiences do not dominate the text. There is no page made by any of the children and young people at Mkombozi and there is very little sense of the cultural context. The site is static with little interactivity on the site, for instance it does not invite responses from site visitors and there is no use of other media platforms such as video, audio or radio streaming.

Furthermore, while one of Mkombozi’s stated aims on the masthead of the site is to ‘engage communities’, it appears that local communities are not the target audience. – A fact that the communications’ officer recognised:

A lot of civil society reads the stuff. It means we have a well-established identity among international stakeholders but it’s less established among locals. ‘(Anna Thor, Mkombozi Communication Officer)

Mkombozi focuses a large part of its public information and advocacy strategy on the internet. However it is likely that large parts of the local population are not reached through this medium, given that in Tanzania, access to the internet stands at just 2% (TAMPS 2009). A major barrier is cost: While the presence of internet cafes in Moshi is growing, at an average 1,000 tsh per hour, (75 US cents), the cost is prohibitive to most Tanzanians who may be earning just 2 – 3,000 tsh a day if they are working at all. Home access to internet is equally prohibitive. Many internet users access it via satellite through Internet Service Providers, the most popular being Kilinet and Kicheko. Start-up costs average between $1,000 - $1,500 and monthly subscriptions between $50-$75 per terminal/laptop – around two months wages. Increased competition has, however, reduced costs dramatically. Vodacom now offers monthly 30,000 tsh flat fee plan. However, this is still beyond the means of the average Tanzanian. So while the internet is a vital communications and

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2 Tanzania All Media Products Survey, 2009
advocacy tool, which has proved effective for Mkombozi in connecting with international audiences and potential donors, the organisation will need to consider whether it can make better use of the internet and other communication technologies in order to connect with local communities.

ICTs 4 Development

**Objective 5:** To use Information Communication Technology (ICT) to sustain and spread Mkombozi’s practice with vulnerable children and young people.

Mkombozi’s ICT policy, as expressed in its most recent planning and monitoring report, (2009), focuses on income generation through its Affordable Computers and Technology for Tanzania project, ACTT, and Community Learning Technology Centres, CLTC. The ACTT project, trains youth who live at Mkombozi as hardware and software technicians and generates income through the sale of computers. The CLTCs are community based centres within local schools where teachers are trained to deliver an ICT curriculum to students.

Mkombozi’s ICT for Development strategy reflects the dominant approach which is based on the assumption that widening access to information technology will in itself lead to a better life for people in developing countries, (Rao, 2005 273-274; Singhal et al, 2005:432 ). It can be argued that building capacity through the acquisition of IT skills is a valid tool for economic development, however its current ICT strategy would appear to be limiting in that it does not exploit the potential for grassroots participation, engagement and agenda setting. This contrasts with its new focus on community engagement as outlined in its five-year

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3 Mkombozi Monitoring Report, 2009
44 www.actt.co.tz
strategic plan which was published in May 2010. This new focus was stressed by Mkombozi Director, William Raj:

‘Although Mkombozi has worked with communities since the beginning of its existence in addressing children, the strategic focus now is how can the community drive its own agenda in terms of change for children and a broader awareness of care and protection issues? How can Mkombozi let communities take more responsibility so it becomes more of a facilitator than a provider?’ William Raj, Mkombozi Director interview May 2010

A further question that could be posed is, ‘how can Mkombozi widen its current ICT strategy to enable communities to drive the social change agenda?’

*Participatory Communication*

We believe that.....we can promote social justice through participation and collaboration. We capture local potential through learning and reflection and act as a catalyst for holistic development.⁵

Mkombozi uses Participatory Action Research with vulnerable children and communities to inform and design its programmes. It is used as the foundation of an education project designed to prevent children dropping out of school in Kilimanjaro region and the methodology is based on Freire’s theory of building critical awareness by using participatory approaches, (1997). Working with local partners, participants are involved in the research process through an action learning model that uses a process of action and reflection on action, to generate new learning and insights, and then a commitment by community actors to plan new action. In practice, this involves working with selected schools in the region and collecting data through focus groups, meetings and interviews, document review, census, and structured observation by Mkombozi staff.

⁵ Mkombozi PAR1 Research Report, 2006
Other participatory approaches have also been used with the aim of engaging communities. Its Tulinde Watoto Sasa, (Protect Children Now), campaign uses street theatre to educate the community about child abuse. The drama, which had some participatory elements, was performed by professional actors and street children. Mkombozi set the main themes of the drama, which revolved around violence towards children, but the stories emerged from the group. They were seen by about 2,000 people in Arusha and Moshi in marketplaces and other outside venues. While successful in reaching large audiences, Anna Thor also identified some difficult challenges that raise key questions about participatory approaches, particularly when related to young people – questions that would be directly relevant to the radio experiment:

Field Notes: April 19th

Anna said at the end of the interview 'Sometimes you have to speak for children'. This observation struck me as being pertinent because a key issue for them is that they recognise the need for participatory communication but applying the theory is extremely challenging because of the fact that they are dealing with children, that they are transient and so involved in the everyday struggle of survival that they have found little commitment to participatory projects such as the drama. Many are damaged psychologically - she told me that one of the children, who was very involved in the drama, disappeared after stealing the mobile phone of one of the professional actors they were working with. The child was later found murdered on
There is also the issue that children in the midst of crisis may not necessarily be able to distance themselves from their situation enough to allow them to understand or articulate the issues affecting them. All this raises questions about how much participation should there be, what do we mean by participation? And for whose benefit? Anna felt the important thing was to clarify the objectives beforehand.

Many of these questions and contradictions will be applicable to the radio experiment.... ie how do you put the theory into practice when the reality is complex and you are dealing with children?

Role plays are often used at community engagement meetings as a means to explain issues to audiences, with the objective of persuading them to change their attitudes towards children. These too have led to questions about impact.

‘We use drama so they understand but it is not easy to change their behaviour because it is based on attitudes. They believe using harsh punishment might boost performance. They don’t see it as abuse. For us it’s something we have been discussing for a very long time. Because when you try to train them to try to change their ways of interacting with children, a small per cent can manage to cope with that. Otherwise the rest are still abusing children.’ Amani Lucas, Mkombozi community engagement officer

A key challenge for Mkombozi is to devise practical, meaningful and sustainable participatory interventions that are rooted in the community but which address the psychological and ethical aspects of working with young people.

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6 Interviewed May 2010
Radio

A series of radio dramas were produced in the past, acted by Mkombozi children and youth. While the agenda was set by Mkombozi, the young people were able to input their ideas. The dramas were popular with both the young participants and the audiences who were able to take part in an interactive discussion at the end of the series. However they have not been repeated.

Conclusion

Mkombozi’s Communication, ICT and participatory strategies, as outlined above, can be placed into several communication models: Its internet presence mainly follows a diffusion model, one-way communication targeting a specific audience although with some interactive elements such as the online petition. Its ICT strategy is based on a life skills’ approach emphasising dissemination of information but which is non-participatory (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009; 2). Mkombozi street dramas and communication role plays can be classified as a Behaviour Change Communication model, aimed at individual behaviour change through the crafting of content which has involved, in part, a participatory approach.

While there are plans to make their web-based and other literature more accessible to local audiences, there is an acknowledgement that text-based communications products are not as successful in Tanzania as in other parts of the world. Radio campaigns have been budgeted for over the last two years but have not yet materialised. The potential for ICT 4 Development interventions have not been fully explored.

Mkombozi has been successful in creating a brand identification, particularly among external donor communities and civil society organisations in Tanzania. However, if it is to achieve
fully the objectives of ‘empowering children, engaging families and enabling communities’, as stated in its literature, it will need to examine its use of communication tools to further its goal of social change. It has already had success in the past by using radio drama as part of an advocacy campaign. The following chapters explore how Mkombozi might develop participatory radio as an effective communication tool to give voice to the street children they serve and to give communities a media platform that will enable them to find their own solutions to the problems that drive children to the streets.
CHAPTER THREE

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Field Notes: May 1

I have been thinking about the question of empowerment. Godfrey has been with Mkombozi for one year. He seems not as confident as the others. (I steered the conversation away from his running away from home to rapping because he seemed like he could get upset). But then Morgan has been there for many years. Yet Godfrey has ambition and has learnt to express himself through rap and music. Is that what we mean by empowerment?

I see that these boys are not typical of their age. Their experiences on the street of course and the hardships have affected them. But that is probably true of many young people here who struggle on a daily basis with poverty, conflict and abuse and who remain hidden in society. But there is also something else that distinguishes them:

Mkombozi, I think, is teaching these boys to recognise their experience and to express themselves. (question – is up to an agency to do this? Are they in a way being ‘conditioned’? Is that bad anyway?) This may not be actively done but may be a result of having a safe space and freedom to discuss, perform, play. Be listened to.
Aim

In his summary of the five key ideas in development communications, Sylvio Waisbord (2006:78) suggests that there is a consensus that community empowerment should be the main goal of interventions:

‘Individuals and communities become empowered by gaining knowledge about specific issues, communicating about issues of common concern, making decisions for themselves, and negotiating power relations.’ (2006: 1)

However Waisbord says there has been less agreement on how empowerment is defined and measured or which strategies need to be implemented. The failure of traditional ‘top down’ development approaches has pushed the language of empowerment centre stage. It has become a buzz word in development speak but as with all words that become over used, sometimes the meaning behind the word becomes fuzzy or even empty, lost in what Waisbord describes as the ‘linguistic labyrinth’ of development communication. (2006:78)

If empowerment should be the central goal of development projects, I wanted to find out what it may mean for marginalised young people in Tanzania, specifically those young people who Mkombozi represents. Further, can participatory radio be an effective platform for realising, practically, the multiple levels at which the concept of ‘empowerment’ operates. This leads to a further question about the source of the ‘empowerment’. Should the demand for empowerment stem from an outside agency or from the individuals and communities themselves?

One of the main aims of the participatory radio experiment was to enable the group of young people from Mkombozi to make their own radio programme about street children according to their own agenda, to observe the results of the process in terms of the discourse on
Empowering Tanzanian youth

‘empowerment’, to reflect on what empowerment means and to assess the effectiveness of participatory radio in empowering at a grassroots level.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the different levels at which the concept of empowerment operated in the making of the radio programme, relating it to theories of empowerment and to review the lessons learnt from the process which might be used in future participatory radio projects. It is divided into the following section headings: research methodology relating specifically to the concept of empowerment; an overview of the position of young people in Tanzanian society, of the street children phenomenon in Moshi and Arusha and of Mkombozi’s approach to the question of empowerment; my findings and analysis of the qualitative data gathered relating to empowerment during the process of making the programme; and a conclusion summarising the key ideas on empowerment that emerged from the experimental process.

Methodology

The main methodological tools relating to the exploration of the concept of empowerment were:

a) Policy and archive research: a review of Mkombozi research and policy documents relating to empowerment was made prior to the start of the programme-making.

b) Qualitative interviews: The semi-structured interview carried out with Mkombozi director, William Raj included the topic of empowerment; in the course of the fieldwork, informal interviews were carried out with Mkombozi staff who acted as translators, particularly at the beginning; group and individual interviews were carried out with the four young people who made the programme, Deo, Charles, Godfrey and Morgan with the purpose of getting an insight into their lives. After the broadcast of
the programme, I also conducted a group interview with three of the boys – Charles was not available. Interviews were recorded and notes were made contemporaneously. c) **Participant Observation**: This was a key methodological tool that was employed throughout the field study. Observation and reflection notes were taken either during interviews, discussions, programme production or soon after sessions with the young programme-makers. This method gave a rich insight into the group and their milieu, culture and practices. (Hansen et al, 1998:65)

d) **Participatory programme production**: The actual process of the young people producing the programme can be seen as a research method along the lines of the inventive, creative, ‘self-made’ methodology called for by Singhal and Rogers (2003). It could be argued that the process allowed the ‘respondents’ to take on the role of researcher as they themselves became aware of how they were being empowered and were able to articulate this to me and among themselves.

**Overview/Context**

**Children and Youth**

In Tanzania, young people under the age of 18 constitute 50% of the population—a startling demographic that has fundamental implications in a number of areas including health, education, child rights, juvenile justice and legal reform, which impinge on Tanzania’s ability to fulfil the potential of its youth, and through them the country’s own future. Despite some changes in legislation affecting child rights, young people appear to be neglected in government policy and they remain a marginalised group, despite their numbers. However the social landscape is a complex one. De Boeck & Alcinda Honwana (2005:1) expose the

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7 Mkombozi, in partnership with other agencies is part of the 50% Campaign which aims to highlight the impact and issues arising from the fact that 50 per cent of Tanzania’s population is under the age of 18.
8 Tanzania passed a new Law of the Child Act in November 2009 which makes the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child part of the law through a new legislative framework.
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ambiguities surrounding children and youth throughout Africa, describing them as ‘makers and breakers’ of societies: they are marginalised and excluded from political and social roles, their voices, visions and views are still to be heard and, yet they are actively involved in creating their own identities through innovative forms of popular culture, and are also important actors in ‘redefining and restructuring existing models of kinship and moral matrices of reciprocity and solidarity.’ (2005:1) They are defined in their communities in terms of intrinsic wealth and as a social good, yet increasingly viewed as troublesome and potentially dangerous.

Stambach (2000:5) aptly illustrates these ambiguities and contradictions in her depiction of village life in Kilimanjaro region: The children of the household in which the author is staying during her fieldwork, show due deference to adults ‘at least in their presence’, performing the duties accorded to their age and gender and upholding the normative order and Chagga traditions. However, in the afternoon after school, when the adults are away from the house, they bring out the boombox and play the music of Bobby Brown, dancing to the beat, sometimes to the consternation of the neighbours. When they hear the sound of the returning adults, they hurriedly put the music away and quickly revert to their accepted position in the community of being seen but not heard. (Stambach 2000:5). In conversation, they reveal the tensions between tradition and modernity and that social change between the generations is happening anyway, with our without specific ‘development’ interventions. Therefore it should not be assumed that young people are passive recipients of change or that society or ‘culture’ is static. Despite their place on the margins of society, young people may occupy a dual position, subordinate yet with the potential to creatively fashion – and change -

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9 Chagga is one of the main tribes in Moshi and Arusha
their own environment. The radio experiment capitalised on this, not only by making them active agents but by making them seen and heard as active agents.

‘I have noticed something in the Participatory Action Research we have done in 10 schools. We did an exercise called appreciative enquiry. We had children representatives from different schools. They spoke of their hopes and dreams. They displayed more confidence than the adults. I think that later, as adults they will influence change.’ William Raj, Mkombozi Director

Street children

SNAPSHOT

53% of street children and youth reported that their parents or another adult in the household swore, insulted, put them down or acted in a way that they thought they might be physically hurt.

28% of street children interviewed said there was never enough to eat in their homes.

26% said that their parents’ drinking interfered with their care

44% of those interviewed said they had been victims of or witnessed violence at some point.

14% said that they very often felt very afraid, stressed for a long period of time, have nightmares or fear for their safety.

Moshi is a small town in Kilimanjaro region with a population in the urban locality of 144,000 that historically has been a magnet for Christian missionaries and a number of foreign, non-governmental organisations and charities. Seventy kilometres away is Arusha

10 Interview May 2010
11 Mkombozi Census 2006
which has grown to become Tanzania’s second city with a population of 270,500\textsuperscript{13}. Since the 1990s, as both towns have expanded, drawing in people in search of employment, communities have witnessed a rise in the numbers of children living and working on the streets, either full-time or part-time. A census carried out by Mkombozi in 2003, identified 259 full-time and 520 part-time street children in Moshi and Arusha, around 90\% between the ages of 10 and 19 years.\textsuperscript{14} An Mkombozi census three years later, put that number at 224 full-time and 878 part-time children.\textsuperscript{15} The picture is not clear cut since while there have been reductions in some categories of street children, according to the head of Social Welfare at Moshi Municipal Council, Agnes Urassa,\textsuperscript{16} the numbers of children on the street are increasing.

\textit{Mkombozi and youth empowerment}

\textbf{Mkombozi values youth empowerment because} it gives young people in difficult situations a chance for a better life. It does this by giving them skills, knowledge and opportunity…..\textsuperscript{17}

Youth empowerment is one of the key goals of Mkombozi and in many respects it has been successful in fulfilling its aim. Under ‘empowerment highlights’ in its 2008 Annual Report, the following achievements are listed:

- \textbf{8 boys and 5 girls} were trained on how to run their own small business.
- \textbf{11 boys and 8 girls} were helped to become employed in different places.
- \textbf{28 young people} were taught how to apply for jobs and how to behave at work.
- \textbf{7 youth} were trained in how to make paper.
- \textbf{10 boys} who live in Mkombozi’s centre travelled to the UK to play rugby.

\textsuperscript{13} National Bureau of Statistics 2002: www.nbs.go.tz
\textsuperscript{14} Mkombozi census 2003
\textsuperscript{15} Mkombozi Census 2006
\textsuperscript{16} In an interview carried out by Charles Godfrey, one of the youth programme producers
\textsuperscript{17} Mkombozi SNAPshot Annual Report 2008
While these achievements should not be undervalued, measured by Waisbord’s definition, they hit only the first of the four indicators outlined above. While the acquisition of skills, knowledge and opportunity are no doubt empowering, a question I wanted to pose was whether empowerment means more than this list of these easy to quantify ‘achievements’ and if so, can it be defined and measured? In carrying out the field work, I found that the figures gave only a partial flavour of how empowerment translates on the ground at Mkombozi.

**Field Notes: May 1**

There is still the authority division but a boy will come up to me and ask a question. Like Charles, 19, who introduced himself to me in the yard yesterday while I was waiting for Godfrey. He asked where I came from. He thought I was Tanzanian and was puzzled about my Swahili language skills. He said he had been on the street since he was two years old.... And that he wanted to be a doctor or a lawyer. Then there was the boy who came in for a few seconds during one of the interviews and shook my hand – not just in the shikamoo adult-child thing. He was inquiring who I was. Simon (coordinator) said these children are taught to be inquirers, to ask questions. Although Godfrey was clearly vulnerable (I was worried he would cry) He was still able to articulate his dreams – wants to be a politician. Does being empowered mean having the confidence to have dreams, to believe in yourself and your ability to change things?

Within a few days of my field work beginning, I realised that NGOs like Mkombozi are under pressure from donors – and possibly the public - to produce figures to prove that they are meeting their objectives. However, to understand the true picture it is necessary to
Empowering Tanzanian youth expose the multiple layers of meaning - a much more difficult task which may require a range of indicators. (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009:5; Tufte et al, 2008:29)

The acquisition of skills is an empowering process in the practical sense that these interventions equip young people to generate income and on a secondary level also inspires self-confidence and self-respect. These latter outcomes are also aimed at through Mkombozi’s programme of sports, music, creative arts and through occasional opportunities to speak or perform at national and international conferences and events. However, according to Freirean pedagogy, the essence of empowerment goes deeper than skills acquisition, it centres on dialogue and control (Freire, 1997). Freire’s literacy work empowered landless peasants to formulate their own demands for a better life and to liberate themselves from oppressive conditions. His philosophy was that stakeholders should determine the outcome of interventions by being involved in the development process through participatory and collective processes in research, problem identification, decision-making, implementation and evaluation of change, (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009:2)

The Mkombozi Director, William Raj, alluded to this deeper meaning of empowerment in an interview at the start of the field work.

‘Experience shows that when you empower people they are convinced to do it themselves. Empowerment is not something that you give but something that you demand. Where I have seen empowerment working is in Latin America. People woke up because they felt it. At the moment we haven’t come up with a way of doing it.’18

In a communication context, the concept of empowerment may be expressed in projects that enable local people to manage and oversee media facilities such as community public address systems, low-powered radio stations, and simple communication centres and tele-centres, (Cadiz, 2005:150) Prime examples of this were the Bolivian miners radio stations of the

18 Interview May 2010
1970s and 1980s which were financed and managed by the community of oppressed miners, described by Gumucio-Dagron (2005:318) as one of the best examples of participatory communication for social change.

.....born out of the community itself, financed and managed by the community, genuinely participatory on a daily basis, well integrated into the social movement, with a wider than local impact without losing its local priorities.’

This emphasis on the local also parallels Mkombozi’s new strategic direction, which seeks more partnerships at a local level.

**FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

In order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the pilot radio project, I have taken as a framework the five characteristics of Freire’s dialogic approach (1970), which Cadiz outlines (2005:147-149). These are:

a) *Communication between equals* – equality between the change agent and the partner.

b) *Problem posing* – rather than the ‘banking’ type of education where the development practitioner ‘deposits knowledge’ for the beneficiary to withdraw, a problem posing dialogue draws from the learner’s insights, knowledge and experience through posing thought-provoking questions.

c) *Praxis* – a cycle of action of reflection which integrates theory and practice.

d) *Conscientizing* – a process of advancing critical consciousness, as participants begin to understand the human, development and social processes.
e) *Five values* – love, hope, humility, faith and critical thinking - interpreted as the principles of effective interpersonal communication.

In outlining the findings and analysis, I will also use as a framework the essential elements of communication for empowerment as identified by Cadiz. (2005:150-151)

a) Provision of access to information

b) Putting users/beneficiaries and local people in control

c) Building local people’s capabilities in communication

d) Emphasis on small and appropriate media

e) Learning with partners

f) Working as a collective

g) Capitalising and building on felt needs

h) Making it enjoyable

i) Giving them hands-on experience

j) Sharing resources

*Putting users/beneficiaries and local people in control:*

This is at the core of Freire’s participatory approach and was at the heart of the development of the pilot radio programme. Having conducted semi-structured interviews with staff, the next stage of the fieldwork was to explain the purpose of the research to the five boys who were to take part in the programme-making. The boys had been chosen by Mkombozi staff because of their previous experience in drama and other creative and participatory projects. They were also quite articulate and it was felt they would be able to rise to the challenge of making their own programme. One of the boys dropped out in the early stage of the project but I did not ask for any explanations or pressurise him to stay since at the first meeting I had
made it clear that participation was purely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any
time. At this first meeting it was clear that although they had taken part previously in radio
and drama interventions that had given them some self-confidence, there appeared to be some
trepidation and even suspicion about the idea of being given control. The following notes
were made contemporaneously:

*Field notes: April 28th*

....Kids now coming in. Looking a bit shy, apprehensive. They have put a bench by
the window. A little way from me. Much lower to the ground than the chair I am
sitting on. Others arriving now. They have to be persuaded to sit at the same table as
me. Morgan’s head is bowed. Godfrey, the youngest is looking at me, mystified. Some
of them are looking away, some looking down. Unsmiling.

*Godfrey Joseph – 14 years old.*

*I introduce myself.*

*He, (Daddy Hassan, is explaining in Swahili what I am doing.*

*(They’re) Looking a bit worried and disengaged. Some of them looking away.*

*Youngest looking at me. Suspicious? Unsure?*

*Forgot to put recorder on. Done it now. Telling them that they choose what to put on
the programme.*

*Charles Godfrey, 18 years Form 3*

*Deo Antipas, 18 years, Form 2*

*Ezrom, 15, Standard 6*

*Morgan Amani, 18, Form 3*

*Godfrey Joseph – 14.*

*My observation – they are all behind in their schooling. Godfrey is very small for his
age. Looks a lot younger – but children here do look younger than in the West.*
I break the ice a bit by talking about football. Morgan is wearing a Manchester United Shirt. I ask him whether it’s his team. He smiles and says yes. They seem surprised I should talk about football. Two of them are Man U fans (I think Charles is the other) Ezrom is Chelsea, Godfrey is Chelsea and Deo is Barcelona. It immediately breaks the ice. All English/European teams of course.

Someone asks if I like football. I say I prefer rugby.

After the football (talk) they revert to their previous blank positions. They listen.

I asked them whether they are happy with this. Although their faces have been completely blank, they are now very positive, saying it is good. It’s then, when you ask them what they think, that they register the first stirrings of interest and their faces lighten up a bit. Charles says it’s good. Took part in the previous drama. Deo – wants to be big musician. He says making the programme will teach him how to speak in public.

The most striking observation in this note is, ‘It’s then when you ask them what they think, that they register the first stirrings of interest.’ Apart from the animation that arose from the football discussion, these five young people were largely non-communicative. The fact that they responded to my asking them what they thought, suggests that this was an unusual request. How often are young people asked what they think?

‘A child can contribute to decision-making in the community, development activities. In Tanzania a lot of people think that children don’t have the ability to speak out. Adults just make the decisions themselves.’

Charles Godfrey, 18, Mkombozi youth and radio programme-maker
Freire’s concept of communication between equals refers to equality between the change agent and development partner, between teacher and student, (Cadiz 2005:147), in this context between ‘expert’ and so-called ‘beneficiaries’. However, it is clear from the field note that this was not necessarily going to be a straightforward process. This was exemplified by the fact that at the beginning of this first encounter, they chose to sit on a bench and put it initially in a position that placed themselves below me (since I was sitting on a chair that was higher), reinforcing their perception of what they supposed to be the power relationship between myself as researcher, foreigner and older person. This supported research findings about the subordinate position of youth in Tanzanian society (Stambach, 2000:5; Helgesson, 2006:87). It also suggested that I needed to reflect further on my position as researcher. I was telling them that this was their programme but I realised that I was still in the position of researcher, expert and ‘superior’. I needed to break the ice which was why I asked the question about football. The fact that I was able to engage with them for a short while on football may be an indicator of what Castells referred to as the ‘network society’ (1996), to the globalisation Thomas Friedman explored (2005), and which was described by Eriksen (2007:8) as an example of transnational interconnectedness and ‘glocalisation’ – local adaptations of global trends. This short lively debate about football also supported the idea of young people negotiating themselves through the social hierarchies to find their own means of self-expression and value.

Making it enjoyable; giving them hands-on experience

What happened next suggested that while young people are subordinate, that given a communication platform, it may be possible to give them a voice.
Although these boys were selected by Mkombozi largely because of their previous experience with drama and other projects, the initial disbelief and surprise at my letting them use the equipment seemed to suggest that they had previously had limited control in these interventions. In the previous radio dramas, Mkombozi had set the agenda in terms of message and objectives and the participants were then able to fashion the content, according to the parameters that had been established by the organisation. Their joy at being allowed to use the equipment could be interpreted on two levels.

a) It reinforced the idea that the ‘normal’ relationship between children and adults and between the agency and the beneficiaries is an unequal one.

b) It suggested that the difference between this intervention and previous ones was the question of ‘ownership’ – Gumucio-Dagron, in his examination of the Bolivian
miners’ radio stations suggests that most of what is called participatory is really ‘access’ (2005:320). In terms of empowerment, it is important to unpick what is meant by ‘participation’ and the limitations which may prevent full ownership by the participants. Tufte & Mefalopulos (2009:6-7) underline the need to define within a project what participation means as it may mean different things to different stakeholders. They list four different perceptions of participation which will be explored further in this thesis: i) Passive participation; ii) Participation by consultation; iii) Participation by collaboration; iv) Empowerment participation where the stakeholders own and control the process. While the pilot project attempts to come under category iv, the previous radio intervention can be placed in category iii) (Tufte & Mefalopulos 2009:7)

Their subsequent disappointment and deflation at not being able to hear the playback properly underlines the importance for them of having a voice. It was not only important for them to be able to take part in being creative, expressing their views and recording their voices, they needed to hear their own voices, almost to reaffirm that they had actually produced something of merit.

Problem posing/learning with partners

The concept of drawing from the stakeholders’ insights, knowledge and experience was one of the pillars of the development of the pilot radio show. The individual interviews were an opportunity to draw out these insights to help them think about the possible content of their programme.
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However, rather than pose thought-provoking questions as in Freire’s pedagogy, I preferred to follow a semi-structured approach in which the conversation was allowed to flow naturally around the topics of family, education, income/poverty, street life and Mkombozi although questions were written down in the interview schedule\(^{19}\) which I planned to use as prompts. (Taachi 2003:63)

The reason why I chose this approach was because of the challenges of working with children, particularly when trying to understand possible traumatic experiences and events in their lives. Brooks et al stress the need for youth researchers to be aware of ethical considerations during the collection of data as well as the need to act with care towards all participants in youth research (2009:21). I was therefore aware that I had to be sensitive in my approach when asking about their life stories, since recounting these events may have added to any trauma they might have been experiencing. I therefore was careful to follow the advice of the staff at Mkombozi and made it very clear to the participants that they could pull

\(^{19}\) The interview schedule is attached in the Appendix
out at any time and that if they felt uncomfortable, they should tell me and we could end the interview.

I was particularly cautious in my interview with Godfrey, the youngest – aged 14 – and quietest of the group, whose interview led me to question my role and motivations as researcher.

Field Note: April 30th

Interview with Godfrey

....He’s still looking very worried.

(He’s) asking me what I am going to do with the information from him and the others....

I think maybe I should have been more sensitive. I didn’t launch straight into how he got on the street, talked about education but all throughout he seemed nervous and apprehensive. Less assured than the others. That’s why I switched to talking about rapping. Was trying to find something he connected with. He relaxed slightly but still worried posture.... I wonder if I am being voyeuristic. I ask about probably the most painful period of their lives as if they were subjects under examination. I need to be careful of my attitude. I try not to appear to pity them. I actually don’t.

Yet he, like the other young people, was able to provide an insight, not only into his own experiences but also clues to some of the fundamental issues at the core of the street children phenomenon.
From these two interviews alone it was possible to begin to understand some of the underlying issues concerning street children such as education, family conflict and poverty. Other themes that came out of interviews with the other participants included corporal punishment of children, social hierarchies and negative attitudes of the community towards street children. Giving them the freedom to articulate about these issues in a dialogic process allowed these questions to emerge in a way that might not have happened if I, as researcher, had made assumptions about the problems I had thought they faced. While it is likely that I would have been able to find out about these issues through other means, engaging the participants in dialogue produced meaning behind the facts and figures. (Kvale 1997/2009:1)
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Working as a collective

Following the individual interviews, a brainstorming session was held with all the participants. By then one of the five, Ezrom, had dropped out. I was unclear why but since I had made it clear that taking part in the programme was purely voluntary, I did not press him for an explanation.

On one level, the individual interviews had resulted in a measure of empowerment because they had been allowed to tell their story – they had been given a voice. (Taachi et al 2009:4)

The brainstorming session took the process one step further in that they were given a forum to discuss the issues they wanted to highlight in the programme and how they wanted to tackle them. As the technical ‘expert’, my role was to outline the types of radio formats they could use in the programme such as interviews, vox pops\(^{20}\), drama, music, package\(^{21}\). Theirs was to discuss amongst themselves, in order to define the issues and agree the content of the programme. In keeping with the participatory model, the ‘point of departure’ was from the community, who are fully involved in the decision-making. (Servaes & Malikhao, 2005:95) rather than from the ‘expert’ as in the monologic, top-down model. In this latter model, the participants would be the ‘receivers’ or ‘beneficiaries’ of a strategy mapped out by an external agent. However, here they were given the power to map their own strategy, similar to Freire’s notion of people being given the right to individually and collectively speak their word. (1983:76) and reflecting current participatory approaches which emphasise the right to participate in the planning and production of media content.

\(^{20}\) Vox pops are a radio technique where a variety of opinions of the public are recorded and then short clips put together in a short montage.

\(^{21}\) A radio package is where a mix of recorded voices, linked together by the presenter and a mix of sounds are put together in a 3 – 4 minute piece.
Since the group understood that they had control of the content, the discussion was a lively one. It was clear that they had been thinking of these ideas for some time. It is unclear, however, if they had had the opportunity to express them publicly. By this stage, the boys were becoming increasingly confident in expressing their ideas. They were also becoming more relaxed with me and more able to speak to me directly in either English or Swahili rather than through the interpreter.

*Giving them hands on experience/building their capabilities in communication*

Unlike television, radio is a technically simple, non-labour intensive medium. It was therefore quite straightforward teaching them how to use the recorder and microphone. I noted that giving them the equipment immediate boosted their confidence. Further, allowing *them* to ask the questions in the programme-making context allowed them to set the agenda and control the direction of the process. Deo, for instance, had decided that he wanted to interview boys on the street and also members of the community, to find out what they think of street children. We went to an area where the Mkombozi street coordinators meet the children who are living rough. Deo had control of the recorder and microphone. I acted as his producer, or assistant, noting down numbers that we would need for playback and making sure that the equipment was working properly. If he needed to ask me a question about whether he was doing things correctly, I was there to answer but mostly he took the lead in selecting interviewees and questions.
Deo slipped easily into his role of journalist and was able to conduct interviews naturally and with confidence. It should be noted as well that he was probably able to elicit more information from the street children and passers-by than I would have as a foreign professional journalist because people immediately identified with him as one of their own community.

*Field Note: May 13th*

......I worked as Deo’s assistant. He was so enthusiastic. He just loved interviewing people and after, totally spontaneously, he told me how much he enjoyed doing this and that it had given him confidence. He started talking about how he wanted to be a journalist and work for the BBC interviewing people about music... The boys seemed keen to talk and Deo spoke to the first two boys, they kept coming back to us as we were interviewing other people....

Measuring ‘empowerment’ is difficult and, as mentioned above, focussing on the statistics of skills acquisition only, may miss the many levels on which ‘empowerment’ operates. The following transcription of Deo’s response to the morning we spent interviewing the street children and passers-by, gives a clear indication of how giving him a platform to create his
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own content, inspired him and strengthened his belief that he could achieve and make a difference. Is that empowerment?

Field note: May 13th
(Deo) ‘I enjoyed this interview because in my future I want to interview people so when I interview people and they talk with me good and smile and I get the confidence to ask people questions I feel so proud because I want to be.....a journalist like you. So when I do it I feel so good. I think I don’t waste my time. I do something which I want to do some day. But today I do. I feel so good. Thanks.’

Emphasis on small and appropriate media

Cadiz (2005:150) identifies local broadcasting and youth theatre as two examples of ‘small and appropriate media’ which, she suggests, are effective ways of empowering rural communities through communication. Morgan’s decision to write a five-minute drama for the radio programme, exploring the issue of family conflict as one of the factors pushing children to the streets, could be placed in this category of communication for empowerment. It also met the requirement to *Capitalise and build on felt needs* because his drama created a scenario – and messaging – that were relevant to the community but which I, as researcher/expert, would have been ignorant of. It was also an example of what Taachi et al, (2009:1) refer to as participatory content creation – the idea that content creation activities can enable marginalised communities have a voice. This may be achieved through creating appropriate and relevant context; engaging marginalised groups and encouraging a diversity of voices; generating local debate around local issues; encouraging participation at all stages of content creation so that it locally meaningful and may lead to social change.
Morgan’s drama explored the issue of family conflict following the death of a mother or father, a situation that in Tanzania often leads to conflict over inheritance and sometimes the rejection of the surviving spouse and children. It was truly participatory in that he wrote a brief outline of what would happen in each scene then left it to the actors – the other programme-makers – to improvise their lines. Although there was no script, no sophisticated recording studio - (It was recorded on our only digital recorder in Mkombozi’s large outdoor stage area) - and no involvement of a drama ‘expert’, the result was remarkable, in terms of content, engagement and impact.

*Field Notes: May 12th*

*Today I went back to Mkombozi to record the drama... they really got into their roles and with the exception of one scene they were not happy about, they did everything in one take. Before each scene, Morgan explained what would happen. I recorded it with the one mike we have and then we listened back. They really enjoyed hearing themselves. This time we were without an interpreter and we managed the session quite smoothly with a mix of English and Swahili. I notice that they are much more relaxed with me now. They gave me the traditional Shikamoo22 greeting (which always makes me feel old) but Charles, rather than shaking my hand put his fist together with mine and gave a ‘street’ greeting. I noticed as well that they were talking to me directly and calling me by my first name (which is unusual for Tanzanian children/young people although maybe it’s because I’m a foreigner)..... In previous sessions they didn’t really speak to me directly but would usually address their questions to ‘Teacher’, as they call Daddy Hassan, or whoever was sitting in...*

22 ‘Shikamoo’ is a traditional greeting of respect that children say to adults or adults to older adults or to those of ‘higher’ social status.
As the production process continued, the confidence of the young participants grew as they conducted interviews, recorded packages and their stories and discussed the structure of the radio programme. I had anticipated that I would edit the programme since I have the technical expertise but I discovered that along with their growing confidence and engagement, that the process had produced evidence of a strong sense of ownership and so they, in fact, became fully involved in the editing process. This will be discussed further in later chapters.

**Conclusion**

The process of giving the Mkombozi youth the free rein to make the programme, visibly increased their confidence and exposed how grassroots participation in decision-making, content creation and public expression contributed to their ‘empowerment’ at a number of levels. While these young people already displayed some confidence before the start of the production process because of their previous involvement in Mkombozi initiatives, being able to control and decide the outcome of the programme, being given a voice, and being listened to, appeared to raise their confidence to a new level. The participatory process exposed some of the key characteristics of Freire’s dialogic approach as well as the essential elements of communication for empowerment, as outlined by Cadiz (2005: 149-151). A challenge, however, is the question of sustainability. By the end of the broadcast, all participants, the radio station and the audience called for regular programming to continue the momentum started by this pilot programme. Without regular and consistent grassroots involvement and production, empowerment can only be fleeting.
CHAPTER FOUR

MEDIA CONVERGENCE, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

‘...are we part of the community? Are we part of the problem?’

William Raj, Mkombozi Director, May 2010

Aim

Mkombozi values community engagement because people, communities and the government should make sure all children are safe, happy and cared for.²³

I have previously outlined Mkombozi’s C4D and community engagement interventions involving radio, drama and PAR. I also noted in the introduction, my experience of a top-down media intervention which, I believe, failed to sufficiently involve the audiences or communities it aimed to serve. In the previous chapter, I outlined how participatory approaches to radio production may contribute to the empowerment of young people. In this chapter, I will move forward the discussion by exploring the following questions within the framework of the pilot radio show:

²³ Mkombozi SNAPshot Annual Report 2008
a) Is radio an effective way of engaging communities in dialogue and solution-seeking about the issue of street children?

b) Would the use of ICTs alongside radio deepen and consolidate further the empowerment of the young Mkombozi programme-makers by enabling them to reach communities with their message through interactive media?

c) Would a new approach to ICTs and media enable Mkombozi to reach its goal of engaging more with communities?

This chapter will be divided into the following section headings: research methodology specifically relating to community engagement; an overview of Mkombozi’s approach to community engagement and of the discourse on community radio and media convergence; my findings and analysis of the qualitative data gathered during the programme production and broadcast relating to community engagement, including the response of the audience to the issues raised in the programme, how they interacted, the effectiveness of the live studio format in raising awareness, promoting debate and giving a public voice to the street children.

**Methodology**

The main methodological tools relating to the concept of community engagement and media convergence were:

a) *Policy and Archive Research* – I reviewed Mkombozi research reports relating to community engagement, literature on participatory radio and media convergence.

b) *Qualitative Interviews* with the Mkombozi Director, William Raj; Mkombozi Community Engagement Officer, Amani Lucas and Head of Social Welfare at Moshi Municipality, Agnes Urassa.

c) *Programme production and radio broadcast* – members of the community were interviewed by Mkombozi youth during the programme-making process. The
programme was then broadcast on a regional radio station, Sauti Ya Injili, after which members of the audience were invited to take part in a live studio discussion via SMS, phone and email.

d) **Participant Observation** aimed at i) observing and noting the response of the audience to the issues raised in the programme. ii) evaluating which was the most accessible medium for audience interaction. iii) assessing the effectiveness of the live studio format in raising awareness of the issues and promoting debate within the community and between agencies working in the field. iv) assessing the impact of giving a voice to the street children through the recorded radio programme and through the live participation of a former street child in the studio discussion. These were based on qualitative data from my own note taking and from feedback interviews after the programme was made and broadcast.

**Overview/Context**

*I want to educate the community of people about the disasters we have and to encourage more cooperation in the family. I want people to be more committed in society.*

Godfrey Joseph, 14, Mkombozi youth and radio programme-maker

**Mkombozi and community engagement**

In the introduction to this thesis, I explained that one of the key challenges facing Mkombozi was that of community engagement. Involving the community in addressing the issue of street children has always been a focus of Mkombozi activities and to some extent it has made inroads: In its Annual Report 2008, the engagement ‘highlights’ listed the following achievements.
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**45 teachers** from 9 schools were trained to teach children to be questioning thinkers.

**100 local leaders** were trained to help children who live in difficult situations.

**100s of community members** came to Mkombozi's monthly youth drama shows.

Mkombozi youth joined several tournaments as well as the Kilimanjaro Marathon.

However, Mkombozi believes that despite its interventions, many people in the community remain unaware of the reasons why children migrate to the street and of the community’s responsibility to tackle the problem themselves by changing their attitudes towards children and young people.

‘...it is not easy to change people’s behaviour because it is based on attitudes. They believe using harsh punishment might boost performance. They don’t see it as abuse. For us it’s something we have been discussing for a very long time. Because when we try to train them to try to change their ways of interacting with children, a small percentage can manage to cope with that. Otherwise the rest are still abusing children. This is the teachers.’ Amani Lucas, Mkombozi community engagement coordinator.

Despite its participatory work with schools, with street theatre and some radio drama aimed at changing community perceptions of street children, in interviews with street children it is clear that many in the community have a negative perception of them.

‘They look down on us. Though we have our own names they do not call us by our names. They call us Soro, Chokora, Kapurua¹, thief. They cannot sit down with us. They say we are thieves.’
Daudi Hassan, street boy interviewed by Deo Antipas ex radio programme Tulinde Watoto Sasa

As noted in an earlier chapter, the predominant belief within the community is that the issue of street children is the responsibility of external organisations like Mkombozi, rather than the community. Therefore it is common for people to bring street children to Mkombozi for
them to deal with them. However, Mkombozi wants to change its role to one of facilitator, encouraging the community to take responsibility and find solutions.

Community radio and convergence

Gumucio-Dagron describes the Bolivian Miners radio stations, dating back to the 1950s, as an example of truly participatory community radio since they were owned, managed and crafted by the local miners’ communities who used the broadcasts as a means to empower themselves in the face of the autocratic regime at that time. (2005:310-320). Since then, community radio has been recognised as a powerful tool for political and social change although the success of community media projects has been variable and difficult to evaluate. While there are common themes which characterise community based media such as access, participation and empowerment (Howley, 2005; Rennie, 2006), there has been little consensus on theoretical models for participatory community-based media. (Rennie, 2006:136-137). Gumucio-Dagron outlined the advantages of participatory radio as a tool for social change as follows:

a) Cost effective
b) Pertinent in terms of language and content so is ideal for huge illiterate populations.
c) Relevant to local practices, traditions and cultures.
d) Sustainability is feasible once the initial investment is made although this is dependent on community participation.
e) Strong outreach and geographical coverage.

In the last decade, new technology has transformed mass media from a one-way monologic model to a converged interactive model, engaging audiences and enabling them to participate in radio and television through the use of telephone, email, mobile telephony and web-based internet. The changes have been rapid and continue to occur, yet in the Communication for
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Development field, there has not been a significant body of research on the potential impact of multi-media communications’ tools which might be effectively used in the development field (Myers, 2008:1).

Gumucio-Dagron suggests that convergence between radio and the internet provides a new strength to community radios and increases networking opportunities. IFAD\textsuperscript{24} concluded that ICTs may be a possible tool for economic, social and political empowerment.\textsuperscript{25} UNESCO has also commissioned research into the potential impact of ICTs for development.\textsuperscript{26} The stress here however is on ICTs as a tool for communication rather than as a machine for information.\textsuperscript{27}

The first stage of this pilot radio project focussed on how the making of the radio programme could contribute to the empowerment of the young participants. The second stage investigated how the transmission of their programme may introduce deeper levels of empowerment for the participants through the engagement of communities in the issues they have raised in the programme via the convergence of radio and ICTs – mainly mobile telephony.

\textsuperscript{24} The International Fund for Agricultural Development is a UN agency that finances agricultural development projects in the developing world.

\textsuperscript{25} These were the findings of a synthesis paper produced by IFAD at the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva, 2003. http://www.ifad.org/events/wsism/phase1/synthesis/index.htm

\textsuperscript{26} UNESCO is working with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) to analyse the potential for mobile-friendly audio or visual content generated by community media in developing country contexts. Source UNESCO News Feed, "UNESCO to Help Community Media with Mobile Content Production", May 14 2009;

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

‘Let’s protect these children now. It is urgent if we are to eliminate the problem of street children by educating the youths and parents on sex and family life.’ SMS message, Ngomuo.

‘I say it is the responsibility of the all the community to bring up, to love and care for the street children. They did not choose to be the way they are. We should not discriminate against them and we should help them.’ SMS message, Light Masama, Mboweni

I will evaluate the impact of the pilot radio programme in the context of convergence, community engagement and empowerment, against the three research questions outlined above which are repeated here:

a) Is radio an effective way of engaging communities in dialogue and solution-seeking about the issue of street children?

b) Would the use of ICTs alongside radio deepen and consolidate further the empowerment of the young Mkombozi programme-makers by enabling them to reach communities with their message through interactive media?

c) Would a new approach to ICTs and media enable Mkombozi to reach its goal of engaging more with communities?
a) Is radio an effective way of engaging communities in dialogue and solution-seeking about the issue of street children?

Radio is the largest information mass medium in Tanzania and, according to the African Media Development Initiative, ‘the most effective communication tool...at present’, as well as the most favoured medium for advertising (2006:14). According to the TAMPS 2005\(^{28}\), radio listenership is 95% in the areas where the study was conducted. A 2004 study by InterMedia (2004) found that 68% of the population had access to FM signals and 92% of the population listened to radio at least once a week. A number of radio development projects have been established in Tanzania, most notably Twende na Wakati, an HIV/AIDS edutainment soap opera produced by Radio Tanzania. (Singhal, A, & Rogers E, 2003: 298-303).

As in other parts of Africa, the media landscape is rapidly changing due to media deregulation and to the planned switch to digital platforms in 2012. In recent years, several private media houses have been established and the number of licensed radio stations has increased from 14 in 2000 to more than 47 in 2006 (TCRA, 2006c), 30 of which are regional stations broadcasting to the main towns of the different regions. Alongside the expansion of radio there has also been an increase in consumption of ICT products, especially mobile telephony. The 2009 TAMPS found that while only 2% of respondents use the internet, 63% make a mobile call and 45% send a text message. The survey also found that 9% listen to the radio on their mobile phones.

\(^{28}\) Tanzania All Media and Products Survey
Radio Sauti ya Injili in Kilimanjaro region, which broadcast the Mkombozi programme, is owned by the Lutheran Church in Tanzania and broadcasts both secular and non-secular programming. It was found to have 39% of audience share of stations broadcasting regionally (AMDI 2006:15). While in its early days on FM, coverage was limited to Moshi town only (1994), it now covers the whole of northern Tanzania with a listenership of 5 million people.29

Consistent with the above outline in earlier chapters, on the marginalisation of youth in Africa, Radio Sauti ya Injili has no programmes targeting young people, despite having a mixed audience aged between 20 and 40 years. Its radio programmes are widely listened to and regularly receive SMS responses from listeners of on average 30 per programme, according to the programmes editor Deo Mosha. Email responses are much lower, occasionally one or two for a programme. Its most popular programme is its ‘Salaams’ or ‘Greetings’ programme in which listeners are able to send messages to friends and relatives on air via written cards which are available at local outlets in the towns covered by the transmissions. The popularity of this programme suggests that radio is a powerful and way of connecting listeners with each other and particularly to those in the rural communities.

The aim of the programme-making process was largely to empower the young participants. In the previous chapter it was suggested that the young programme-makers were empowered through:

a) The act of giving them access to the programme-making process.

b) Allowing them to voice their own opinions and feelings.

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On a third level, they were empowered by engaging with the communities in which they lived and in turn empowered those communities by giving ordinary people a platform to express views. This was achieved by

c) Allowing the programme-makers to ask questions of people in the community about the issues that had driven them to the streets.

d) Giving the programme-makers the power to encourage people in the community to ask questions of themselves and of the authorities who should serve them.

This was evident in the making of two of the items for the programme: i) Deo’s ‘package’ where he interviewed street children and passers-by and ii) Charles’ interview with the head of social welfare, Agnes Urassa.

*Field Note: May 13th*

......I was surprised that the passers-by were so responsive. Tanzanians generally seem so passive, accepting anything their government throws up at them, I thought, unquestioningly. But I found that they had a lot to say in front of the mike... .... There was one woman Deo stopped. She was carrying green bananas on her head in a plastic bucket. She agreed to be interviewed but said that she didn’t have much time as she was late. So Deo was quick but after he ended the interview she carried on talking. She wouldn’t stop talking and he had to keep resuming the interview. She was getting more and more passionate as she spoke. She said she was a teacher and that we should go to her school and do some interviews with the girls there so that they could understand how strong they really are!

The interview referred to in the above field note was not used in Deo’s package because the interviewee was rather unfocussed and did not really answer his questions. However it was a
rather amusing and telling interchange since she had first said she did not have time then continued to talk, despite Deo’s efforts to end the interview, even grabbing the microphone at one point.

In other interviews, passers-by were able to express their views and call on members of the community to take action:

**INTERVIEW 1**

*Ali Juma:* I advise society that they should take pity on children and when they ask for help don’t be harsh on them. Don’t chase them away...I think they don’t give any assistance to street children at all. I advise them to have a heart for these children.

**INTERVIEW 2**

*Mama Shabbani:* For the street children I think all parents should try to bring up their own children so that there will be equality. People in society feel very bad when they see the children, the way they sleep, the way they go about looking for food. They feel very bad so we have to struggle to bring up our own children. Before bringing a child into the world you should think about how you are going to bring it up.

I believe that Deo was able to tap into the community and provoke a response that I, as a journalist and outsider, would not have been able to. As members of the same community they connected, while at the same time Deo’s role of interviewer, was likely to have
challenged in the minds of the interviewees, the prevailing negative stereotype of the street child.

In the brainstorming session, Charles said he wanted to ask a government minister what it was doing about the issue of street children. However, because of time constraints and potential bureaucratic difficulties, Mkombozi staff suggested he interview the head of the social welfare department at the District Commissioner’s office, Agnes Urassa. Staff from this department, work with Mkombozi in efforts to reunify children with their families. When we approached Mrs Urassa, she explained that she had a very big case load and that a key challenge was to persuade people to take responsibility for their children and help them tackle issues that drive children to the streets. She said counselling each of her clients can take hours and the results were often disappointing. When offered the opportunity to take part in the programme as interviewee and studio guest she immediately saw it as a way or reaching the wider community.

The passion and sincerity with which Mrs Urassa responded to Charles’ questions, challenged my own understandings of the authorities’ role in the street children issue. I had had negative perceptions of the authorities but Mrs Urassa’s contribution suggested that although the system had failed to deal with the issue, that there are some individuals working within the system who had the desire to promote change. A second observation was that there is a need for both bottom up and top down interventions, for a partnership between the grassroots and government. (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009:6-7; Waisbord, 2005: 79-80) This will be explored further in the concluding chapter.
b) Would the use of ICTs alongside radio deepen and consolidate further the empowerment of the young Mkombozi programme-makers by enabling them to reach communities with their message through interactive media?

During the programme-making process, I had had casual conversations with Tanzanian friends and relatives about the issues raised by the participants, and had been surprised to learn how little they knew, even though they are well-educated.

Field Note: May 1

When I came back from seeing Godfrey my husband’s niece and her husband were there. We had a brief conversation since they were leaving and I talked about some of the experiences of the boys at Mkombozi. (I’m uncomfortable calling them boys). Carolin and her husband, both educated Tanzanians, seemed genuinely surprised about the issues I mentioned – family breakdown, poverty, education, abuse. I guess they are part of the ‘community’ and they seemed to be unaware. Both Godfrey and Morgan talked about the need to raise awareness. I guess this is the ‘community’ that should be engaged."

There are questions about what we mean by ‘community’, (Howley, 2005: 5-6), and I was aware of the danger of making assumptions that this is a homogenized group of people who necessarily share the same perceptions and experiences (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001:24). This, I believe is one of the weaknesses of top-down approaches – a failure to understand the complexities and power struggles within communities. One of the strengths of the participatory process is that it can expose these complexities through dialogue. (Servaes & Malikhao, 2005:95)
Field Note: May 26

The programme went out yesterday and it was a great success. SMS messages were constantly coming in throughout the transmission - 22 in all and a few also rang into the studio. Listeners were able to ask questions of the guests. The mobile phone network for Zain and Tigo were down for most of yesterday and for half of the programme, so imagine if they were working fully!(I've also been getting beep calls from people on the SMS line). I spoke to a Tanzanian friend who listened and she said that this was ground-breaking in that young people are not often given a platform to voice their views. Also she herself was surprised at how the audience engaged with the topic. I too was surprised at how much people had to say.

In the days leading up to the broadcast, the radio station ran trials of the programme and solicited text messages from the audiences. The trail featured the voices of some street children describing their lives on the street. Messages started to come in even before the programme went on air, then during the transmission of the recorded programme there was a constant stream of text messages, which continued throughout the live studio discussion.

Presenter: ‘One person has sent a text message saying ‘I feels so sad and at the moment tears come dropping from my eyes hearing about the suffering of these children.’ Another one reads: ‘let’s forswear bestiality. Let’s take care of our children’, and another listener has sent a text saying, ‘I wish I could come to the radio to give my opinion in person.’

Presenter: ‘...well maybe next time we can give you that chance...’
In addition to the sheer volume of text messages, what was striking was the support the audience had for the street children and the common call for support and action from parents, the community and authorities.

‘As a community we are obliged to take care of the children in order to reduce the phenomenon of the street children. [Street children] should be given equal rights because they are also human beings.’ SMS message

‘[Children] centres would not solve the problems. Children should be brought up in a family so they feel family attachment.’ SMS message

‘When parents split up children lose direction. That’s when street children emerge. We should not discriminate against them.’ SMS message

‘The children did not ask to be called by such names. Pray, let the institutions and corporations feel it is their responsibility to help them’- SMS message. Goodluck Kimaro

‘The source of street children is the uncaring) society. I beg people to desist from cruelty and value other people’s children. You, step-mother, stop being cruel’- Heavenlight, Moshi.

This contrasted with the street children’s accounts of the negative attitudes towards them from people on the street. It would be necessary to conduct impact evaluation research in order to assess what the listeners’ previous views and perceptions had been before and after the broadcast. This will be discussed further in the concluding chapter.
Even after the end of the transmission, listeners continued to send text messages and to call the radio station. In further research there would be a need for analysis of the geographical location of the audience and whether they are in urban or rural areas in order to get a picture of the reach of the programme.

It should be noted that no emails were sent into the programme. This was not surprising given the low penetration of internet in Tanzania. (See Chapter 2). The dominance of the text messages over internet and phone calls to the programme, reflects the high ownership of mobile phones and the low cost of sending texts compared to making a phone call. Most people in Tanzania communicate by text message because of the high costs of voice calls. It is common practice for someone to ‘beep’ another person to ask them to call them, in order to avoid paying phone charges. (This widespread practice has led the mobile phone companies to offer free ‘call me’ texts to subscribers). According to Meyers (2004:1) there has been a ‘re-discovery’ of radio in the context of new ICTs, with technology making radio into a more of a two-way medium. Meyers suggests that radio can also help bridge the digital divide by providing a powerful tool for information dissemination and access, especially for hard-to-reach rural audiences. Combined with ICTs such as mobile telephony, dissemination via radio becomes dialogue and access becomes participation, movements that are more likely to bring change because it is rooted in communities. This matches in part, Rao’s vision of an information society of online and offline communities creating and governing information spaces (2005:275)

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Mkombozi has been struggling with the concept of community engagement but here it seems was a place where the community could express its views and engage in discussion about the issues and particularly the question of whose responsibility it is to promote a change in attitudes and actions towards street children. There were far too many text messages for the length of the programme, even though it overran by about 8 minutes.

The success of the programme in reaching out to and engaging the community of listeners, I believe, lay in the fact that it was made by the former street children themselves and not by outsiders representing them. Hearing their voices on air telling their own stories was a powerful way of grabbing listeners’ attention and raising awareness of these hidden issues. Involving one of the programme-makers in the live interactive studio discussion not only empowered him as an individual, it also connected the world and experiences of street children with theirs and debunked negative stereotypes of street children, as he was shown to be articulate, intelligent and capable of discussing the issues at the same level as the adults on the panel and the listeners. Charles’ mere presence and his ability to articulate about his situation and respond to questions challenged the widespread notion that children ‘should be seen and not heard’.

‘…There were many problems living on the streets, firstly hunger. We always were looking for food. Secondly, being beaten by the police – at night when we are finding places to sleep….’

Charles Godfrey, Mkombozi youth programme-maker, Tulinde Watoto Sasa studio discussion, May 25th, 2010

After the programme went out, Charles told me that at first he had been nervous but that he had relaxed and had felt more at ease as the discussion continued. He was visibly excited and
said that the process of making the programme and taking part in the discussion had been very good as it had given him confidence that he could achieve.

c) Would a new approach to ICTs and media enable Mkombozi to reach its new goal of engaging more with communities?

Field Note: May 26 cont......

Immediately after the transmission, the programme presenter, William (Mkombozi Director) and the head of Social Welfare proposed repeating the programme followed by another live studio session. Spontaneously they all agreed that there should be more regular programming. This was also suggested earlier this week by Charles and some of the staff at Mkombozi. ie there is a recognition of the power of this medium. (they could quite easily set up a small studio/workshop at Mkombozi.)

Gumucio-Dagron (2001:9) suggested that development organisations have ‘misused’ communication for the purpose of institutional visibility and seldom as a development device.

In interviews carried out with Mr Raj and with the communications officer, Anna Thor, prior to the programme-making process, it was clear that Mkombozi’s current approach to media and ICTs was largely similar to that outlined by Gumucio-Dagron above (although the organisation had previously used radio drama as a forum for discussion on one of its projects. This was successful but not repeated). The process of self-reflection within the organisation and its open cooperation with the research project, also indicated its willingness to consider new approaches. Following the transmission, I conducted a second feedback interview with
Mr Raj, in which he enthused about the idea of having regular radio programming as part of
Mkombozi’s empowerment and engagement strategy.

FEEDBACK INTERVIEW: WILLIAM RAJ

Rosalind: Do you think this is something you could possibly explore for The future in terms of using interactive l radio more in your work?

William: Of course....really , definitely. We did a little bit in the past but probably not in the right way. I find that this is a fantastic way because we have been struggling with this whole community engagement thing.... I think for Mkombozi , people do listen a lot to radio nowadays and people are reading newspapers more ..you might even influence the other media in a way how to do this, bringing development issues to the forefront without complications. I think definitely Mkombozi is going to use and we would also need some technical expertise but otherwise I think this is a very powerful way. In fact I was thinking of particular target areas, if there is any way....those who don’t have radios, is there a way these can be heard in public places?

Conclusion

While these are early days, this pilot project has opened the way for new thinking within the organisation on ways to reach communities and help them find their own solutions to the issues that drive children to the street. In the process of the programme production and transmission, it became clear that the concept of community engagement is a real and achievable goal. However, this will require further research into the role that ICT may play,
in improving radio as a participatory tool. Text messaging has already become a part of the
culture and has to be explored as an effective way of reaching communities. Developments in
mobile technology such as radio streaming may be a way forward, as will radio streaming
and podcasting on the internet. Researchers, NGOs and donors will need to be abreast of
future media trends in order to maximise the potential.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: PARTICIPATORY RADIO FOR SOCIAL CHANGE?

‘For more than fifty years radio has been the most appealing tool for participatory communication and development. It is without a doubt the communication tool most widely spread throughout the world and has always been the ideal medium for change.’ Gumucio-Dagron (2001:12)

Aim

The purpose of this concluding chapter is to bring together the threads of the discourse on the previous pages in a review of the pilot radio project in terms of the notion of social change. I will also reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of my research approach and suggest how Mkombozi may be able to build on the idea of participatory radio as one of a variety of communication tools it can develop to achieve its youth empowerment, community engagement and social change objectives. This chapter is divided into a section on findings and analysis, reflection - the way forward.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The process of helping the Mkombozi youth make this radio programme was a way of exploring in a qualitative, experimental way the research question outlined in the introduction:
Can participatory radio, converged with new ICTs such as mobile telephony and internet, be used as effective tools to help bring the sustainable change desired by Mkombozi?

As with many of the key concepts explored in this thesis, defining social change is a minefield, measuring it even more so. The Rockefeller Foundation report on communication for social change defines it as...

“.......a process of public and private dialogue, through which people define who they are, what they want and how they can get it... [it] empowers individuals and communities. It engages people in making decisions that enhance their lives...”

Such change, say Tufte & Mefalopulos (2009:55), may be a process that happens on multiple levels:

a) The level of the individual and his or her family.

b) Community level – neighbourhood, village, municipality, district

c) National level - government

One radio show will not promote change, however there are indications that communication initiatives like this one, if repeated on a regular basis, may set social transformations in motion (Waisbord, 2005:86). One of those indicators was the sense of ownership which was spawned by the participatory process, which had the potential to transform the participants – both the young people and the community – into agents of change.

31 www.communicationforsocialchange.org
Gumucio-Dagron’s study of participatory communication for social change (2001:26), stresses the need of a sense of ownership and the need to understand the cultural complexities of communities in order for change to happen. In the process of making the programme, I witnessed a growing sense of ownership among the young programme-makers and realised that this could only be achieved through the participatory process:

Field Note: May 15TH 2010

Today I went to Mkombozi to mix the drama we had recorded on Wednesday. Yesterday I edited the scenes and began thinking about sound effects. I had assumed that I would do the editing as it would be faster and at home I got quite carried away because I had forgotten how good it is to create something for radio. I recorded the rain and some barking dogs and found some BBC archive of chickens. I spent hours doing this – I was unconscious of the time and went to bed at about 1.30am. As it happens, quite fortuitously as it turns out, I didn’t save the sound effects properly last night so they had to be done again with them at Mkombozi. In effect I handed back the ‘power’ to them and I think this deepened their attachment to what they had created. They really got into it and were in deep and lengthy discussions about what sounds to use and where. What is telling is that they chose to use the sounds differently to how I had done the night before. They really paid attention to detail and replayed scenes over and over. There was one scene where they spotted a mistake in the dialogue which they insisted on correcting. Because the editing was proving difficult they decided to record the whole scene again. They worked very well together, discussing, revising, experimenting and were quite passionate about the finished product. My role was to simply follow their directions. This may be the relationship one should aim at in a participatory programme where the so-called
empowering Tanzanian youth

expert is on the project. ie the expert should acts as facilitator, not ‘controller’. There
is a strong desire to take over but I have managed to quell this and the result is a
finished product which they ‘own’.

The two sentences I have highlighted in bold, underline how participation engendered a sense
of ownership, which in turn gave them the power to create something that was relevant to
them and the listeners rather than something that made sense to me.

We can review the potential for social change of the pilot radio programme by relating it to
the levels of social change outlined by Tufte & Mefalopulos (2009:55)

Level of individual and his or her family

Earlier chapters have shown how the programme-makers were empowered individually in the
making of the programme but also how they recognised it as an opportunity to influence
change:

I want to think of something that can help – maybe have a joke but get the message
across, perform something that is entertainment but with a message. I feel proud to
have this platform. It should be monthly. I think it can help the government so they
know what people think. We are youth. We can present things that you can see.
Maybe we can get solutions to problems in order to have stability of development.

Deo Antipasi, Mkombozi youth programme-maker

Community level

The programme gave young Mkombozi producers a forum to provoke listeners to think about
the issues and the solutions.
Empowering Tanzanian youth

..... it was so good to hear that people feel for the children. I think it is good to hear from many of them who said that they really feel bad about it and some of them even said that they want to do something, ‘what can we do?’ William Raj, feedback interview.

National level

The participation of the head of Social Work, Agnes Urassa, indicated the potential for using the programme for advocacy and holding the government to account to the wider public. Mrs Urassa was also clear on how participatory radio of this kind could help the authorities reach communities in order to promote changes on an individual level.

‘....I was very, very happy to be a participant on the programme due to the nature of the job I am doing, it is very important and very crucial to make the community aware of the social problems which are affecting the people.....’ Agnes Urassa, feedback interview.

REFLECTION – THE WAY FORWARD

Integrated approach

While the concept of participation was extremely successful in the experiment, there is also a need to explore how a mix of top-down and bottom up approaches may also have a place in such a project. Grassroots participation, I believe, remains the foundation of effective social change but that does not mean excluding expertise, government, information and knowledge dissemination. Servaes echoes this point:

Participation does not imply that there is no longer a role for development specialists, planners, and institutional leaders. It only means that the viewpoint of the local public groups is considered before the resources for development projects are allocated and distributed and that
My technical expertise as a radio journalist was needed to bring the project to fruition. Likewise, Mkombozi’s experience and knowledge also provided vital input into the project and research. In going forward, one of the key issues, therefore, as outlined by Tufte & Mefalopulos is to define the approach to participation by asking the following questions (2009:4).

1. What is participation to each stakeholder?
2. Why is participation important in the development process and for whom is it important?
3. Who is supposed to participate?
4. When is participation relevant and for whom?
5. What are the constraints to participation and according to whom?
6. How should the participatory process be evaluated?

**ICTs**

The use of text messaging in the radio programme was an effective way of engaging audiences. Further research needs to be done on how to use new technologies, not solely as an information tool but as a means to promote dialogue. The use of new technologies also extends to the Mkombozi website which could be more effective with more interactive elements and input from Mkombozi youth and the community.

It is likely that in the coming years, more Tanzanians will begin to have access to the internet because of increased ISP competition, the arrival of the fibre-optic cable in East Africa and
rapid advancements in mobile telephony. If Mkombozi wants to reach the grassroots, it will need to consider how Tanzanians will access the internet, whether they will be content to be passive recipients of information and how the power of radio to promote social change, can be maximised through convergence with new technologies.

The way forward, I believe, is for the experts to ‘let go’ of the reins and to let the people they serve, speak for themselves.

Field note: May 22nd

As we were finishing recording the links, Deo suddenly decided that they should end the programme with a rap. So he hurriedly wrote one. At first he asked one of the boys to sing with him. Then for some reason the boy went to call Godfrey, who did it with Deo. They took the words of the Mkombozi campaign ‘Tulinde Watoto Sasa’ as the chorus of the song. This is also the name Deo decided to give to the programme. When I asked him to think of a name, he couldn’t at first and asked me and then Simon if we would suggest a name. We told him it wasn’t our programme but his so he should think of the name. He agonised for a few moments then suddenly he came up with the idea of using the campaign phrase. We couldn’t have made a better choice........

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APPENDIX

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

These interviews will be with street children who have engaged with a Mkombozi project. The main topics that will be covered will be as follows: family, education, income/poverty, street life, Mkombozi. The aim will be to cover all these topics but to allow the conversation to flow naturally although questions below may be used as prompts. (Tachi 2003: 63).

a) About you

What is your name?
How old are you?
Where are you living?
Who are you living with?
Do you have shelter?
Do you have water?
Do you have electricity?

b) About your family

Do you have family around here?
Where are they living?
Do you have brothers and sisters?
What kind of responsibilities did you have at home?
What kind of home does the family live in?
Is there water/electricity?
Do they have a radio/television?
Does anyone in the family have a phone?
Do they read newspapers?

c) Your education

Did you go to primary? Secondary?
What was school like?
Did you enjoy school?
Were there difficulties at school?
What were you good at doing?
When did you stop going to school?
Were you able to continue as long as you wanted?
Would like to have stayed in school longer? If so why?
Do you think school is important?
If you had the opportunity to go back to school, what would you do in life?

d) Street Life

How did you end up on the street?
Did you plan to leave home?
Why did you leave home?
Do you ever go back?
Would you like to go back?
Are you in contact with your parents/siblings?
Do you see your parents?
Why haven’t you gone back home?
What do your family think about you?
What does the community think of street children?
What are the worst aspects of living on the streets?
What are the dangers?
Do you have friends on the street?
More than anything what would you like?
Did people help you when you were on the street?
What kind of help should people give you?
Who do you think should help you?
Can you tell me about a typical day on the street for you?
What are the worst aspects of living on the streets?
What are the dangers?
How did you cope with life on the streets?
Where did you sleep?
How did you stay safe?
What was the attitude of the police towards you?
Why did you stay on the street?
What would you tell people about your life?
How did you get money?
How much could you get in a day?
How did you survive on what you got?

e) Mkombozi/youth

How did you find out about Mkombozi?
What does Mkombozi do?
Did other street children talk about Mkombozi?
What was your first impression of Mkombozi?
What do you like/dislike?
Has it helped you?
What would you tell people about Mkombozi?
What are people’s attitude towards young people?
Are young people able to express what they think?
Empowering Tanzanian youth

What should the government be doing for young people?

What should young people do for themselves?

What’s life like for young people in Tanzania (Moshi)

What opportunities are there for young people?

f) Communication

What communication resources are open to you? e.g. media content, technologies, skills?

Who do you communicate with and why?

How do you understand the way these resources can be used?

How do you find out what is going on?

Do you talk about news to people?

Do you get to listen to the radio?

If you were allowed to speak on the radio what would you talk about?

Do you know anyone with a mobile phone?

Do you ever text people or receive texts?

Have you ever used the Internet?

In practice the range of questions asked will depend on the flow and turns of the conversation. They are largely open-ended to elicit elaboration and will move from the general to the more specific and sensitive. If the conversation takes an interesting turn the researcher should be prepared to go with the flow and adjust or add topics as they come up. (Tachi et al. 2003: 66) A key aim will be to encourage a rapport between researcher and respondent through the researcher being responsive, flexible and a careful listener.