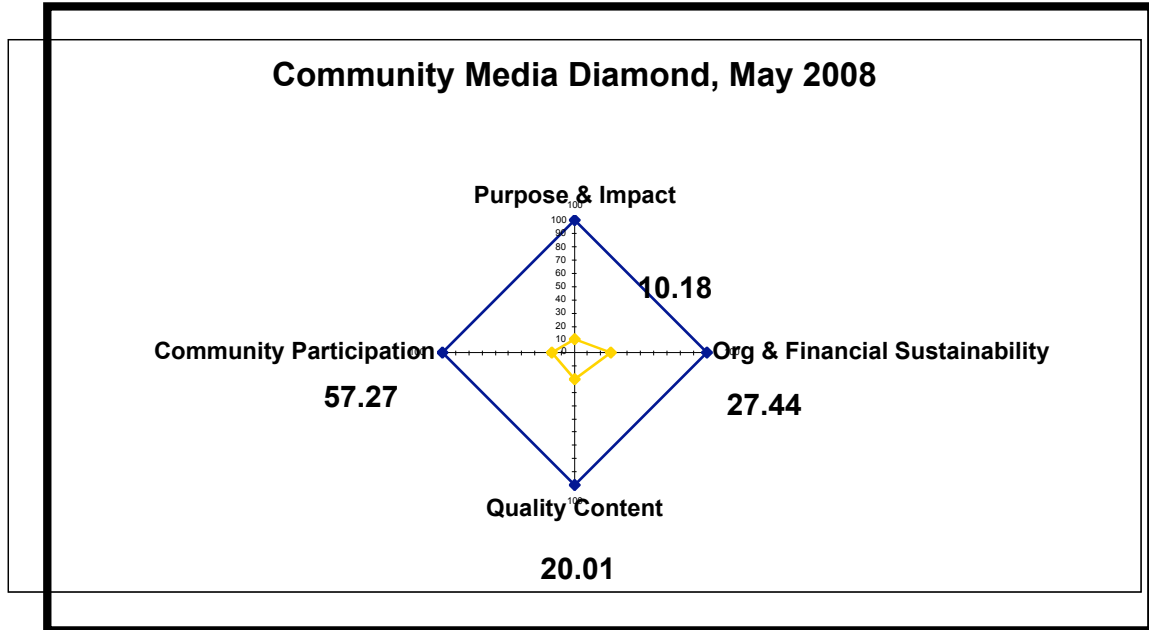


Zebediela Community Radio

Community Media Index



SUMMARY BASELINE *May 2007*

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1. Introduction

Zebediela Community Radio participated in the Community Media Index (CMI) assessment on the 26th and 27th of May, 2008. The CMI is a participatory assessment and action-planning tool used by community media projects to enhance their ability to reflect and grow. It empowers projects to ‘index’ themselves, creating goals and benchmarks.

The application of the CMI in the South African Community Radio Sector was initiated by the National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) as part of their commitment to enabling sustainability in the Sector.

The CMI assessment was a structured opportunity to enhance the Zebediela Community Radio’s ability to access information about other members of the community and share information about themselves in order to improve their self-awareness and ability to reflect, and thus enhance their performance. Greater dialogue among stakeholders enhances transparency, accountability, networking, and partnership.

A number of research tools were used to collect information and to facilitate a participatory assessment to enable maximum learning for the Station and its stakeholders. Information was collected from the Station management using a semi-structured interview, and from the community in a participatory one-day workshop supported by a survey completed by all workshop participants. The assessors also conducted a review of the Station’s documentation and systems.

Overall the Station scored 18.64% on the Community Media Index. On the four dimensions the Station scored as follows:

Purpose & Impact	10.18%
Community Participation	16.94%
Org & Financial Sustainability	27.44%
Quality Content	20.01%

Based on this assessment the report makes a series of recommendations of improvements that can be made to the Station's performance.

As a consequence of its action-research philosophy, the CMI assessment seeks to provide information that can easily be translated into practical actions by the Station and stakeholders. Zebediela Community Radio engaged in the CMI process with an openness and willingness to learn. This was critical for the success of the process as it is not intended to expose or shame the Station but rather to offer the Station and its stakeholders an opportunity to reflect honestly on the current reality in order to improve the Station's performance in the future. As such this is a baseline CMI and it is hoped that through future assessments significant improvements will be tracked.

2. What is the Community Media Index?

The Community Media Index (CMI) is a participatory assessment and action-planning tool used by community media projects to enhance their ability to reflect and grow. Projects can implement the CMI themselves as a self-assessment tool, involve stakeholders from their Development Eco-System and use the CMI as a participatory learning and information-sharing tool, or invite an external agency to apply the CMI as a form of external evaluation.

As a consequence of its action-research philosophy, the CMI assessment seeks to provide information that can easily be translated into practical actions by stakeholders.

In short the CMI is envisaged as a lens – a common language or perspective. It can be applied in specific contexts once-off (as a strategic planning tool) or over periods of time (for planning and evaluation). In specific contexts it empowers projects to 'index' themselves, creating goals and benchmarks.

This process is not an academic initiative, nor is it aimed primarily at national policy makers or institutions engaged in creating an enabling environment for the community media sector. While the information generated may well be of value to policy makers, service providers, and development planners, the primary beneficiaries of the initiative are the media projects and the serviced communities themselves.

The CMI offers projects an opportunity to create themselves as learning organisations. They can embrace the opportunity to focus their energies through planning and then reflect on their activity with a view to extracting lessons and improving future performance. The CMI delivers an action agenda for strengthening the project.

3. CMI Findings & Conclusions

Overall the Station scored Zebediela Community Radio 18.64% on the Community Media Index. The following sections unpack the four dimensions of the Index.

Purpose & Impact: 10.18

This dimension addresses a project’s strategic assessment of their environment, the development of a vision and strategic goal, the extent to which this vision informs the project’s activities, and the extent to which the project has actualised its vision in the period under review. Zebediela Community Radio scored as follows:

	<u>WEIGHT</u>	<u>%</u>
Vision & Mission clear	20	17
Vision/Mission recorded	4	20
Vision/Mission relevant to community needs	5	35
Vision/Mission inspiring and measurable	3	15
Participatory strategic planning takes place	3	10
Annual targets are set to realise Vision	5	0
Vision & Mission Owned	30	10
Community participation in developing/reviewing Vision/Mission	5	15
Vision/Mission known to stakeholders	5	10
Vision/Mission shared by stakeholders	15	8
Activities are informed by Vision/Mission	5	10
Social/Community Impact	50	8

Data is collected to assess impact	10	0
Strategic evaluation takes place	10	10
Progress is made towards realising Vision	30	10

While the Station has recorded a Vision statement and Objectives, neither the Station management, nor community members were able to articulate these fully. The statements are not displayed or readily available and have not been reviewed since their drafting.

Internal stakeholders placed an emphasis on the role of the Station in increasing the health of the community and also identified entertainment and education as focuses.

Community members mentioned health but emphasised a broader developmental purpose for the Station with reference to developing the socio-economic status, fighting poverty, literacy, small business, promoting equality of men and women, communicating human rights, and regeneration of moral fibre, amongst others.

Zebediela is an impoverished rural area and as such all of these purposes are relevant to the surrounding communities.

However the Station does not have formal strategic plan to achieve these objectives and ensure that programming and other activities support these objectives. Further, no formal evaluation takes place to assess whether these objectives are being reached.

Station management were confident that their objectives were being reached. They cited the partnering of the local clinic to broadcast 30 minutes a day of health news as well as partnering the NCRF and Dept. of Health in delivering health programming, and involving community by giving airtime to teachers to focus on the curriculum, and giving airtime to traditional healers and traditional leaders. Of the 20 participants in the community workshop, all but 3 believed that the Station was achieving its purpose.

However a review of the Station schedule demonstrates that the vast majority of programming is committed to playing music.

Station management claimed the vision/mission statements were clear and measurable and progress could be measured because of falling HIV/AIDS infections. However they are yet to record that these indicators are in fact tracked systematically.

In the absence of agreed objectives and targets, or agreed measures of these targets, it is not possible to assess if the Station is in fact having its desired social impact.

Community Participation: 16.94

This dimension looks at the degree to which community stakeholders participate at all levels of the project. It reviews the ownership model, participation in management, planning, reporting, reflecting and editorial/programming. This dimension makes an assessment of the extent of the projects engagement with its Development Eco-System, it looks at stakeholder mapping, partnerships and collaborations. The Station scored as follows:

	<u>WEIGHT</u>	<u>%</u>
Participation in Governance	50	19
Participatory AGM	10	33
Democratic Governance	12	34
Participatory Strategic Planning	8	10
Input into Policy	6	10
Wide Reporting of Progress	4	5
Participatory Evaluation	10	8
Participation in Management & Implementation	30	16
Participatory Operational Planning	5	8
Participatory Operational Monitoring	4	5
Organisations Partner in Practice	8	18
Participation of Individuals with Skills	6	10
On/Off		
Air Campaigns	7	30
Participation in Programming	20	13
Participation in Schedule Design	6	10
Participation in Show Design	6	10
Representative Sources	3	20
Participatory Evaluation of Shows	5	15

The Station is registered as a Section 21 company with a democratically elected Board. The community participates directly in the governance of the Station by participating in the General Meetings and electing the Station's Board.

These General Meetings, called Annual General Meetings, only take place every three years. While Station management asserts that these meetings are attended by over 100 people and are representative of the community, none of the participants in the CMI community workshop had attended a General Meeting.

While Station management claimed that a report on Board meetings, Station operations, minutes of meetings, and audited financial statements were presented at these meetings, the existence of these reports could not be verified.

These General Meetings last for about 3 to 4 hours. It is difficult to discern the degree to which over 100 people could engage constructively with these reports and make informed inputs into policy and planning, as well as conduct an election in this space of time.

While organisations working with disadvantaged groups within the community identified by the Station management (ill, unemployed, and the disabled) were invited to the General Meetings, of seven Board members only one is disabled, no other marginal groups are represented.

The Board meets quarterly and when they are needed to provide oversight and governance to the Station. Station policies (the programming schedule, finance policy, language policy, and HR policy) are developed by the management and approved by the Board.

No Board members participated in the CMI so information relating to the state of the Board could not be verified.

No intentional mapping of the community takes place. In between General Meetings the community is engaged through the traditional leaders.

At the CMI community workshop none of the participants focused on aspects of community participation in governance or non-programming related aspects of management. There is no evidence of community members participating in aspects of

operational planning, financial management, human resource management, or project management. All management functions are performed by Station staff reporting to the Board.

The Station staff does all show and schedule design. Stakeholders participate as sponsors/advertisers or information sources called into the studio to respond to presenters' questions.

In this regard the Station management and workshop participants identified a number of partnerships including the Dept. of Agriculture, Dept. of Health (national and provincial), Dept. of Education, the Premier's Office, Workers World Media Productions, SAPs, the Taxi Association, local government, ZB Citrus (the farm), and local CBOs.

Within examples given there is a clear emphasis on state institutions with a limited participation of national civil society groups and local business. Local individuals are predominantly drawn from the middle class strata (traditional leaders, police, nurses & teachers) and the identified disadvantaged groups do not feature.

Various on-air campaigns have been run including Polio Week, 16 Days of Activism, Women's Day, and Youth Day. No off-air campaign or community coverage takes place because the Station does not have outside broadcast capacity.

While all staff and presenters come from the community, ordinary community members participate in implementation only through phone-ins. Farm workers visit the Station daily to select songs that will be played over speakers in the farm in the afternoon.

Organisational and Financial Sustainability: 27.44

This dimension assesses the strength and functionality of an organisation's systems including governance and decision taking, human resource development, financial management, and critically, the ability of the project to develop and grow different income streams. The Station scored as follows:

	<u>WEIGHT</u>	<u>%</u>
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Strategic Management	15	16
Strategic Planning	5	10
Effective Governance	5	27
Effective Partnership Development	5	10
People Management	20	26
Healthy Team Dynamic & Remuneration	8	32
HR Policy Supports Staff	6	22
Staff Development	6	23
Financial Management	25	28
Financial Policy Gives Guidance	8	25
Maintenance of Financial Systems	12	33
Asset Management	5	22
Project Management	15	27
Projects are Planned and Implemented	7	34
Projects are Systematically Managed	5	30
Community Participates in Project Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation	3	5
Income Generation	25	36
Balanced & Diverse Income Streams	9	34
Planning for Income Generation	3	39
Annual Income Targets are Met	9	40
Station is Marketed	4	27

Structured strategic planning and evaluation does not take place (see Purpose & Impact above). Governance is performed by a Board elected at - and reporting to - a General Meeting every three years. While the Station management assert that the Board meets at least every quarter to oversee operations and adopt policies, no record of these meetings nor Board member was available to verify this.

The management team of 5 people work well together. They are versatile and can cover for each other. While an organogram exists, there are no signed contracts and staff is not registered in terms of the labour law. Staff salaries (currently stipends) are seen as being in major need of improvement.

While the Station management asserts that lots of training takes place, it is ad hoc, in

response to what is offered by other institutions. There is no training plan or budget. Staff appraisal and planning only takes place in weekly staff meetings.

There is a small budget, about R20 000 per month, for the project, covering the phone, stipends for all staff and petty cash. The management teams asserts that finances are audited and reported annually. However no audit financial reports could be presented.

The citrus farm provides the building, electricity and the initial studio equipment. There is no asset register and equipment at the Station is not adequate to meet the Station's needs. Dust is a key factor contributing to the decay of assets.

The Station has a rate card and profile. They market themselves via a promo on-air but have nothing off-air. Programme sponsorships and advertisements come from the citrus farm, Dept. of Health, Dept. of Agriculture, NCRF, Dept. Of Transport, Premier's Office, Dept. of Education, Provincial Treasury. There are only a few local advertisers (e.g funeral undertakers, Cash Build). Advertising comes from Motswako and the NCRF Hub. Income is not consistent.

As with community participation, in examples given there is a clear emphasis on state institutions with a limited contribution of national civil society groups and local business to financial sustainability. Local community groups do not contribute at all.

There is evidence that the Station complies with ICASA's requirement that logs of adverts and records of programming be maintained and submitted. However these records are not kept in an orderly fashion and their accuracy or currency could not be assessed.

Quality content: 20.01

This dimension assesses the extent to which the project's editorial/programming meets the information and expression needs of its community. It will assess the editorial/programming in terms of the representation of women and marginal groups in the community, bias towards institutions holding political, social, or economic power, the application of media ethics, accuracy and fairness in reporting, the spread of stories and

sources, quality of presentation, and the extent to which the programming upholds and advances the values contained in the South African Bill of Rights. The Station scored as follows:

	<u>WEIGHT</u>	<u>%</u>
Appropriate Format	15	15
Variety & Spread of Formats	10	18
Participating Format Design	5	10
Appropriate Sources & Topics	30	17
Variety and Representative Sources	9	20
Campaigns around Themes and Issues	6	20
Local Content Promoted	6	25
Well-Researched Content	9	8
Independent, Balanced & Fair	30	26
Independent	10	40
Balanced & Fair	20	19
Technical Quality	15	26
Clear Voice and Sound	6	30
Useful Equipment	4	13
Staff are Skilled for Broadcasting	5	30
Community Participation	10	10
Participatory Production of Shows	5	15
Participatory Feedback Mechanisms	2	10
Coverage of Community Events	3	0

While the Station's purpose speaks to health and other aspects of social and economic development, the Station's schedule is dominated by music programming. There is no community participation in the development of the schedule.

Presenters prepare for their shows by researching using newspapers and the internet on their cell phones. The Station reports news from the police and traditional leaders and staff bring news from their villages. The Station has no music library and no resource library to use in research shows. They have no stringers or reporters and get most of their news from SABC or the commercial internet news sites (Media 24 and IOL).

Beyond health the Station aims to entertain playing music with impact – that is, music with messages relevant to the community (including education, children, strengthening democracy). Prominent artists are interviewed on the Station.

The Station promotes education by giving airtime to teachers to focus on the curriculum. Students call in with questions. They also partner the local clinic to broadcast 30 min a day of health news as well as partnering the NCRF and Dept. of Health in delivering health programming. While they use medical experts, the presenters develop the topics themselves.

According to the Station management programming is balanced and fair. Diverse views are given airtime. Complaints are made to the programming manager and a record is maintained. However corrections are not made on air immediately and no code of conduct is displayed at the Station.

The significant dependence of the Station on government advertising, sponsorship and information sources suggests that the Station may not be as balanced and fair as the management asserts.

The equipment is adequate for basic broadcasting and does not give trouble. However the transmitter is not 100% functional and the Station only has two field recorders to cover 28 villages. There is no outside broadcasting equipment or production studio and only one studio phone line.

While all staff and presenters come from the community, ordinary community members participate in implementation only through phone-ins. Farm workers visit the Station daily to select songs that will be played over speakers in the farm in the afternoon.

Community members that participate in production tend to come from state institutions like government departments and local government or middle class professions (teachers, nurses, policemen). Disadvantaged groups identified by the Station do not participate in programming.

4. CMI Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the above assessment.

Purpose & Impact

1. The Station should conduct a participatory planning process where it should engage staff, Board, partners, and community members in achieving the following:
 - a. Review and clarify Stations objectives presented in its founding documents
 - b. Identify practical and realistic strategies and activities for reaching them
 - c. Agree on a set of annual targets and agree how these targets will be measured.

2. The Station should then display these statements, and plans in the Station and announce them on-air to popularise the Station's purpose with the community and invite the community to hold them accountable.

3. The Station should conduct a participatory evaluation process at the end of the agreed period where it should engage staff, Board, partners, and community members in achieving the following:
 - a. Assess where targets have been met and missed
 - b. Assess whether strategic statements are still relevant
 - c. Draw lessons from the period's experience and agree on practical and realistic strategies and activities for reaching their objectives
 - d. Agree on a new set of annual targets and agree how these targets will be measured.

Community Participation

1. Disadvantaged groups in the community should be systematically engaged with and encouraged to participate in the life of the Station including governance and the production of programming.

2. The Station should develop mechanisms beyond its General Meetings to include

community members in governance. These should include ways for stakeholders to participate in strategic planning and evaluation as well as to receive and engage with organisational reports on an ongoing basis. At a minimum, General Meetings should take place annually and should be prepared for and structured to enable meaningful engagement with critical aspects of the Station.

3. The Station's documents should be stored in an orderly manner and staff and community members should have easy access to all reports.
4. Community members and partners should be engaged in project management and project design from the conceptualisation of shows through to evaluating the impact of projects.
5. The Station should develop the capacity to conduct outside broadcasts and other ways to facilitate community participation beyond the confines of its studio.

Financial and Organisational Sustainability

1. As stated above, General Meetings should take place annually and should be prepared for and structured to enable meaningful engagement with critical aspects of the Station, including engaging with evaluations of strategic planning and adopting new plans.
2. Financial records must be properly maintained and audited annually.
3. Greater income should be generated to remunerate staff adequately.
4. The Station should conduct a mapping of potential sources of income and develop a marketing strategy with measurable targets to increase income.
5. To ensure the Station's independence, income from local CBOs and business and well as national NGO streams should be explored.

Quality content

1. The Station should rework its programming schedule to ensure that content serves the objectives of the Station by paying greater attention to issues of social and economic development.
2. The Station should diversify its sources of information to include more local community members and non-governmental perspectives.
3. The Station should involve ordinary community members more in production. They should explore the possibility of training people as stringers to provide local news and perspectives for the Station.
4. The Station needs to develop and maintain a music library and a resource centre to keep material for presenters to do research in preparation for their shows.
5. The Station should ensure its transmitter works properly and invest in more field recorders, outside broadcasting capacity, and more studio phone lines to support the participation of the community in production.

ENDS