



Investigating the Participatory Role of Community Media in Enabling An Active Civil Society: A Review on a Case Study of Izwilethemba FM

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Abstract

Community media has been the voice of the voiceless in our society, providing a platform for those that have dreams and hope of uplifting their lives through the community media medium, by not only working in these platforms but also by being a voice for change in society and providing that change to those that require assistance. However, the challenges, the medium has constantly encountered like the financial constraints and the shortages of equipment, that has caused a hindrance in growing the community medium.

The study aims to determine whether community media plays a participatory role in enabling an active civil society, using a case study of Izwi'lethemba FM. 10 questionnaires were administered to residences of Parkside and Duncan Village area using purposive and convenience sampling method. Key findings concerning the participatory function of local radios in society. Majority of respondents indicated that the community media still needs to involve more youth development programmes and community engagement.

Keywords: Izwi'lethemba FM; Community media; Community development; Civil society

Introduction

This study aims to observe the participation of community-based media in developmental activities within the Buffalo City Metropolitan (BCM) community. It seeks to investigate whether or not community-based media in Buffalo City Metro plays a significant role in developing local communities and in enforcing active participation by members of the community; using a case study of Izwilethemba FM.

Faisal and Alhassan [1] report that development through community-based media in local communities is achieved by the local media by promoting the sharing of knowledge and assisting people to make informed decisions on critical issues. Jallof [2] states that local radio stations will only reach their development objectives if their on air shows are well investigated, structured and presented carefully with by taking into consideration what the listeners will learn and absorb from the broadcasted programmes.

This research study shows the meaning behind hyperlocal media by focusing on a specific area in BCM. Hyperlocal media is focused on the geographical community with its primary focus directed on the concerns of the population in that area [3]. The local community is empowered through following an ongoing research cycle of observing, planning and reflecting which will be conducted during the research process.

It is important to know how general activities of the media can strengthen and unite each member of the community. Participation from those general activities empowers the local people, it shows acknowledgment of their contribution to the development processes of the community [4].

Background to the study

This research uses Izwi'lethemba FM as a case study. Izwilethemba FM is a community-based radio station in Parkside, East London, an area with a population of around 2,768 people and 599 households; residing mostly 87% of coloured people followed by Black Africans with 10% and then the rest of the population are Indians or Asians, Whites, and others. A language that is more popular in the area is Afrikaans followed by English and isiXhosa being the third most used language in Parkside. The area is also dominated by young people between the ages of 20-24 and rated as being the highest number of people in the area [5].

Izwi'lethemba FM officially opened in September 2012 by

Dr. Apostle Z.A Ntiwane with the mission of developing the station to become measures for social fairness by being a trusted source of information about Christianity, music as well as the cultural life of the community and heal the nation through the word of God.

The station is a Christian radio station, broadcasting not only religious believers but also ordinary people from the neighbourhood. The study wants to find out exactly how the station accommodates different people from society. As published in the March 2016 RAMS data, the station has around 56,000 listeners.

According to Hobbs [6], local media can show support for community development by making the community understand the history and progression of discrimination and give them the necessary standpoint to make logical choices to emerge from it, with that being said, individuals have the right to take part in democratic processes and shape their future locally and nationally.

Fombad and Jiyane [7] report that local radio is the preferred medium in communities based on its affordability and accessibility to community members and plays an important part in serving the needs of the community where it operates.

Aims and objectives of the study

This study aims to establish how Parkside-based, East London community radio station Izwi'lethemba FM contributes to influencing social change within the Parkside community. The station claims that it is committed to becoming an instrument for social justice and acts as a voice of the community, with the main focus of healing the nation through the word of God. The station exists and operates in a community facing many socio-cultural issues such as gangsterism; poverty as well as high unemployment rates. Parkside community is neighboured by the infamous Duncan Village community, an old East London Township with a rapid population increase due to the influx of people occupying the area by living in informal settlements [8]. Similar to Parkside, these two areas are well-known for the high rate of crime and unemployment. Izwi'lethemba FM is surrounded by communities, that are in desperate need of social and economic change. The question, therefore, remains as to whether or not, community media, particularly, in this case, a community radio, has any role to play in addressing such social ills.

There are five community radio stations in Buffalo City Metro. The majority of areas in BCM are confronted with social challenges especially the township areas, amongst other role players in shaping communities are community radio stations. They also have a role to play in society, just to make a difference and not be seen as a community radio station that operates like the commercial stations that seek to make profit-driven decisions only. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate whether community radio plays a role in promoting community development.

The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) states that the role played by community radio stations at the grassroots level through development programmes is

significant. Duncan and Seleokane [9] indicate that in South Africa, community broadcasting media has to do with broadcasting controlled and initiated by members of the community to empathise their needs, concerns, or aspirations without interference dependent on the regulation of the Independent Broadcasting Authority.

A report by the South African Audience Research Foundation [10], identified categories of local radios, about four unique groupings in South Africa: The first type, operates for geographical areas like those communities that have been disadvantaged during the apartheid era; The second type is a campus-based radio, those that are active on university and college campuses; The third type is, the religious stations like the Muslim, and Christian radio stations; Lastly the fourth type targets cultural and ethnic communities like the South Africans of Chinese, Portuguese, Greek origin and the Afrikaner communities [7].

Izwi'lethemba FM falls under the first and third category as a religious Christian radio station led by "The Calvary Power of the Cross Church" in the Parkside community, one of the communities that have been disadvantaged under the apartheid regime.

Izwilethemba FM geographically serves the needs of the community of Parkside and Duncan Village; it also has a role as a Christian radio to serve the needs of Christians by offering the community the word of God through the airwaves. The study wants to understand exactly how the station manages to serve social needs while it is focused on the religious needs of the community.

The main objectives of this study explore the importance and effectiveness of community media through community development participation. Based on the general objective, this study has the following specific objectives;

- To analyse whether or not community media plays a role in addressing social ills.
- To provide the participatory role of the community media within the geographical community.
- To assess the extent to which Izwi'lethemba has contributed to the community's developmental issues.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the current study:

- Which community-based projects has/is the station involved with?
- What are the aims of conducting such projects?
- How is the response from the communities?

Social context

Community development and community media: Through the process of community development, community members work together in making collaborative action and generate solutions to common problems [11]. Thus, community development is essentially based on social justice, the values of human rights,

equality, and respect for diversity [12]. At the same time, community media organisations are few of the remaining public platforms where community members can join in conversation together as a community [13].

Community development does not necessarily solve a problem in an area, instead, it increases opportunities for growth [11]. However, according to Mayor Pakati [14], BCM has to deal with a lot of economic challenges including amongst others the consistent levels of high unemployment, especially amongst the youth. In terms of BCMM economic growth and job creation, the lack of appropriate education and skills level threatens future development.

Rate of unemployment in buffalo city metro: Murray [15] states that in the population projection of Buffalo City Metro, it predicts between 2016 and 2021 there has been an projected average annual growth rate of 1.1%, in an outlined change from the structure of the population as of the year 2016 and 2021 shows that, in 2016, there was a larger share of young working class people between 20 and 34 (32.6%), in comparison to what was projected in 2021 (29.8%).

This report shows that the number of young working-age people in BCM over the next year will decrease while there are still major issues of unemployment especially in disadvantaged areas of BCM. Unemployment can lead to depression, anxiety, and an increasing crime rate.

Poverty in developing communities: Studies indicate that poverty is an issue in developing communities, high levels of inequality and poverty influence the living standards, levels of crime, economic growth, and social stability [16]. In communities such as Parkside, in East London; this is no exception.

Furthermore, the municipal office has citizen-engaged-based programmes promoting service delivery by creating an opportunity for an interaction between the community and the station's management once a week [14]. The participation of community radio stations, focusing on building active cooperation from the members of the community in creating a civil society, is crucial for sustainable development in all aspects.

Crime affecting buffalo city metro: Townships can be violent places in South Africa, with young people often being victims or victimising others [17]. Typically, the community is often a place where young people feel compelled to violating one another [18].

For this reason, crime has been increasing at an escalating rate since 1997 in South Africa [19]. Throughout South Africa's recorded history, notorious and often colourful gangs and criminals have been present [18]. This suggests that people may fall victim to being attacked, robbed, or even sexually victimised while out on the streets while enjoying the freedom of mobility and access in the neighbourhood environment [20]. These are just some of the issues experienced in township society.

Literature Review

Defining the relationship between a community and a community media

Rennie [21] states that the community is defined only geographically, but also in terms of language, culture or ethnic groups, and interests. A community setting has members with diverse perspectives and experiences, therefore, it is important to develop meaningful relationships with community members to create a positive change [22]. The willingness of community members to work together in building a healthy society depends on conditions of common interests and shared hopes among the residents. It is the linkage of mutual trust and the shared willingness to intervene for the common goal that defines the neighbourhood perspective [23].

Tonnies [24] believes that social relationships are willed relationships, wanted and maintained by the more or less candid or prudent individuals of a group. Moreover, Tonnie [24] argues that the "will" of a social relationship between people is expressed in rules or conduct in essentially the same sense in which customs, ethics, laws, and public opinion can be perceived to express the will of larger collective groups. Also, the willingness of community members to join hands even though there are diversities that exist, help a lot in uplifting the community [22].

Howley [13] argue that the relationship between a community and a community-based media platform is very crucial, community based media plays a very important role in creating, sustaining and promoting a strong community as they are run by the community [25]. Therefore, the local media is able to represent different ethnic groups within the community [26].

Participatory role of community media in communities

Community media, focusing on community radio particularly; provides a voice to the unfortunate and marginalised by being an influential tool that empowers the disempowered; it also facilitates the promotion of social justice, making the remote and marginalised communities aware of the government schemes and their entitlements, improving the delivery of public services and sharing and preserving indigenous as well as religious knowledge and best practices [27].

However, Myers [28] suggests that traditional media largely serves mainly the needs and interests of the elite; the commercial ones are not informative enough and the public media are propagandist tools of the state. Furthermore, limited funding possibilities and complications in attaining licenses make it hard to sustain for community-based radios, thereby restricting their ability to fulfil South Africa's Constitutional obligation which clearly states that ICASA is an independent regulatory body that is required to provide for the regulation of broadcasting in the public interest and to ensure fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing South African society [29].

In particular, the media can make it possible for all classes of society to be heard and thereby limit the injustice in power between people and classes [26]. For instance, community outreach programmes have played a role in creating a viable community media platform that continues to give a voice to active members of the community and address issues they are facing in their area [13]. Ruckle [30] explains community outreach as a programme that assists those who are unable to help themselves, it brings the community together also can bring certain perspectives into view that you may not have been aware of until you see others in need.

Another development notion focuses on community access and participation in development projects; It sees access as “the use of media for public service” [31], and participation as a process of empowering the people to participate in identifying the problem or designing a development programme [32].

Community media in the age of digital technology

The South African media is still struggling to keep up with the rest of the world, but it has made some progress along the way, Horwitz [33] suggests that the dawn of the state of equality for those who live within the country (democracy) 1994, introduced drastic measure in terms of the independence that afforded South African media freedom of speech that allowed them to do their work with no fear, but also in terms of the normative roles intended for the media in a young democracy. However, Bosch [34] reports that most local media platforms have not been able to attract any significant advertising, they lack marketing skills and have small coverage areas. Despite attempts to try and imitate and compete with commercial and public broadcasting services rather than finding a niche for themselves [34]. Community media are seen as a medium that allows underdeveloped areas of society such as in small towns and rural areas, to have opportunities and receive information of interest to them that might not reach the agenda of big commercial media [35]. Consequently, communities working together with public broadcasters, to establish low-power radio stations and community radio, organising cable access networks, joining community broadband networks, and producing for satellite-delivered public interest channels [36]. Although the telecommunication industries are pressing in the regulatory arena to be relieved of local community commitments, claiming that local people are so empowered by the internet and it becomes pointless to involve other media to support in their lives [37].

The community is left to wonder on how to deal with these ever growing changes in creating better ways of merging media and culture. However, this is widely recognised as an enabler to advance access to factual information as well as global flows of media relating to social inequality [38,39]. Community media organisations engage in empowerment in different ways; many offer training programmes to build the capacity of community members to use media technologies; others assist communities in contending with the media flooded culture through media

literacy training [40], yet others emphasize economic and workforce development through skills training and content creation [41,42].

There is a term used by scholar Clemencia Rodriguez and others called “citizen’s media” to refer to the use of media that allow people to act effectively as citizens across the spectrum of daily life [43]. National media is now being used within the world of online joint media to refer to decentralised practices including blogging, social software applications, and other combined media tools; experts of online collaborative media have adopted the language and practices of participatory media [36]. Therefore, the current visibility of the blogosphere has contributed to the misunderstanding that national and community media have just emerged with internet, and that participating media as a function of technology rather than of people acting as citizens [21].

Community media during a pandemic

Huizies [44] suggests that local media plays a key position in reaching and informing the public in their respective home languages during this pandemic, and it becomes easy for local media to reach the people because it remains the tier of media closest to the community. Local radios struggle to sustain themselves and their employees, owing to a lack of funds. The organisation commonly operates with volunteer staff who are faced with challenges of safety while travelling from their homes to the radio stations amongst others [45].

However, Sakoane [46] reports that the South African Community Radio Foundation (SACRF) is persuading various government entities with the long-term objective of enhancing the ability for local media to sufficiently service their communities; above 200 strong sectors are severely under-resourced with most unable to pay all members of the team that drives content and enriches the community they serve.

The lack of personal protection equipment (PPE) makes safety a concern particularly when sourcing information, practitioners pointed to the risk of using smartphones and voice recorders, which are held close to the mouth when talking to community members [47]. Furthermore, practising social distancing in community radio stations is one of the major challenges as most operate in small and confined spaces, access to expert information and expert speakers, reaching remote areas to report on COVID-19, sharing information with special groups such as blind people, preparedness to deal with pandemics, and fighting disinformation are among many other prevailing challenges [48].

Falt [49], emphasizes the position of local media, more especially the community radios in making sure that the information being broadcasted is genuine and unruffled during these challenging times marred by a global health crisis; by aiming to form a national network of local radio stations as a way to prevent the spread of Covid-19 by raising awareness, accountability, encouraging solidarity within community groups, and transparency.

Mittal [50] reports that the community radio stations expressed the need for a support system to produce local content on issues

related to Covid-19 such as misinformation, quarantine, stigma, plight of the migrants, and difficulties faced by the health workers to be a part of their usual programme. In addition to the needs identified by the community radios, they feel there is a need to imagine programming more creatively and using different formats to trigger conversation through the community media [50].

Methodologies

Research design

Burns and Burns [51] describes the research method as a framework for the collection and analysis of data, and the process aims to obtain reliable information by using valid measures that reduce errors to a minimum.

Data collection

Qualitative research method: The qualitative method is an investigation procedure of understanding based on distinct procedural traditions of inquiry that discover a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed opinions of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting [52].

Qualitative research is not apprehended with numbers, as it involves gathering a great deal of information about a relatively small number of people, rather than a limited amount of information about a large number of people [53]. This study is focused on collecting a considerable amount of information from a few sources.

Interviews

The interview contained open-ended questions for the collection of primary data. According to Mugenda and Mugenda [54], an in-depth interview is a method for data collection that entails asking questions, probing, discussing, and even obtaining data *via* verbal communication. Face to face semi-structured in-depth interview was conducted with the station's Programmes Manager of Izwi'lethemba FM.

In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer usually works from a questionnaire or interview schedule in which questions are asked in a programmed order and most questions supply respondents with a range of potential answers [55]. The interviews were conducted in both English and IsiXhosa; recorded by phone, then translated and transcribed in a word document, the interviews lasted for about 30 minutes.

The method enabled the participant to give detailed information on the role that the community radio station plays in facilitating an active civil society, for example, how the radio station addresses social ills within the community. The interview was also meant to assess how Izwi'lethemba FM manages to assist the community directly. The survey allowed the interviewer to investigate and guide the discussion to ensure that it remained within the limitations of the discussion.

Observations

Observation is useful in receiving a better understanding of context and gaining new insights [56]. The researcher listened to three shows that are based on community engagement for 7 hours, 30 minutes a day on their online streaming. The challenge the observer encountered while trying to listen on the phone is that there was a poor reception even though the station is 4.3 km (approximately 11 minutes) away from the observers' urban-based location. An alternative was to stream online and the challenge was the buffering of the session from time to time.

The observer listened to the shows for 5 days during the week. Trying to understand at least some of the activities and considerations to get a better understanding of what the programmes are really about. The observer noticed that all the shows are church topic orientated and not focused on the overall community engagement; with topics such as tithing, gospel artists, Christians, and their avoidance to participate in politics, gospel messages as well as trending news.

Quantitative research method

Questionnaires: In addition to the interview and observation of the station programmes, there was a need to use a different method to obtain views from the community, to check whether the station does contribute to community development. Only 10 questionnaires were distributed in Parkside and Duncan Village Community. A questionnaire is a research instrument that consists of a series of questions. The questionnaire for the study included both closed and open-ended questions. Purposive and convenience sampling were used for selecting the respondents from the targeted residents who listen to *Izwi'lethemba* and a few who do not listen to the station.

The questionnaire method was necessary for this study, to analyse the responses from the public. To have valid knowledge of what the community thinks about their respective community radio stations.

Sample size

On the first day of the distribution, six respondents participated, some saying they listen to the station and others saying they do not listen often. On the following day, four participants participated and a majority saying that they do not listen to the station, one out of four confirmed that they are part of the listenership of Izwi'lethemba FM.

The respondents were selected based on their geographical location, which is Parkside and Duncan Village. The researcher chose respondents that listen or are familiar with Izwi'lethemba FM on the first day on purpose, to check why exactly do they listen to the shows, and on the second day, the researcher included respondents that have not listened to the show to understand why it is like that.

Ethical issues

Research ethics is generally concerned with how the process of

pursuit of knowledge ought to be morally conducted. According to Bryman [57], research must be designed, reviewed, and undertaken in a way that ensures integrity and quality.

The respondent of the qualitative interview was well informed about the purpose and intended uses of the investigation and informed approval then sought in obtaining information from them. The investigator identified themselves fully to the respondent and data-collection instrument (phone recorder) were declared beforehand.

When informed consent was being requested from the participant, they were informed that they had the option of refusing to take part and were also at liberty to terminate their involvement at any time. According to Frankfort Nachmias and David Nachmias [58] informed consent is embedded in the high value we attach to freedom and self-determination; we believe that people should be free to determine their behaviour because freedom is a cherished value. Questionnaire participants also agreed to participate after being informed about the exercise they are required to take.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of research conducted with Izwi'lethemba FM management. This section tries to answer the research questions of the role played by Izwi'lethemba FM within the community, as a community medium based in BCM, and whether or not this leads to the development of the community.

The contribution of the station through projects

Izwi'lethemba FM plays the role of informing, entertaining, and educating the community using in-house programmes/shows.

In December 2020, the station gave away food hampers under the "feeding scheme" project to ten disadvantaged families living around the Parkside area. Each year the station works together with the ward councillors to actuate planned events to assist the community; the ward committees locate the most disadvantaged homes in the area to receive the food hampers.

As an ongoing initiative by the station to assist members of the community, when alarming cases are being put into the station's attention, the station seeks out sponsorships in places like Nick's Food Spar, Boxer Superstore, Chas Everitt International Properties Group, Pastors, Churches, Businesses and other clients of the station.

The station also does crime prevention awareness working with the Police Cluster for the area, as well as assist the community whenever there are service delivery issues.

For the 16 Days of Activism in 2020, the station organised a march for all men around the community to create awareness about the abuse of women and children, in-house shows were used to market the event as well as social media. The march aimed to show men in the front line saying no to the abuse of women and children, all men joined together with placards on the streets wearing the station T-shirt.

The message was *#WeAreNotPartOfIt* giving hope to women that there are men who stand against violence of women and children. The stations' Programme Manager is a leader in an organisation called Men Championing Change and he said men need to take a stand and take action.

Reasons for conducting projects

As a Christian radio station, the station believes in being the helping hand for the communities it serves. The station uses its airtime to reach out to businesses and work with them, with the belief that it is their role as a community media to take care of the community by all means possible. It is deemed by the station as worthless to broadcast programmes that would not be helpful to society.

Station events calendar

The station has scheduled yearly calendar events for each respective public awareness month. For example, on Youth Month (June), the station focuses on the empowerment of young people from the area by providing skills programmes and work opportunities for them. When it is Children's Month (November), the station donates school uniforms for kids coming from disadvantaged backgrounds; unfortunately, in January 2021, it became impossible to proceed with the planned event because of Covid-19.

Participation by the community

The station claims that the response from men in the community during the 16 Days of Activism march was not that good, the station saw that is either men do not understand what was taking place or they were just being ignorant about the message because they do not care about it.

Another reason for not joining would be because of the pandemic that the country is currently confronted with. Next time, the station says it will include more shows that will teach men how to conduct themselves and how to protect women and children, seeing that there are men in the society that are abusive towards their partners but are not aware of their abusive behaviours.

During the interview, the Programmes' Manager said that when the station organises an event that provides job opportunities and skills programmes, the community comes in numbers and the response becomes overwhelming.

The community has a high unemployment rate crisis, the station working together with organisations such as OTESA Entrepreneur Academy, Harambee, NYDA assists many applicants that have applied for those opportunities that have arisen.

The response from the people who participated in the survey was different from that of the station. Respondents were asked to indicate their age, gender, highest educational level attained, and employment status to understand the people being surveyed.

A group of seven different age groups was used; a majority falling under the age group 21-30 and 41-50 years old, followed by those who fell in the age group 31-40 years old. A few indicated being

between the age of 18-20 and 51-60 years of age. The results show that 50% of the respondents were men and that another 50% were women.

The results disclose that many respondents had completed secondary education and postgraduate degree. Followed by some who chose others and did not specify. And a few who hold an undergraduate degree and partial primary level. The majority of the respondents were in full-time employment, followed by respondents who indicated that they were self-employed, part-time employed, and unemployed, A few indicated that they were students.

A majority said that they listen to the station and indicated that they receive a lot of information based on the Gospel and food parcel announcements, with some pointing out that they need more teaching programmes that are focused on youth empowerment. Following an equal number of respondents others saying they do not listen to the station and others saying they listen occasionally.

Those that do not listen to the station claim that they have other commitments and do not have much knowledge about the station. Those that listen occasionally, also listen to the preaching programmes. When asked about community outreach programmes the station has been involved in, together with the community. Most of the respondents have not heard about any visits done by the station to their relevant community, and others indicated that they attended the station's launch party, and others indicating that the station has covered a youth impact tournament they were organising for the community.

Developmental programmes

The station has three (3) programmes that are dedicated to empowering and developing the community.

- A mid-morning women's show called Usuku'lwam airing at 09:00-12:00, during that slot it is a trend in radio stations that at this time radios broadcast a women's show, although men's issues are also tackled as well as healthwise issues and family affairs issues.
- A midday show called Khula'Nathi airing at 12:30-15:00, a community development show, focusing on uplifting the youth with job opportunities and skills development opportunities. Every week Harambee and OTESA Entrepreneur Academy have a slot on the show, Harambee educates and informs listeners about the developments and how many people are needed for vacant opportunities; OTESA Entrepreneur Academy recently worked with the station in recruiting a total of 300 people within a period of 5 months for skills development.
- On every Monday, there is a show called Ezabahlali airing at 19:00-21:00, focusing on politics, it is more of a current affairs show.

Community outreach programmes

As a Christian community radio, the station facilitates Revivals in and around the community at Community Halls and Post

Office space in Duncan Village, including Outside Broadcasts with shows like Khula'Nathi together with Harambee targeting young unemployed community members; educating them about business and other things related to self-empowerment.

The locations for these Outside Broadcast drives are determined by the organisations that are working with the station like Harambee, whether which location they want to target for that particular period, and the type of giveaways they have for the target market. The station also does Outside Broadcasts for crime prevention awareness, working closely with the Police Cluster in the area Community Policing Forum, including an organisation called Afesis Corplan that deals with community service-delivery issues. The stations also do Roadshows around the BCM.

Results of assisting the community

Through the initiatives done by the station, the community can benefit not only by receiving food hampers, but young people can find jobs and enroll in schools. School kids receive uniforms through the assistance of other parties. Lastly, the initiatives also focus on crime prevention, with the assistance of Police the community is able to get help.

Challenges faced by the station

The station believes in going to the community with something to give and not empty-handed, therefore the station faces the challenge of struggling to get support and sponsorship. Another challenge would be, not having the needed equipment to broadcast outside because the station hire's the equipment and it sometimes encounters the challenge of not being able to raise enough money for that.

Conclusion

To conclude the above research, it is evident that Izwi'lethemba FM not only has a Christian role to play in that community but also community members are keen to see the community broadcaster involved in more community-based programmes and projects that will assist in empowering especially the youth.

Izwi'lethemba FM has contributions to the social change process of the community. The station has endorsed people to not only become aware of developmental support but has also given them actual opportunities where people have benefited through the selected themes from the radio station's events calendar, the station has taken steps in addressing issues of immediate concern to the people like the Women and Children Abuse March, Crime Prevention Awareness, Employment, and Skills Development Workshops. Through observations, while in the radio station, the station has exposed several young people and volunteers from the area, including both Xhosa and Afrikaans speaking individuals to this type of media technology and gave people an opportunity for training in presenting skills for those aspiring to become radio broadcasters, gaining skills in radio production and content production skills.

The programmes manager seemed to know what was expected of them when he pointed out that the station has to serve the

community not only by broadcasting shows to them but by also giving a helping hand to those that need assistance from the community; except that there are a few obstacles that are standing in their ways such as not always being able to secure a sponsorship or donation to assist people and the issue of all community radio stations which is not having enough equipment tools especially an Outside Broadcast Van that would make it easy for community radio stations to go out to people and interact with them directly; with that being said, those issues prevent them from doing what a community media should do. Despite those challenges, the station is still committed to assisting where possible.

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