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## **Making Markets Work for the Poor** Case Studies Series

The role and impact of radio in reforming the rural  
business environment in Africa  
A working paper

by Gavin Anderson and David Elliott  
The Springfield Centre, Durham, UK  
on behalf of the FAUNO consortium

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**Employment and Income Division**  
Freiburgstrasse 130, CH – 3003 Bern  
Tel. ++41 31 322 10 65, Fax ++41 31 323 08 49  
[e-i@deza.admin.ch](mailto:e-i@deza.admin.ch)  
[www.deza.admin.ch/ei](http://www.deza.admin.ch/ei)

***This case study was prepared on behalf of the Fauno Consortium (Skat, Springfield Centre, Swisscontact, Facet, Inbas), which is a mandate of the Employment and Income Division of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).***

*This case is one of a series exploring the application of the Making Markets Work for the Poor approach to different areas of private sector development. This document represents the views of the author and does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever of the SDC, Employment and Income Division.*

## **Executive summary**

This paper focuses on research into the role of radio in reforming the business environment. The starting point for the paper is not radio but policy processes and governance. It is clear that inappropriate policy, legislation and regulation adversely affect the emergence, survival and growth of the private sector in many developing countries and that poor governance, rent-seeking, corruption and illegal activity are debilitating to the private sector's operation and competitiveness. What is less clear is how development organisations can support the sustained improvements in policy, legal and regulatory formulation and reform which are essential for a more conducive environment for business and a platform for economic growth.

The role of mass media in reform processes has often been overlooked particularly in the area of private sector policy, legal and regulatory reform. This paper explores the role that the mass media can play in enhancing processes that underpin the reform of the business environment. It does so through the lens of local FM radio stations in Uganda that have emerged over the last decade to become a prominent feature of the country's social, political and business landscape.

This paper is based on research undertaken in mid 2007 which aimed to understand the potential role of radio, and therefore mass media more generally, in business environment reform processes and to understand the potential impact of radio at both policy and enterprise levels. Uganda was chosen because of its liberalized and diverse media that includes a network of local FM radio stations. These stations tend to focus on local issues and are therefore relevant to Uganda's decentralized local government structure. The case studies were chosen from an array of possible examples of media impacting on the business environment. The research sought to examine, attribute and quantify this impact in detail. By analysing successful examples, the paper endeavours to understand the characteristics of success: what makes media effective in impacting on business policy, legislation and regulation and how donors can intervene to enhance the role of mass media in the business environment.

Six case studies were analysed in detail. The case studies highlighted that media intervention can bring about changes in the business environment that results in sizeable and quantifiable impact. Significant scale was observed in one case study where 25,000 rural farmers' livelihoods were protected and their incomes almost tripled. The ability of radio to impact on some of the poorest and most marginalized in society, for example women involved in stone crushing and poor-farmers in night markets, is also clearly illustrated in the case studies. The identified impacts came about through radio's role in giving voice and platforms for public-private dialogue. In particular media played a clear role in

- Raising awareness among policy makers of important issues in the business environment
- Building interest in these issues by framing them and giving them public coverage
- Enhancing the desire and conviction of policy makers to act
- Monitoring that action had taken place

The paper shows how the media can build political economy by improving the flow of information between policy makers and the private sector and stimulating demand among the general public for action by policy makers. This role is complementary to existing forms of private sector representation and approaches to public-private dialogue, but the media adds a further dimension by increasing demand for policy reform through public exposure of important issues. Local media has particular relevance in decentralized government and therefore in local economic development.

The paper therefore informs a potential future agenda for development organisations in making media markets work for promoting economic and business environment reform. The radio programmes highlighted in the case studies emerged from a liberalized, diverse and increasingly competitive media industry. The competitive pressures for radio stations to build ratings (listenership) increased the focus on mass audience that in Uganda are predominantly the rural poor, and resulted in increased programme innovation. Nevertheless, the programmes that

brought about impact on the business environment were ones that had been supported by donor intervention (FIT Uganda and the ILO SEMA Project). These donor funded interventions supported the innovation process and raised capacity and standards in radio. As such, they were distinct from traditional media interventions that predominantly purchase space and airtime and maintain editorial control of content.

The radio programmes that have brought about impact in the business environment were indigenously owned, managed and run. They operated in diverse local languages and responded to specific local issues. This local ownership and management is at the heart of the success of the programmes and would have been less likely to have come about through programmes funded and managed by donor projects or staff.

Donors therefore need to support media in a way that is both systemic and sustainable and there are 3 clear potential areas for intervention:

Supporting emerging and growing media industries to ensure that media reaches and increasingly serves business groups and the poor.

Building market institutions and the market system that increase capacity, standards and skills in the media industry.

Supporting processes of competition and innovation particularly in programming that focuses on business and livelihoods and provide effective platforms for the voice of the poor and for public private dialogue.

This approach of making media markets work for the poor has the potential to build media as an important driver of change in its own right. The paper therefore highlights mass media as a key player in business environment reform and one that should therefore be integrated into business environment programmes in private sector development.

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## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

This paper responds to a growing call to understand the processes that bring about business environment (BE) reform and the institutions and drivers of change that support reform processes. Recent conferences focusing on creating better business environments in Cairo (2005) and Bangkok (2006)<sup>1</sup> have raised sustainability as a key issue in business environment reforms. It is recognised that reform is an ongoing process that must be driven through effective public and private dialogue. The indigenous institutions, organisations and individuals that underpin this ongoing process should therefore be a focus for donor support and capacity building. But who are these institutions, organisations and individuals and how can donors most effectively support them?

The mass media is recognised as a driver of change in its own right and as a platform and tool for other drivers of change particularly in governance. Despite this, the mass media has received relatively little attention in private sector development and in donor programmes that focus on business environment reform. While this may have been understandable while much media in developing countries was controlled and owned by the state (and often the voice of the state), it is less understandable in the context of the widespread liberalization and growth of independent media industries which has taken place across much of the developing world in the last 15 years. These liberalized media industries are playing an increasingly important role in reform processes and are therefore potentially an important focus for donors seeking to strengthen reform processes.

This paper looks at radio broadcasting in Uganda as a lens through which the role of mass media can be appraised and understood. The paper presents new research findings on the impact of commercial radio in Uganda on business environment reform processes and therefore on the livelihoods of the rural poor. In so doing the research specifically addressed the following questions:

- Is the radio media an effective driver of change in BE reform in Uganda?
- What factors underpin radio as a driver of change in BE reform in Uganda?
- What can donors do to support and strengthen media as a driver of change?

The research and preparation of the paper was funded by the Employment and Income (E+I) Division of SDC. As part of SDC's ongoing work in promoting a more systemic approach to private sector development, E+I had been reviewing experiences from various development programmes that have been working to implement the emerging "making markets work for the poor – M4P – approach". One such case considered the work of FIT Uganda (a Ugandan development organisation) and ILO SEMA (an ILO project supported by various donor funders that built on work initiated by FIT Uganda)<sup>2</sup>. This case study details the successful experience of supporting the growth of sustainable income and small business oriented radio programmes. The case provided interesting, but anecdotal, evidence of various impacts related to business environment reform. This paper builds on this recent work by exploring the role of radio in business environment reform in more detail and in a systematic way.

### **Research methodology**

The research methodology adopted for this study was based on the identification and exploration of case studies. As such, the research findings present a high degree of causality and attribution, but are not necessarily representative and therefore are not open to the degree of statistical analysis and manipulation that more experiential designs might afford.

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<sup>1</sup> Conferences organized by the Business Environment Working Group of the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, G & Hitchins, R, "Expanding the Poor's access to business information and voice through FM radio in Uganda", 2007, published by SDC under their "Making Markets Work for the Poor case study series.

Nevertheless, the case studies presented in this paper are neither isolated nor exceptional, but are examples of the roles that radio plays on a daily and ongoing basis in Uganda.

The research was undertaken in mid 2007 and involved a preliminary scoping study to identify and investigate a potential shortlist of ten case studies. This scoping study was undertaken by a small team of Ugandan researchers who spoke to radio broadcasters, policy makers, lobbyists and representatives of the audience. This scoping study resulted in the short-listing of eight potential case studies which were researched in more detail by the authors in collaboration with Ugandan researchers. This research involved a process of exploring and understanding the role of radio and how it contributed to business environment reform. The team verified whether radio could be clearly attributed to the policy change by interviewing a variety of policy makers, reformers and beneficiaries. This was followed by an analysis into the impact of the business environment change and, where possible, a quantification of this impact. For each case study the views of various stakeholders on both sides of the policy debate were sought.

This paper is based on six case studies which highlight various roles of mass media in impacting on and reforming the business environment. Two case studies were dropped because attribution to radio could not be proven or was unclear. The research also involved exploring more widely the role of radio. Informants were asked about other types of media and radio programmes that have less, no or even negative impact on the business environment. This broader research is used as part of the basis for understanding the key factors that contribute to mass media playing a positive role in policy reform.

### **Format of the paper**

The paper is formatted into five main sections, excluding the introduction and conclusion. The first provides the basis of the analysis and explores the nature of reform processes and the growth of media industries globally. The second section provides the background and an overview of the six case studies. The third section draws from these case studies to explore the potential role that mass media can play in business environment reform processes. This is followed in the fourth section by a more detailed analysis of the impacts of the media both at policy and at enterprise level. The final section highlights the key characteristics that appear to have contributed to the successes in these case studies. These characteristics are the basis on which donor intervention to improve the role of mass media in policy processes can be designed and the potential role of donors is explored in the conclusion to the paper.

## **SECTION 2: BACKGROUND – REFORM PROCESSES AND THE MASS MEDIA**

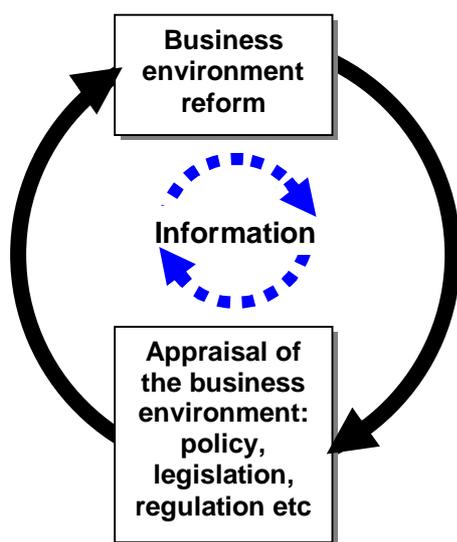
This section briefly explains the reform process, the role of political economy and the relevance of mass media in business environment reform. As such, it provides the foundation on which the research was devised and undertaken.

### **2.1 Business environment reform: A process not an activity**

The provision of better policies and improved legislation and regulation that can create an environment conducive for business growth is not a single activity or series of activities bound by time; it is an ongoing process of appraisal of the existing business environment followed by reform and reappraisal. This iterative process of continual change is essential in a dynamic world where problems, issues and priorities alter continuously. Reliable and accurate information that builds policy makers' and reformers' understanding about the problems of businesspeople is therefore at the centre of effective business environment reform.

While this information is sometimes actively sought by policy makers, much reform comes about through a lobbying process that overcomes the natural inertia which opposes change. In a well-functioning business environment, it is the private sector itself and other stakeholders (e.g. consumers and consumer groups) that create this lobby and feeds information to policy makers.

To be effective in supporting improved business environments, development initiatives therefore need to recognise the process-based nature of business environment reform and develop approaches to enhance these processes. This is already taking place. For example, development organisations have for many years recognised the importance of business membership organisations (BMOs) in policy dialogue and representation. Nevertheless, many other reform initiatives are reliant on donor support and funding; while these initiatives are valuable in the short term, they tend to result in isolated improvements and do not build policy reform process in a sustainable way. This ‘sustainability challenge’ is widely acknowledged in the development community, but many of the tools developed to enhance business environment reform, e.g. policy dialogue forums, investment surveys, performance benchmarking, have failed to achieve sustainability<sup>3</sup>.



**Figure 1: The business environment reform process**

Sustainability is therefore an important focus of this paper. The paper is founded on a belief in the importance of recognising business environment reform as an ongoing process and therefore in the critical importance of building the capacity of the drivers of change in reform processes in a manner which is sustainable.

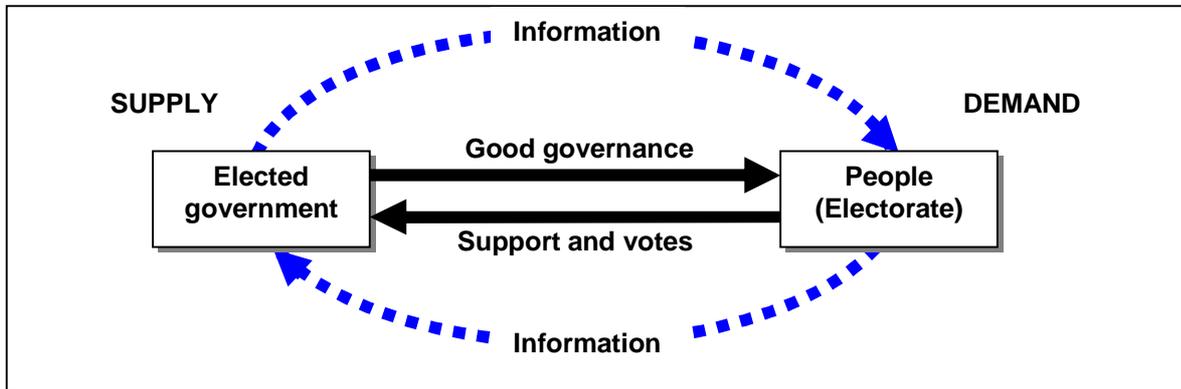
Recognising the importance of the reform process raises some key questions. Who are the drivers of change in reform processes? How can we strengthen these drivers of change? What conditions empower the drivers of change? How can we enhance these processes so they include rather than exclude the poor? This paper explores the potential role of one of the drivers of change, local mass media, and attempts to begin to answer these questions. The paper also assesses the potential impact of media in bringing about reform in the business environment, assessing whether this is a viable and effective entry-point for donor intervention.

## 2.2 The demand and supply of ‘political economy’

To understand reform processes one must understand the incentives and motivations for reform to take place. In democratic countries the electoral process is an important part of the motivation for legislative and policy reform. This can be understood as a ‘political economy’ where there is a supply of and demand for good governance and a transactional relationship between elected governments and the people they serve. In return for good governance the electorate provide support and votes. This idealised model of governance relies on the effective flow of information between government and the electorate.

Elected officials in a democratic system, both at national and local level, are motivated to respond to public interest and concern to ensure that they maintain support and therefore office. This process is one of the tenets of the democratic system providing the check and balance of political power. It is this basis for motivation which the research identified as a key factor underpinning effective policy reform, formulation, implementation and enforcement.

<sup>3</sup> This was highlighted in the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development conferences on Business Environment in both Cairo (2005) and Bangkok (2006)



**Figure 2: Political economy of supply and demand for good governance**

### 2.3 The relevance of mass media to business environment reform

While the relevance of political economy in business environment reform processes may be clear, the relevance of mass media in this context may be less so. To many involved in business environment reform mass media would appear to be a peripheral player on the margins of the business environment reform process, at best a useful tool for information dissemination on laws and regulations. Work with the mass media in business environment reform has therefore been limited and has tended to treat the mass media as a 'tool' for other drivers of change rather than as an integral institution that enhances reform processes in its own right.

This paper is based on a premise that the concepts of good governance and business environment reform are inextricably linked. In governance, the role of mass media has been explored and is well understood. Mass media has been hailed as the 'fourth estate' of politics, referring to its role in both direct political advocacy and in providing political information to the public. This role of media is clearly articulated in DFID's 2006 White Paper 'Making Governance work for the Poor' where it is regarded as an institution that is central to improved governance and policy reform and an integral part of civil society's checks and balances on political power. The white paper states that:

*'The media and civil society hold governments to account. The media ask tough questions and encourage debate.'*<sup>4</sup>

This central role of mass media in governance is one that has become increasingly relevant to development over the past decade. In many developing countries government monopoly over the mass media have dissolved to allow the growth of diverse privately-owned media industries. Mass media has become less and less a government mouthpiece and has begun to play a more

<b>Year of launch of first private radio station</b>			
Mali:	1991	Ghana:	1995
Uganda:	1993	Pakistan:	1995
Zambia:	1993	Kenya:	1996
Sri Lanka:	1993	Nepal:	1997
Senegal:	1994	India:	2001
Tanzania:	1994	Bangladesh:	2006

important role in democratic government. This relatively recent change is illustrated by the dates of the launch of the first private radio stations in various African and Asian countries (Table 1). This liberalization and diversification of mass media across many of the focal countries for development activity in Africa and Asia offers a new opportunity to tap into the potential of media to become a

positive driver of good governance. Understanding the existing and potential role of the mass media in governance, and more specifically in bringing about reform in the business environment, is therefore important and timely.

<sup>4</sup> DFID, making governance work for the poor', 2006 White paper

## SECTION 3: UGANDA CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW OF THE CASE STUDIES

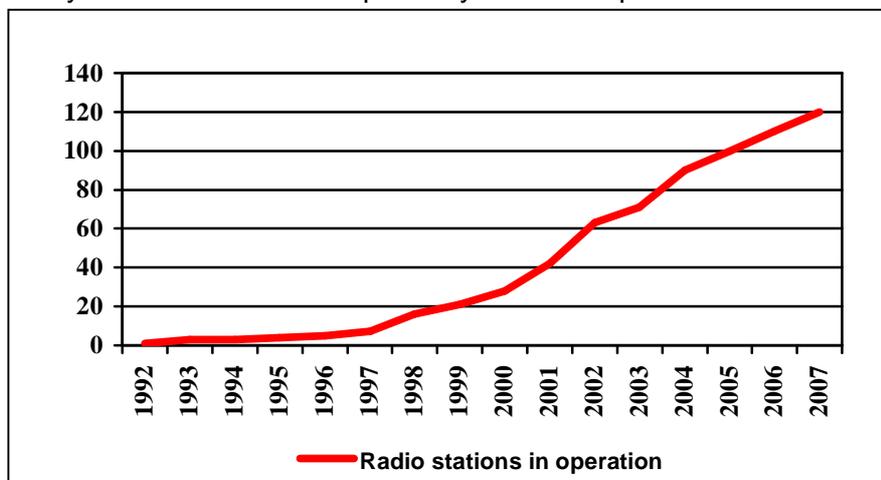
### 3.1 Uganda: The context

Uganda was chosen as the focal country for the research because of previous work that had been undertaken to develop sustainable programming for small business<sup>5</sup> and the unique characteristics of the media in the country. This sub-section provides the context of the research in terms of mass media and governance in Uganda.

#### Mass media and radio

Uganda has a relatively liberalized mass media sector with private newspapers, television and radio stations. While newspapers play an important role in Uganda, they are primarily the preserve of the urban elite. There are three daily newspapers whose combined circulation is below 100,000 and, at most optimistic estimates, would have a reach of 5.5% of the population on any single day<sup>6</sup>. Television is also primarily an urban media with 6% of households owning a TV and the private broadcasters reaching only the central areas of the country. It is therefore radio that is the dominant mass media in Uganda.

FM radio was liberalized in 1993 and has grown significantly over the past one and a half decades. There are currently over 120 radio stations, the majority broadcasting in local languages outside the capital city of Kampala. The large majority of the radio stations operate on a commercial and purely for-profit basis. This growth of private FM radio in Uganda is interesting from a number of perspectives for this paper. Firstly, whereas the growth of private FM radio in many countries has been primarily an urban phenomenon with radio stations explicitly aiming



towards serving audiences in urban conurbations, a significant proportion of the radio stations in Uganda are local (sub-national). While these radio stations are usually based in the larger market towns, they broadcast in vernacular languages and perceive themselves to be local (often defined by language groups) rather than national.

*Figure 3: Growth of FM radio in Uganda*

This growth of local commercial radio, while not unique, is at a level almost unprecedented in other African or Asian countries. This growth has been driven by a number of factors. Uganda has 37 languages but its national language is English. While English and in some areas Ki-Swahili is viewed as a lingua franca, the majority of people in the country speak neither English nor Ki-Swahili fluently. The major vernacular languages are therefore the only way of reaching out to and effectively communicating with mass audiences in Uganda. This has driven advertisers, often unwillingly, towards multi-language advertising thus feeding the growth of local radio. This need to reach out in local languages – and therefore on local radio – is increased by Uganda's demographic profile with 87.5% of Uganda's population living outside urban areas<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> This refers to the work of the ILO FIT SEMA (Small Enterprise media in Africa) project.

<sup>6</sup> This is based on newspaper estimates of 8 readers to every single copy sold.

<sup>7</sup> 2004 figure, UNDP Human Development Report 2007

Uganda therefore has a relatively distinctive media profile with a liberal approach to radio licensing combining with linguistic and demographic diversity to stimulate the growth of a local media industry. It is this distinctive media profile that makes Uganda an interesting focus for analysis, particularly in relation to the country's political decentralization.

#### Decentralization and local government in Uganda

Uganda has a relatively decentralized government structure with 77 districts operating local elected governments. There are 4 layers of elected local councillor (LC) as detailed in table 2. The LC5 chairperson is the local mayor in the urban and town areas of the country. Each of the other layers of local government has chairpeople heading a board of elected councillors.

Elected officials	Serving area
LC 1	Village
LC2	Parish
LC3	Sub county/ division
LC5	District

**Table 2: Local government structure in Uganda**

The districts have local tax collecting powers and therefore independent budgets. Local government are in control of investing in local infrastructure and in environmental and health protection. Local governments have the power to issue and suspend business licenses and are involved in tendering both public works contracts and management of markets, bus parks and public utilities. Local government therefore has direct importance to the private sector in their districts and is often the focus of private sector lobbying for improvements in the business environment.

### **3.2 Overview of the case studies:**

Four of the six case studies focus on policy issues at the local government level, one focuses on a private corporate policy issue and one focuses on national policy. The dominance of local government issues reflects the priorities of MSEs, particularly the smallest traders and manufacturers, who are often most concerned with issues concerning local infrastructure, management of markets and bus parks, licensing and local tendering procedures. The following provides an overview of the case studies. A more detailed narrative of each case study are attached as annexes.

#### **Case study 1: Exposing corruption and bringing about policy change at corporate business level (Rural tobacco farmers in Northern Uganda)**

In 2003 British American Tobacco (BAT) was facing a major problem with its outgrowing scheme in Uganda. From the company's perspective the problem appeared to be caused by the more than 25,000 small scale farmers who were producing increasingly poor quality and yields. Unknown to BAT's senior management in their Kampala headquarters was the breakdown in the farmer-BAT buyer relationship in the field. The farmers were accusing the BAT buyers and graders of widespread rent-seeking that was significantly reducing their incomes and making tobacco an unprofitable crop. This relationship breakdown was resulting in farmers losing heart and opting out of tobacco growing, potentially destroying the whole supply chain vital to the incomes of rural communities.

A journalist, Alice Kabatooro, working for a local commercial radio station uncovered the story when undertaking field based investigations into the potential impact of a public smoking ban for a weekly income and business programme. She organised a village based debate on the issue which she recorded. On taking the farmers' accusations to the local BAT buyers, Alice was threatened with violence if the story was made public. Alice persevered and ran a series of programmes on the issue. Despite generating local public response and outrage and catching the ear of the local government officials who were mandated to monitor tobacco under the Tobacco Marketing Act, the problem was not resolved locally. Alice therefore followed the story up by travelling to Kampala and presenting her findings to senior managers at BAT headquarters.

BAT's response was almost immediate. An enquiry was undertaken and within a year BAT had restructured its field operations and the way grading and buying was undertaken. In the process the majority of their field staff were made redundant. BAT altered its policy on communications, investing in local radio as a means of both conveying information to their outgrowers and providing platforms to allow the outgrowers to discuss and voice issues and problems. The impact of the changes have resulted in renewed interest in tobacco growing with farmers in the research area tripling the income they make from tobacco. There has been a significant rise in the number of outgrowers to 47,000 and, according to BAT Uganda management, Ugandan tobacco quality has risen. This is significant for Uganda's national income since tobacco is the single largest source of tax, contributing one-sixteenth to the total tax revenue.

### **Case study 2: Building public policy debate and stimulating the set up and operation of citizen's watchdog groups (Night Market in central Uganda)**

CBS (Central Broadcasting Service) was a ground-breaker in establishing its twice weekly small business radio programme Nekolera Gyange (I run my own business). This programme has been the model for numerous similar programmes around the country and has a strong listenership and 100% commercial sponsorship. Nekolera Gyange has been involved in taking radio to the people and through its producer, Hamzat Ssenoga, has pioneered monthly town and village level business debates which bring representatives from local and national government together with local business communities to discuss areas of concern and opportunity. These programmes are known as the 'Nekolera Gyange mobile'.

This case study focuses on the activities of 'Nekolera Gyange mobile' in Mpigi, a small town and district capital in central Uganda. The programme provided a platform for the local business community in a conflict-afflicted town market to discuss issues and concerns with local councillors and government officials. An initial town level debate was organised by the station and the proceedings and subsequent follow up broadcast in a series of radio programmes. Many of the concerns about improved infrastructure, sanitation and waste disposal were subsequently addressed. In particular, the most marginalized traders in the market – the Nabyerengera (farmers who come to a night market to sell produce directly) – were given official recognition and rights to sell in the market.

The connection between the town's business community and the Nekolera Gyange production team was reinforced by the formation of a listener club that acted as a contact point and watchdog for the programme. This group frequently contacts the production team to inform them of newsworthy issues in the town. This model of a citizen's watchdog group has been replicated by CBS in three areas of the country providing a unique model for public-media collaboration in local policy reform and monitoring.

### **Case study 3: Tackling gender and social equity issues for some of the poorest in society (Women stone crushers in South Western Uganda)**

Stone crushing for construction is undertaken by poor women who have few other income opportunities or choices. It is a difficult job made harder by their informality, lacking trading licenses and representation, and facing widespread gender inequality. In South-western Uganda eighty of these women were having their struggle for a livelihood made harder by the theft of the stone they crushed. Men who frequented the local bars along the margins of the dirt roads were selling the stone to the arriving buyers and lorry drivers while the women were in the quarries and were therefore stealing the women's goods. The women felt powerless when faced with this pervasive theft. In traditional society, men are perceived to be the owners of land and therefore the proceeds, such as stone, of the land. The women's complaints fell on deaf ears and the fact that they were informal and unlicensed made them feel unable to force the police and local government to act.

The story of the stone crushers was picked up by the journalist of a local FM radio station, Alex Akankwasa, following his training in field-based investigation for radio. The story, while not directly relevant to the majority of the audience of a weekly business programme he ran, had

human appeal and he believed merited broadcasting. He therefore ran a programme about the plight of the women involving the district gender officer and women's representative councillor. Initially this single programme appeared not to have a direct impact being broadcast at the wrong time of day. However the programme was rerun on a more popular prime time programme, which resulted in a significant public response which in turn triggered action and a resolution of the problem.

A significant reduction in the prevalence of theft from the women stone crushers ensued which can be attributed to a number of factors, each resulting from the radio coverage. Consumers of the stone became aware of the issue and many ceased buying from the men and sought out the women stone crushers directly. From a policy perspective, the coverage resulted in a district level councillor (the LC5 women's representative) going to LC1 councillors to demand action and making a public address emphasizing the women's rights. The action taken by the women's representative councillor empowered the women to assert their rights and threaten the men with action if the theft continued. It was the public nature of the exposure of this story that appeared to trigger a response from consumers of the stone and local government officials.

#### **Case study 4: Protecting the drivers of political change (Activists against corruption in rural public transport in South Western Uganda)**

This case study was initially perceived to be an example of radio having brought the issue of irregularities in management and tender procedures at a local bus park to public attention. On analysis it became apparent that the issue had already been highlighted and brought to the attention of the Public Accounts Committee of the Ministry of Local Government by a local councillor, Julius Tituryebwa.

Julius had researched conflict and irregularities in the bus park and with the tendering of the bus park management. He believed that there were numerous problems with the management of the park which were impacting on investment in rural transport, consolidating monopolies and therefore directly impacting on travellers. Violence in the park had been steadily increasing with one manager of a bus company alleging attempted murder after having been shot at. In addition, Julius believed that 57% of the potential revenue from the bus park was not being remitted to local government. While procedures for annual public tendering of the management of the bus park were supposed to ensure that mismanagement was minimised, the bus park tender had not been publicly advertised since 2003.

Despite raising concerns at local council meetings, there had been no action which Julius attributes to the vested interest among high level officials and powerful businesspeople. This then gave Julius the momentum to make a request to the Ministry for an enquiry and action. His reason for then going to local radio was to let the public know of his efforts. While this may be motivated by his interest in having his actions publicised to the electorate, Julius asserts that one of the most important roles of the local media is in providing him with protection. Conflict over the management of the bus parks across Uganda have spilled into violence and death and officially complaining about strong vested and entrenched interests in the bus park is potentially life threatening. Many reformers and activists have also found themselves accused of misconduct or crime. Making the public aware of his actions not only builds the reputation of reformers working in the public interest but can provide a degree of safety.

#### **Case study 5: Dialogue and debate on public investment in local market infrastructure (Market traders in Western Uganda)**

This case study focuses on a series of radio programmes that have covered investment in a municipal market in a district capital, Fort Portal, over a four year period. These programmes are part of a weekly business show run on the local commercial FM radio station, Voice of Toro. The issues and conflicts around the municipal market have been the focus of many of the programmes and the debate has involved the traders and the LC5 officials. The mayor has been at the forefront of the debate from the local government side and has frequently participated in radio programmes covering the issues.

This case study shows how a radio programme managed, in the early years, to provide a platform for dialogue and debate between local government and traders and bring about a series of improvements in market infrastructure (e.g. improved access to water and sanitation, increased investment in market infrastructure and construction of new lockable business units).

Over time dialogue with local government became more strained with the mayor accusing the station and programme of political bias and one-sided reporting. While these accusations are difficult to verify or deny it is clear that the radio programme became increasingly perceived by its audience to be the 'people's voice and representative' and was used as leverage to force local government attention and action.

### **Case study 6: National advocacy and campaigning for environmental policy change (Civil society and national government)**

This case study differs from the others as it involves an issue that was covered and reported across a wide array of media channels including newspapers, television, radio, internet and SMS at national and international level. Early in 2007 national newspapers broke the news that the government was planning to degazette a quarter of a renowned forest reserve, Mabira Forest, in central Uganda to provide land for the expansion of a sugar plantation. Ugandan environmental groups joined forces with international groups and launched the 'save Mabira Forest campaign'. This campaign used mass media to reach out to the Ugandan people in an attempt to mobilize mass opposition to what they perceived to be government ignoring laid down constitutional and parliamentary procedures for managing forest reserves.

The campaign aimed to mobilize mass support by linking deforestation to declining rainfall in the Lake Victoria basin and the threatened livelihoods of those reliant on the water and electricity produced by the lake. From a private sector perspective, the campaign linked deforestation to the rising costs faced by business and domestic electricity uses, the impact on the growing non-wood forest product enterprises (honey, fruit and medicinal plants) and the potential destruction of an emerging eco tourism industry that had been established around the forest. The campaign was ultimately successful and forced government reluctantly to shelve the plans in May 2007. This is highlighted by many Ugandans as a unique success of an environmental lobby in enforcing Uganda's national government to adhere to environmental protection laws.

This multi-media nature of the case study allowed a comparative analysis of the roles of various media channels. The informants were unanimous in highlighting the role of radio as being key to bringing mass support to the campaign and it is this mass support that was perceived to be the decisive factor in the policy reversal. One of the most interesting and possibly pivotal programmes in the policy reversal revolved around a 'people's parliament' style programme called Mambo Bado. People's parliament programmes are live political debate programmes involving panels of politicians and lobbyists with an interactive audience. The programmes focus on topical issues many of which are taken from the parliamentary agenda. During the Mabira campaign, the president himself participated in Mambo Bado through a live link-up for three hours to present his point of view. He was faced with a hostile and well informed audience primarily comprising of ordinary members of the public. The following programme involved seven government ministers, who found equal opposition and hostility to the plans.

A number of the informants interviewed perceive these two programmes involving live direct debate between members of the public and senior national politicians as being the turning point for the campaign. It is unique in Uganda to have live on-air debate on a controversial issue between members of the public and the most senior politicians in the country.

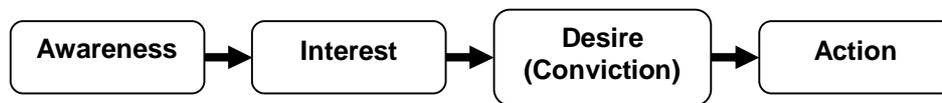
## SECTION 4: THE ROLE OF RADIO IN THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The case studies highlight 3 key roles of radio. The first is its role in directly stimulating action to improve the business environment and therefore in its role as a direct driver of change. The second is the role of radio in building demand for reform and therefore in stimulating the demand side of political economy. The third, highlighted in one case study (bus park tendering), is in its role as a supporter of other drivers of change.

### 4.1 Stimulating action to improve the business environment

For policy makers to act they must not only be aware of the issue but they must have the interest and desire or conviction to take action. Radio can be seen to have played a role in each stage of the process that reformers move through from awareness of an issue to ultimate action. Radio raises awareness by providing information on issues, stimulates interest by deepening understanding of the issue and builds conviction or desire to act. Radio can then play an additional role in monitoring that action has taken place or is resulting in positive change.

**Figure 4: The process that leads to action**



#### Raising awareness of issues in the business environment

The radio in many of the case studies raised the awareness of policy makers to the problems and issues that small businesses face as in the case of the women stone crushers, the markets in central and western Uganda and the tobacco farmers. The mass media is therefore an important source of information for policy makers and provides a platform for small business people and their representatives to raise issues and reach politicians. This channel to reach politicians is particularly important for micro and small businesses that lack effective representation.

***“When you are in government you cannot know every corner and you have to listen and learn from the people radio gives me information and you can learn from it. Mayor Edison Asaba Ruyonga, Fort Portal***

***“Radio programmes link us with our politicians” Trader, Fort Portal Municipal market***

***“We thought radio was about announcements, but after the meeting [with Kitara FM] we realised that radio could cover the problems of communities” Kizito Mutaagi, Tobacco farmer and Village Chairman***

The case studies in Uganda highlight the weakness of grass roots associations and representation. Representatives of tobacco growing villages (LC1 or village chair people) were unable to bridge the information divide between the farmers and the BAT management because they were fragmented and lacked capacity. Radio empowered one of these LC1 chair people to publicly voice the issues of the farmers. This, in collaboration with a pioneering local journalist, resulted in the information divide being bridged. In other cases, the most marginalised informal businesspeople were not represented (e.g. stone crushers and the Nabyerengera market traders) and formal channels to raise their concerns were either not available or blind to their problems.

Mass media therefore potentially provides complementary and alternative channels for voice and representation for the private sector which are particularly important to the sections of business that are most poorly represented and marginalized. Mass media also provides an alternative and complimentary channel for information to policy makers, enhancing public-private dialogue.

#### Building interest in the issues in the business environment

The mass media not only raises awareness but can also deepen understanding of business issues and therefore stimulate interest among policy makers and reformers. This was achieved in some of the cases by in-depth investigation, dialogue and discussion. In many cases rather

than relying on decision makers, policy makers and reformers to listen to the programmes by chance, journalists invited them onto the radio programmes to participate in discussion and debate. These were mostly done as live talk shows but in the case of Nekolera Gyange was undertaken as a field-level debate.

The ability of mass media to frame issues and convey them to audiences is an important component of its ability to bring about change. A unique characteristic of broadcast media is its

**“I was really touched by the coverage on radio”**  
Byamugisha Santoro, LC 3 Chair person, Kabale.

**“When we heard the programmes the councillors, particularly the ladies, were touched because the women were sitting under the sun all day working hard but making no money”** Lydia Turyahumura, Women’s representative counsellor, Kabale District.

**“The mayor would not listen to individuals but very many people are listening to radio and he fears loss of face and will listen”** Market Trader, Fort Portal Municipal market

ability to convey the very words – and in the case of TV, faces – of interviewees and therefore their emotions. This ability of broadcast media is apparent in the case of the stone-crushers which impacted on both consumers and local politicians.

Another aspect of media that results in its commanding the attention of policy makers is its mass outreach. The issues are being publicly aired and discussed and policy makers will be perceived to be out of touch or unresponsive if they ignore or remain ignorant of topical issues.

#### Building the desire or conviction to act

A key motivator in many of the cases was the public pressure that media coverage placed on policy makers to act. This is one of the unique aspects of mass media and, from the case studies involving local and national government policy, appears to be a critical aspect in radio having brought about change. With the stone crushers it was not until the programme had been rerun at a more popular time and stimulated a public response that local government officials took action. In the cases involving market traders in central and western Uganda the local government officials were pressurised to fulfil promises made publicly on radio.

**“The minister and others would not have acted if this was not in the media”** Julius Tituryebwa, LC5 councillor, Kabale District

**“The government had to back down because of popularity. If radio wasn’t driving the people then it would not have been an important issue”** Hon. Maurice Kagim Kiwanuka, Minister of State for Economic Monitoring on the Mabira Forest Campaign.

Desire is perhaps an inappropriate term for the motivating factors in some of the policy impacts researched. Coerced may be a more appropriate term for the shelving of the plan to degazette part of Mabira Forest or in getting the mayor of Fort Portal to respond to the issues of market traders. In the interviews with supporters of the president on Mabira Forest and the mayor of Fort Portal there was a clear anger in their being forced to take action by the media. But these examples highlight the power of the media, which can be exerted both positively and negatively, to force action from policy makers.

#### Monitoring that action has taken place

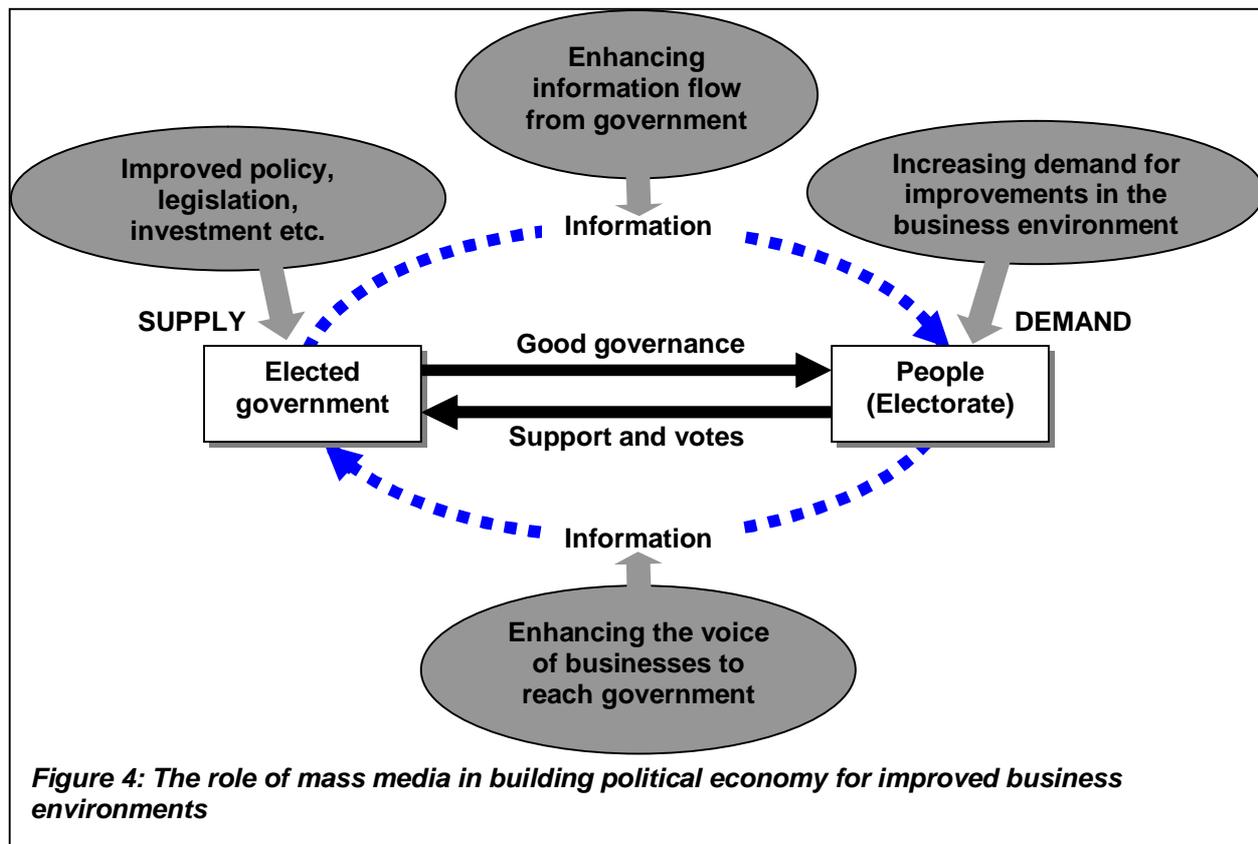
In a number of the case studies, the media played an important role in monitoring and following up on action taken by policy makers. This ‘watchdog’ role of monitoring action and performance was also complemented in the Nekolera Gyange listener group that acted as a citizen’s watchdog on the fulfilment of government pledges for action.

## **4.2 Building political economy**

In an interview during the research Hon. Hussein Kyanjo, a member of parliament, asserted that in Uganda *“the population is used to orders and is driven away from fighting for rights towards seeking favours and relying on contacts”*. Hon. Kyanjo continued by discussing the role that

mass media played in asserting rights and forcing politicians to adhere to the rules. While his assertion may be controversial, few independent observers would dispute the need for Uganda to build on its already established democracy and deepen political economy between the general population and its political representatives.

In five of the six case studies that deal with local and national policy, radio contributed to improved governance with respect to the business environment by stimulating the demand for and supply of better governance and enhancing the flow of information between elected governments and the people. As such, radio can be seen to be building political economy and supporting Uganda's current shift from oligarchy, where power rests primarily with a small elite, towards democracy at both national and local levels.



#### Enhancing information from government to the people

In the case studies (e.g. the market in central Uganda and early activities focusing on the market in Western Uganda) radio enhanced debate and discussion with government and provided an important channel through which local government could reach out to the public. This role of radio providing a channel to communicate with the public is also apparent in the Mambo Bado programme where the president and cabinet ministers attempted to put their viewpoint forward on the degazetting of part of Mabira Forest. State-controlled media has played this role for many decades and independent media, when working, also provides an important channel for communication between politicians and the people. Furthermore, private, independent media is perceived by many to be providing more impartial platforms for political dialogue and debate.

***“Radio is quite different from a rally. Firstly you are talking to the people not individuals, secondly people have more belief in radio”***  
 Mayor Edison Asaba Ruyonga, Fort Portal

#### Enhancing the voice of the people to reach government

In the case studies radio acted as either the direct channel for information or, in the case of the town debates organised by Nekolera Gyange, as the catalyst for the organisation of a forum.

Radio therefore enhanced information flow to government, helping and in some circumstances forcing the government to listen and understand the issues of business communities.

This role has emerged strongly with the increasing liberalization of media which has replaced the government controlled media monopolies which dominated in the majority of developing countries throughout most of the twentieth century. The increased diversity and independence of mass media therefore offers the opportunity to enhance the people's voice in policy reform processes.

#### Increasing demand for improved business environments

In a number of the case studies radio programmes have created public awareness and stimulated interest in issues impacting on the business environment. This raised awareness and interest among the general public appears to have played a pivotal role in motivating policy makers to act. In the examples of national and local government policy, the motivation is most apparent as being part of the transactional relationship between voters and elected officials (mayors, local councillors, MPs and the President himself). In the example of BAT, the primary motivating factor for action was profitability, but BAT was also motivated to act to save its public reputation and image.

The example of the stone crushers is particularly noteworthy. In the wider scheme of fighting for support among the electorate, the plight of 80 poor women would be unlikely to figure highly. But once the media aroused wider public interest and compassion the motivation for elected officials to act and be seen to act significantly increased. The public nature of media therefore plays an important role in building demand for reform, a role which other forms of private sector representation struggles to achieve.

#### Increasing the supply of effective policy, legislation and investment

The majority of the case studies highlight that radio played a pivotal role in bringing about changes in the business environment. It was therefore impacting on the supply of public sector investment, legislation and policy. The impacts of media on policy and services are explored in more detail in Section 5.

### **4.3 In support of local reformers**

In the concluding section of his recent book 'The Bottom Billion', the former director of development research at the World Bank, Paul Collier details his views on 'an agenda for action' to tackle the problem of what he views as the 'failing states', a group of about 50 states where poverty is most prevalent. One area of action he specifies is in 'breaking the reform impasse in failing states' and he writes:

*'Reform in these countries has to come from within, and it takes courage. Vested interests can be relied upon to use their power, resources and ingenuity to oppose change. Although the reformers have truth on their side, truth is just another special interest, and not a particularly powerful one. The villains willing to lie in order to defeat change have an advantage over those constrained by honesty. Reformers do not have it easy'*<sup>8</sup>

***"People should get information of what is taking place and it is part of our security. I get my security from people. If they don't get that information then my security would be at threat. So we are trying to attract sympathy such that whenever you are put in trouble you can be rescued"***

Julius Tituryebwa, LC5 councillor and activist on mismanagement in a SW Ugandan bus park.

***"It is awareness that makes government not act irrationally towards us. There was a great outcry when we were arrested"*** Hon. Kyanjo Hussein, opposition MP and Mabira campaigner

In the case studies, radio has informed, motivated, empowered and, in the case of the South Western Uganda bus park,

<sup>8</sup> The Bottom billion: Why the Poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it, Paul Collier, Oxford University press. 2007

provided some degree of protection to the reformers. The journalists themselves who have been named in this paper – Alice Kabatooro, Alex Akwankwasa and Hamzat Ssenoga and others – are themselves reformers who were often willing to take risks to expose malpractice. In these case studies, two of these journalists have been threatened with violence, and one with her life.

The mass media gave environmental campaigners the means to bring the public on their side and thus empowered the campaign. A campaign which both sides of the debate stated would have failed without the mass support stimulated by mass media and particularly radio. In the context of these case studies, radio is therefore stimulating reform by supporting reformers. The supporting role of mass media to reformers is a critically important one if, as Paul Collier emphasizes, reform has to come from within.

## SECTION 5: WHAT CAN MASS MEDIA ACHIEVE? THE IMPACT OF MEDIA IN THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Measuring the socio-economic impact of any development intervention is notoriously complex and difficult. Measuring the impact of interventions involving the mass media is particularly challenging. The public nature of mass media undermines the ability to utilize control groups and the size and distribution of audiences creates sampling difficulties. In contrast to message-oriented media interventions, such as social marketing campaigns, an approach which involves media maintaining editorial control adds further complexity to impact measurement.

Despite these complications, the research undertaken for this paper aimed to explore impact in more detail and where possible to measure the impact of radio at enterprise level. This research aimed to answer two key questions. Can radio be seen to have a tangible impact on policy and therefore enterprises? What is the potential scale of impact of policy focused radio programmes on enterprises?

The radio programmes featured in the case studies resulted in a number of impacts on enterprises. Not only are they providing platforms for dialogue and debate on issues impacting on the business environment, but they are also providing a wide array of information on issues such as markets, service provision, technology and business management. For the purposes of this paper, the research focused purely on the policy-related impacts of radio.

### Causality chain

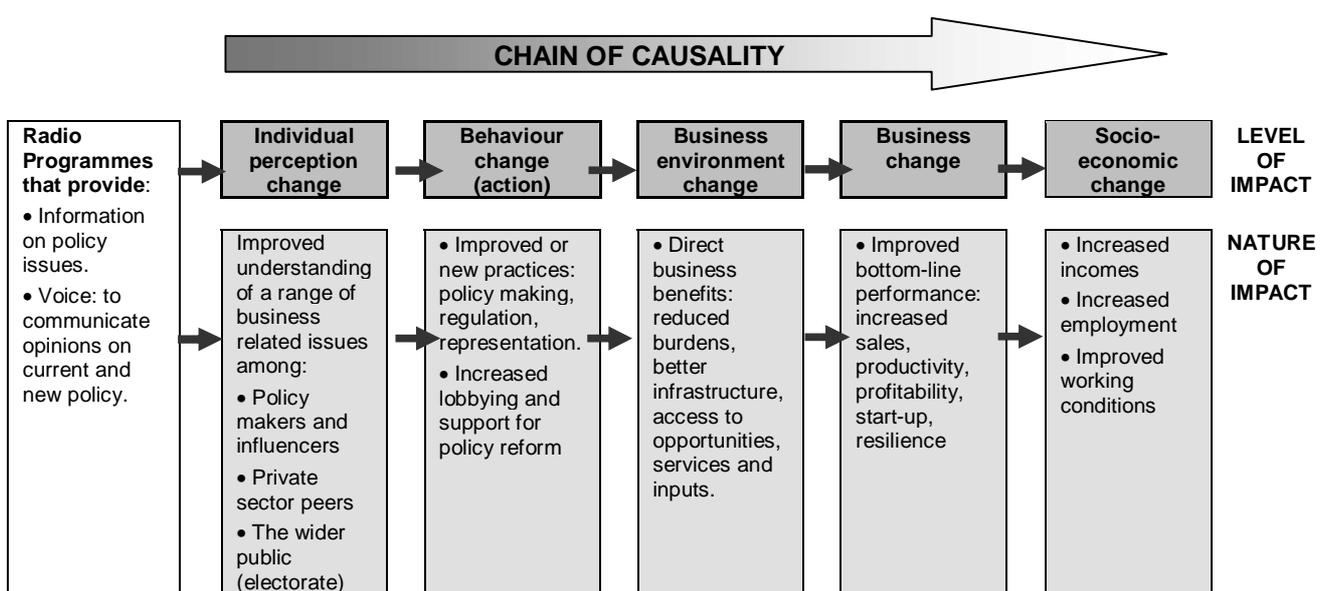


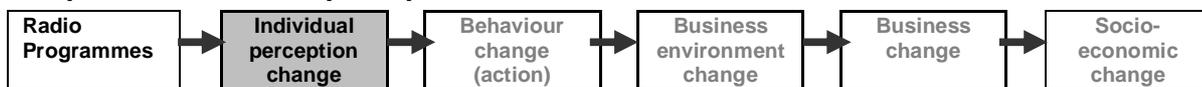
Figure 5: Causality chain for radio programmes

To understand the potential impact of radio programmes on business environment reform it is important to establish a realistic chain of causality (see figure 5). Radio programmes, as with other mass media, can only change audiences' understanding, knowledge or awareness (perception) of an issue. As noted above, this raised awareness, understanding or knowledge needs to result in behaviour change (action) among policy makers, reformers and lobbyists. It is this action that then potentially impacts on the business environment and then on individual businesses.

The research for the case studies worked to prove attribution of identified business environment reforms by questioning those on the different side of the reform debate (lobbyists, policymakers etc.). Once attribution was proven then analysis was undertaken to quantify impacts on business.

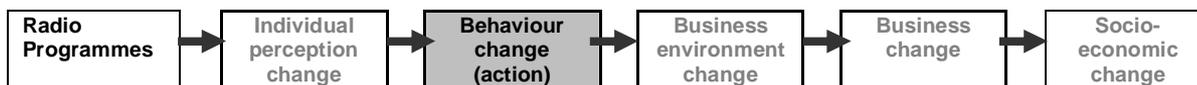
The following tables provide details of the key identifiable and attributable impacts of the radio programmes at the various steps in the causality chain. The bus park case study is the one example which has not yet shown an impact at business level since the issue is yet to be resolved.

### Impact on individual perception



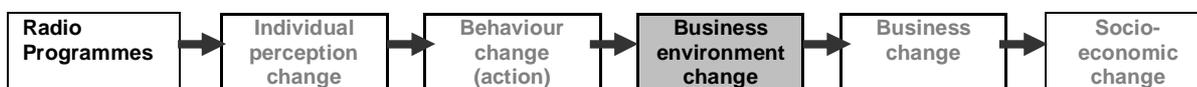
Case study	Perception change
<b>BAT tobacco</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness and understanding of problems of farmers among:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BAT management at headquarters</li> <li>- Local government officials and inspectors</li> <li>- Wider public in Masindi area</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Night market – Central Uganda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness and understanding of lack of investment in market and fears among the Nabyerengera of being forced from the market among:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local government officials</li> <li>- Other market traders</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Stone crushers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness and understanding of the plight of women in having their product stolen:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- among local government councillors</li> <li>- among the buyers of the stone</li> <li>- among the wider public</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Awareness and understanding among the women stone crushers of their own rights.</li> </ul>
<b>Bus park tendering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness among the wider public of :               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the alleged mismanagement of the bus park</li> <li>- action being taken by the local councillor in trying to bring about reform of the tender and management of the bus park</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Market – Western Uganda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness among local government officials of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the demand for improved investment in the market</li> <li>- health and business problems in the market.</li> <li>- views on the relocation of the market</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Mabira Forest campaign</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness and understanding of the potential impact of deforestation on livelihoods among:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the general public</li> <li>- politicians</li> <li>- civil society and lobby groups</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Impact on action among policy makers, reformers and lobbyists



Case study	Action taken
<b>BAT tobacco</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigation into the complaints of farmers by BAT</li> <li>Restructuring of the outgrowing and buying systems by BAT.</li> <li>Restructuring of BAT's communication strategy with farmers</li> <li>Enforcement of the tobacco act and increased scrutiny by local government on tobacco growing</li> </ul>
<b>Night market – Central Uganda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes in priorities in investing into the market by local government</li> <li>Guarantees provided by councillors over space in the market for the Nabyerengera night market.</li> </ul>
<b>Stone crushers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public response to the plight of the women through phone calls and interaction with the radio station</li> <li>Public statements made by councillors to clarify and assert the rights of the women stone crushers.</li> <li>Women's representative councillor put pressure on LC1 to protect the rights of women stone crushers.</li> <li>Women began to assert their rights when dealing with the men.</li> </ul>
<b>Bus park tendering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public response to the mismanagement in the bus park through interaction with phone-in talk shows. This led to increased public support for reform in the bus park.</li> <li>Continuation of the campaign by local councillor to bring about change in the bus park.</li> </ul>
<b>Market – Western Uganda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reprioritization of investment in the market by Mayor and municipal council</li> </ul>
<b>Mabira Forest campaign</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased public support to the campaign with petitions, public debate, demonstrations.</li> <li>Government began interaction and debate on the degazetting of the forest.</li> <li>Opposition among parliamentarians increased with more public announcements of disapproval.</li> </ul>

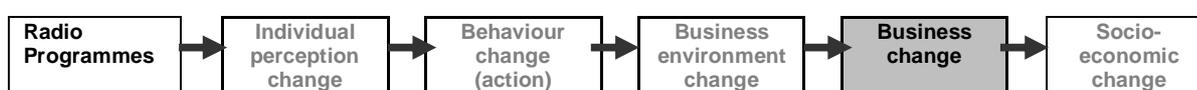
## Impact on the business environment



Case study	Impact on the business environment
<b>BAT tobacco</b>	<p><u>Corporate policy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved and more transparent system for grading and buying put into place.</li> <li>Improved communication policy for BAT's extension service.</li> </ul> <p><u>Government policy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased enforcement of the Tobacco Act among local government inspectors</li> </ul>

<b>Night market – central Uganda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New infrastructure provided – lighting, sanitation.</li> <li>• Improved local government services – rubbish collection</li> <li>• Guaranteed space in the market for the Nabyerengera.</li> </ul>
<b>Stone crushers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforcement of established procedures to protect women’s rights</li> </ul>
<b>Bus park tendering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased ability of a reformer to pressurise local government and the Ministry of Local government to investigate and clamp down on alleged breaking of policy and legislative procedures.</li> </ul>
<b>Market – Western Uganda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved infrastructure – water, sanitation and new market premises</li> </ul>
<b>Mabira Forest campaign</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned degazetting put on hold.</li> <li>• Enforced adherence to established constitutional and parliamentary procedures in degazetting a forest reserve.</li> </ul>

### Impact on enterprises



Case study	Impact on enterprises
<b>BAT tobacco</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income of around 25,000 farmers from tobacco more than tripled from \$180 to \$530 a year.</li> <li>• Increase in the number of tobacco out growers to 47,000 across the country.</li> <li>• Increased security of the tobacco market and supply chain with significantly improved quality of Ugandan tobacco.</li> </ul>
<b>Night market – central Uganda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The income activities of 60 Nabyerengera were saved.</li> <li>• 43 additional Nabyerengera entered the market.</li> <li>• Savings and increased incomes of Nabyerengera of \$0.50 a day.</li> </ul>
<b>Stone crushers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased income of 80 women stone-crushers of between 40% to 60%.</li> <li>• Increased ability and confidence of some women to invest in new business activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Market – Western Uganda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between 80 to 100 food vendors improved sanitation resulting in increased clientele (one vendor attributed a 100% increase in business to the improvements) and improved health among the</li> </ul>
<b>Mabira Forest campaign</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of non-timber forest enterprises including honey, fruit collection and medicinal plant collection in Mabira area.</li> <li>• Protection of a growing eco-tourism industry.</li> <li>• Suggested wider impact on the enterprises by reducing risks of water and electricity shortages.</li> </ul>

The single largest measurable impact was in the tobacco sector and highlights the potential power of improved information. The other case studies achieved more modest impacts at enterprise level, improving incomes of smaller numbers of people. What was not measured in this study was the possible wider impact that some of these examples may have had. For example, did asserting the rights of women stone crushers empower other stone crushers or other female

***“If radio was not there we would probably have learnt about this two years later which could have had a real impact on our business”***  
 Communications manager, BAT Headquarters, Uganda

entrepreneurs to assert their rights? Has the public dialogue, debate and controversy around markets, taxi parks and forest reserves changed the way that local and national policy makers govern and has this impacted more widely on enterprises?

Whilst anecdotally there are signs of spill-over effects, these more diffuse impacts of mass media are difficult and costly to isolate and quantify and are beyond the resources of this research. What this analysis confirms is that radio can have an impact on policy and therefore on enterprises. What it also shows is that despite the need for mass media to have mass appeal, it can cover minority interest issues such as those of the stone crushers and the Nabyerengera by reporting them as 'human interest' stories which can appeal to a wide audience.

## **SECTION 6: WHEN IT WORKS, WHY DOES IT WORK?**

The case studies have spotlighted successful examples of radio impacting on reform in the business environment. These examples are by no means the norm in radio in Uganda. It is therefore important to identify the characteristics that underpin the success of the radio programmes in these case studies. This requires an analysis of the approach of the radio journalists and producers and of the media environment in which they are operating.

### **Public, community or commercial: which can most effectively impact on policy reform?**

All of the radio stations featured in the case studies are commercial. CBS is majority owned by the Buganda Kingdom, which is separate from government. The other radio stations featured, Kitara FM, Voice of Kigezi and Voice of Toro are owned by individuals. It is therefore impossible in this case study to compare the roles of different types of media, but it is clear that commercial, for-profit radio can, and is, playing an important developmental role in the Ugandan context.

This appears to fly in the face of much conventional wisdom in media development and development communication which views the commercial, for-profit agenda of media houses as conflicting with their willingness and ability to run developmental content and programmes. So are these stations undertaking such programming for reasons of corporate social responsibility or does such programming make commercial sense?

For CBS, Nekolera Gyange (their twice weekly business programme) and Mambo Bado (their people's parliament programme) are among their most profitable programmes. They achieve this popularity by attracting audience and therefore sponsors. As this illustrates, the primary business of commercial media is in selling an audience to advertisers. Low audience ratings mean lack of competitiveness and therefore lack of advertising and sponsorship revenue. In a competitive media industry, radio stations must therefore ensure that their programmes are responding to the interests of their audiences. In Uganda business programmes that respond to the issues of micro and small enterprise have been seen to be popular<sup>9</sup>. These programmes drive up listener ratings and provide opportunities to sell to advertisers that are interested to promote products, equipment and services to small businesspeople. In addition, political and current affairs programmes have been seen to be extremely popular and are mainstreamed into the prime time of most radio stations. Such programmes are now part of what audiences expect from local and national radio stations. The profit motive of commercial radio stations does not therefore conflict with their ability to run programming that can impact on broader policy and business environment reform if that reform is in demand from the public.

What has more impact on the ability of radio to impact effectively on policy is ownership of radio. In Uganda, it is the publicly or state-owned radio, managed from the Ministry of Information in the Presidents office, that is perceived to be ill placed to offer independent platforms for debate, impartial information and an enhanced voice for the public. This situation is similar in many

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<sup>9</sup> Audience research undertaken under the ILO FIT-SEMA project in 2004 showed that 74% of adults in central and western Uganda were regular listeners to at least one small business programme.

countries where public radio has not effectively separated itself from influence of the incumbent government.

Community owned radio is not well established in Uganda and is mostly small with limited broadcasting range. Community radio in Uganda, as in many countries, often relies on volunteers and acts more often as a notice board for local announcements. Community radio therefore neither investigates issues journalistically nor undertakes current affairs and political programming unless funded and supported by external donors (making them unsustainable).

The other type to radio that has tended to play an important role in governance issues are the relatively small number of religiously owned radio stations in Uganda. Their role is often explicitly social, as well as religious, and they often provide an important platform for debate and public voice.

Like their public counterparts, many private radio stations in Uganda have a political bias or are poorly managed, resulting in unbalanced programming and an unwillingness of radio owners and managers to invest in more expensive field based programming. However the predominantly private and commercial nature of Uganda's radio industry does not impact negatively on its ability to play a positive role in policy reform. It is poor management and biased media coverage stemming from ownership, be that public or private, which appears to be the major inhibiting factor to radio's positive role in policy reform processes.

### **From rumour and speculation to fact and investigation: The importance of professional journalism**

Radio in Uganda is often accused of peddling rumour and unsubstantiated accusation rather than fact. The talk shows, phone-in programmes and open forums (such as the people's parliament programmes) are perceived as a platform for such rumour. Rather than providing platforms for balanced debate and conflict resolution, radio and the media more generally is perceived as often throwing oil on the fire of conflict. While various commentators would differ in their view of how radio overall measures up in balanced political and social debate, it is certainly true that biased, uncorroborated and poorly researched information is spread through radio in Uganda.

The negative impact of poor quality journalism and media coverage are not unique to Uganda and are a characteristic of every media industry across the world. But there are professional standards and best practices in media that attempt to reduce the potential negative impact of media. The case studies highlighted in this paper generally appear to reinforce this need for professional journalism which includes:

- Effective investigation and corroboration of facts
- Balanced and unbiased reporting
- Providing the right to respond for those accused of malpractice

In fact in the BAT example it was the dedication of the journalist to get a response from the BAT headquarters that ultimately provided the breakthrough in having the issue addressed. In the Western Ugandan market example, the radio station and programme involved was accused of bias. This appeared to break down the ability of the radio programme to be a platform for balanced debate and made the programme a platform for one side of the debate. This situation may be inevitable in some circumstances where one side is not open to criticism and may be used to an autocratic approach to managing conflict. But as the Nekolera Gyange example of the market in central Uganda shows, a professional approach to handling rumour can result in defusing rather than inflaming tension and conflict.

***“CBS played a role in uniting those who thought they were being marginalized and the tension has been defused”***

Market Master, Mpigi Market on CBS's role in a recent market conflict

Professional journalism is therefore central to the radio programmes having positive impact on policy and providing effective platforms for public debate and discourse.

### **Focused and investigative: the added value of business programming involving field based investigation**

Much of the impact in the case studies came through programmes that were focused on business or agriculture. Radio stations in Uganda run short news bulletins (often five minutes on the hour) and these news bulletins seldom go into detail on issues and focus on a few national and local headlines. The few current affairs and political programmes do cover business issues, but it is unlikely that the issues of women stone crushers or the Nabyerengera would have been raised on such programmes without having first appeared on a focused and regular business programme.

It is also clear from the case studies that it was the field-based investigative nature of these programmes that resulted in issues being identified and highlighted. The journalists in the focused business programmes moved to the villages, markets and streets to identify the problems of businesspeople. It was this approach that uncovered issues that would have otherwise gone unnoticed.

***“We thought radio was about announcements, but after the meeting (with Kitara FM) we realised that radio could cover the problems of communities”*** Kizito Mutaagi, farmer and village chairman

The fact that the programmes were business focused and oriented towards identifying the issues and problems of business in the field appears to be an important ingredient in their success.

### **Indigenously driven, relevant and responsive: the importance of media being internally rather than externally driven**

Many ‘developmental’ radio programmes in Uganda are sponsored by development organisations and NGOs. While some of the development sponsors provide some freedom over the content in the programmes, many maintain influence or control the content and editorial policy. This is often done with a belief that it is the development sponsor, rather than the radio station itself, that understands the needs of the target audience. The case studies are therefore noteworthy because the journalists involved have complete editorial control over the programmes. They are operating journalistically in identifying and investigating issues. By doing so, they are identifying issues that are unlikely to be priority for developmental sponsors but are priorities for small businesspeople. The journalists are therefore effectively tapping into the grassroots concerns and problems of business communities by using investigative approaches to news gathering and programme production.

### **Building local political economies: the importance of local media in decentralized governance**

Only one of the six case studies, Mabira forest, dealt with a policy issue at national level. The other examples revolved around locally specific issues. While the possible decline of tobacco growing has national relevance in tax terms, the growing of tobacco is limited to four areas of Uganda and was therefore initially a local issue also. The case studies on markets, bus park and stone crushing all revolved around discourse between local government and local business communities. A number of respondents commented that such issues would be unlikely to command more than a few lines in national media and it was only local radio that would cover the topic in depth.

As in many countries, national media is perceived to have a strong urban and capital city bias. The business issues and the policies of local government in the upcountry districts of Uganda are generally of low priority. Local media therefore plays an extremely important role in building local political economy, improving information flow between local government and local communities and providing platforms for local policy dialogue. In many ways, local radio is therefore closer to and more relevant to the poor in Uganda.

This is a particularly important role in Uganda with increasing investment in local economic development and therefore an increasingly important role for local government in private sector development.

### **An ongoing process not an issue: The importance of sustainability in achieving impact**

A number of informants for the Mabira Forest campaign case study noted that they believed that the policy of degazetting part of the forest has been shelved rather than abandoned. Some believe that following the high profile Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) the issue will be back on the agenda. As in this case, the roles that mass media plays in information, voice and platforms for debate are ongoing ones. The checks and balances provided by civil society and the electorate and potentially enhanced by mass media need to remain permanently. Policy reforms and the issues and problems that businesses face recur, evolve and change.

The importance of a continued focus on the problems of a business community is also illustrated by the case studies dealing with markets in central and western Uganda. The problems faced by the traders in western Uganda evolved and changed while the problem of loss of access to the market for the Nabyerengera recurred. In both cases the journalists followed through and continued to play a role in the dialogue.

One-off reform initiatives focusing on 'fixing' a single policy issue face the risk that changes can be subsequently watered down or even reversed. Similarly, radio programmes that are reliant on donor funding are likely to have a limited lifespan and therefore will not have the same impact as those that can be independently sustained. Sustainability in radio programmes helps build the political economy that is essential for more effective governance processes.

## **SECTION 7. CONCLUSION: LESSONS FOR THE ROLE THAT DONORS CAN PLAY IN STRENGTHENING MEDIA AS A DRIVER OF BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT REFORM.**

This paper has highlighted that radio, and mass media more widely, can play an important role as a driver of change in its own right by raising the awareness of issues in the business environment and building the interest and conviction to take action to bring about reform. As such, the mass media builds political economy by enhancing information flow to and from elected governments and the electorate. The mass media can also support other reformers and drivers of change by building the support and lobby for reform.

The paper has demonstrated that radio can impact on some of the most marginalized in society, providing them with voice and representation that they lack and are unlikely to receive through formal representative channels.

This paper therefore clearly shows the potential importance of radio in business environment reform, but what role can donors play in strengthening this role? An analysis of the roles of FIT Uganda and ILO SEMA, which supported most of the programmes featured in the case studies, provides a useful insight into the potential role for donor intervention.

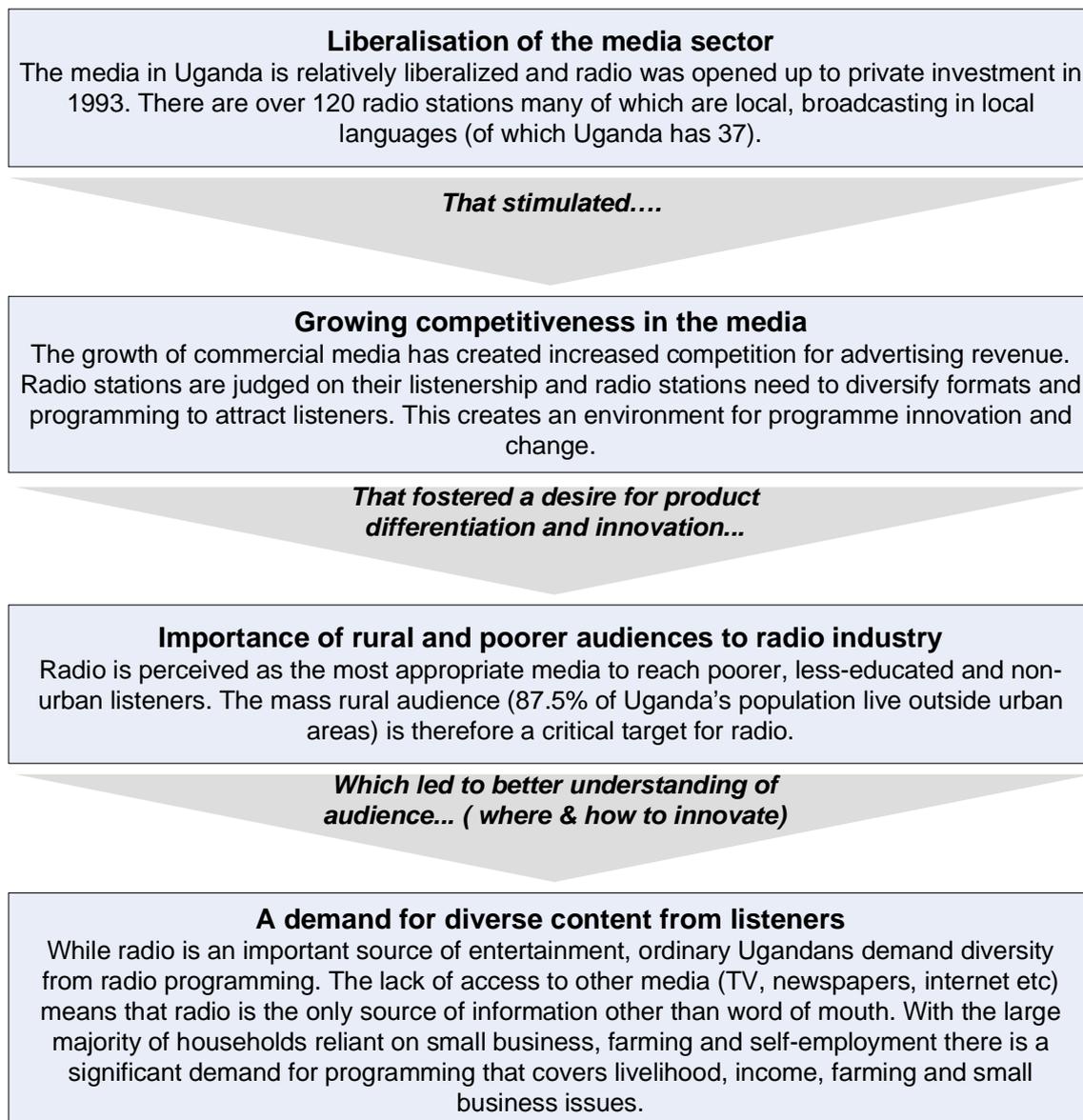
### **7.1 Donor intervention in Uganda**

The work of FIT Uganda and the ILO SEMA project built on a growing, liberalized radio industry. As illustrated in figure 6, commercial and competitive pressures within this growing radio industry created the environment in which radio programming focusing on the incomes and livelihoods of the mass audience (the rural poor in Uganda) was able to flourish. The roles of both FIT Uganda and ILO SEMA were in:

- Reinforcing the commercial opportunity for radio stations to develop programming that focuses on income and livelihood issue. This was done by assisting radio stations to

understand the business of media, the demand from audiences for informative content and more specifically the demand from listeners and advertisers for focused business programmes.

- Supporting the process of radio programme innovation to respond to this opportunity. The interventions supported training and capacity development to enable radio staff to develop and market programmes effectively. The projects also supported programme innovation.



**Figure 6: The factors that underpin the success of business radio programmes in Uganda**

The interventions avoided the purchase of radio airtime or direct financial support. As such, these programmes were working within a pre-existing radio market and making this market work better for the poor. This M4P (making markets work for the poor) approach resulted in the growth of indigenously owned, managed and controlled radio programmes that are responding to audience interests and needs. It is the M4P approach that underpins the success of the radio programmes highlighted in the case studies. It is this approach that has ensured that the radio programmes continue to operate and run independently from external donor funding or editorial control.

## **7.2 Suggested areas of donor intervention**

To embrace this M4P approach donors interventions for donors should be in three key areas. Firstly, supporting emerging and growing media industries so that they reach and serve the poor. Secondly, working at the systemic level to build the market institutions that can support the improvement of standards, increasing capacity and competitiveness in the media industry. Thirdly, supporting innovation in media products that can effectively provide platforms for debate, voice and information.

### **7.2.1 Supporting emerging and growing media industries**

Various issues constrain the growth and diversification of media. For example national legislation, approaches to the licensing of media and lack of finance and knowledge among investors all contribute to stifling media growth. In Sri Lanka, as in many countries, there is a significant lack of local media that covers issues from a sub-national, non-Colombo perspective. As a result of this lack of local media, there is ineffective coverage of local issues. In Bangladesh, lack of liberalization of terrestrial broadcast media leaves one third of the rural population media dark<sup>10</sup> (without access to any media) while at the local level newspapers are the only media with a local focus in a country with only 41% adult literacy<sup>11</sup>.

Lobbying for improved media legislation and supporting investment and growth in local media in such situations can support the emergence of media industries that can more effectively support policy reform processes and therefore enhance business environments. Support to the emergence of local media would appear to be particularly important with investment in Local Economic Development (LED) and the increasing power being provided to local government through decentralization programmes.

The Media Development Loan Fund (MDLF)<sup>12</sup> is currently using financial service approaches to support investment in private media. Such approaches can stimulate growth and improvement in media industries leading to media playing a more effective role in political, economic and business environments.

### **7.2.2 Building media market institutions and market systems**

At the heart of the M4P approach is the need to work at the systemic level and support the growth of institutions and supporting services that raise standards and build capacity in the media system. The areas of particular importance that are highlighted in the case studies are:

#### Raising professional media standards

Media works effectively when it operates professionally and without bias. Supporting the raising of professional standards in media, for example by supporting the development of codes of practice, voluntary standards and self regulation, can significantly enhance the media's capacity to effectively build political economy at local and national levels.

#### Building journalism capacity and skill

Much work has been undertaken in training and capacity building journalist; some effective and others less so. Training in basic journalism skills, investigative journalism, production techniques etc. can work if they are appropriately designed and bring on board the gatekeepers of media: the editors, managers and owners. Such training reinforces the journalism skills that allow media to play a more effective and independent role in providing voice, platforms for dialogue and information.

#### Enhancing the competitiveness and profitability of media industries

Profitability in mass media is essential to enable it to operate effectively and be able to invest in quality journalism. Many factors impinge on media profitability. Weak media management often

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<sup>10</sup> AC Nielsen, Bangladesh, media and demographic survey 2005

<sup>11</sup> UNDP Human Development report 2005

<sup>12</sup> See [www.mdflf.org](http://www.mdflf.org)

results in a lack of understanding of the importance of audience leading to manipulation by advertisers and poor editorial and programming choices. Weak management also leads to poor reinvestment in journalism, content and programming.

Local and rural radio stations often struggle to be profitable resulting in weak and ineffective local media. Poor marketing and audience research that is biased towards urban areas often impacts on the profitability of local media. Interventions can therefore focus on removing these blocks and distortions to improve profitability and therefore the operation of media.

### **7.2.3 Supporting processes of competition and innovation**

The ILO SEMA project in Uganda supported the growth of small business radio programming in the country. Similar activities have been piloted by Swisscontact in Indonesia, Katalyst in Bangladesh, and ILO in Sri Lanka involving print, radio and TV. In Bangladesh, Katalyst is also working to enhance business journalism training at universities. These activities are endeavouring to increase the focus of media on economic, business and agricultural activity. This specific focus increases the impact of media on business environment reform, as highlighted in the case studies detailed in this paper.

Private sector development practitioners are particularly well placed to enhance the role of the media. In the past, much work in media was about reforming media as a public service. But today, with the growth of media industries, the focus is now inevitably on making diverse media markets work; an activity which requires private sector understanding and skill as well as understanding of journalism and media. These activities overlap with work in wider political governance where capacity building independent media is a clear current priority. The private sector development sector therefore potentially has an opportunity to add value to these existing activities and increase the focus on making media markets work for promoting economic and business environment reform.

## Annexes: Detailed case studies

### Case Study 1

#### Exposing corruption and bringing about policy change at corporate business level: Rural tobacco farmers in Northern Uganda.

##### Background

In Uganda, Tobacco is the single largest source of tax revenue to the government and is estimated to provide about one sixteenth of the total tax revenue<sup>13</sup>. Unlike many tobacco producing countries, production in Uganda is based on smallholder farming rather than estates. This potentially provides direct income to tens of thousands of rural farmers but creates logistical problems for the tobacco exporters.

In 2003 the quality and production consistency of Ugandan tobacco was proving problematic. Many tobacco experts in Uganda pinpointed the poorly-educated farmers as the source of the problem and questions were being raised about whether smallholder farmers could produce the higher quality that is increasingly required for the global market. As the number of out growers dropped and standards failed to rise, tobacco growing in Uganda appeared to be threatened. The collapse, or even significant reduction, in the tobacco industry would have significant implications to the tax revenue and wealth of the country.

Tobacco farming in Uganda is undertaken in 4 northern areas of the country and has over the past few decades provided an important source of income to rural households and economies. But from the early nineties onto 2003 tobacco production had become a source of concern and anger for farmers resulting in many reducing or abandoning tobacco production all together. The source of the problem was the tobacco buyers who worked on behalf of BAT (British American Tobacco) that held a monopoly in tobacco production and export at that time. A growing and bitter conflict had grown up between the farmers and the BAT buyers as a result of perceived exploitative practices by these individuals.

In Bunyoro, one of the 4 growing areas, trust and communication between farmers and the tobacco company's agents had completely broken down. The farmer's complaint was that the buyers were extorting the large majority of their profits by:

- Grading the majority of tobacco as X quality, the lowest grade possible, while they believed the buyers were handing it onto BAT as if they had paid for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and thus pocketing the difference.
- Fraudulently weighing the tobacco and refusing to allow the farmers to see the scales.
- Exaggerating inputs provided by the buyers (seed, fertilizer etc.) particularly to illiterate farmers who were unable to monitor the 'pass books' which logged inputs.
- Charging for transport and other services which the farmers believed should have been provided free as part of the growing agreement with BAT.

The farmers lacked the voice and leverage to tackle this issue. Despite their being a 'Tobacco Marketing Act' created in 1992 under which government could monitor and regulate tobacco growing, local government inspectors were overstretched and their management did not place a high priority on monitoring tobacco growing. Direct complaints to the tobacco company could only be made through the company's agents and as Kizito Mataagi, the chairman of a tobacco growing village, commented '*when we tried to complain to the company we were beaten by the askaris (guards)*'.

The problem of tobacco production in Uganda was growing due to lack of information. The head quarters of BAT received their information through their agents and their agents acted as the interpreters and guides during site visits. They were therefore unaware of the spiralling conflict

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<sup>13</sup> New York Times, February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2003

and the accusations of misconduct among their agents. The farmers had no national association and only fragmented village based representation. These representatives lacked the capacity and channels to reach those who could bring about change.

### **The role of radio**

In 2004 the Ugandan government announced a ban on smoking in public places. Journalist and radio producer Alice Kabatooro decided to use this as a starting point of a story for a weekly livelihoods and business programme called Ekyotamusana that she ran on the FM radio station Radio Kitara in Masindi (the principle town of Bunyoro). Alice operated this programme differently from most on local FM radio and worked on the principle of ‘taking radio to the people’. Rather than relying purely on studio based guest and phone-in programmes that marginalised many, particularly rural populations, that had no or limited access to telephones, Alice went to the streets, villages and markets to make recordings and interact with her listeners. Alice therefore took public transport to visit a tobacco growing village with the intention of getting their views on the potential impact of the smoking ban on their farming activities. On arriving in Kitwara Village Alice met with the village chairman. Local farmers were called to an impromptu village debate which was recorded to use in the next edition of Ekyotamusana. It quickly became apparent that the smoking ban was of minimal importance to the farmers, there was a much more important and newsworthy story.

The debate undertaken in the shade of a mango tree in the small village centre inevitably focused on the problems farmers had with the tobacco buyers. The farmers voices were recorded in their own language and the list of accusations were explained in detail. As the meeting progressed word circulated and more and more farmers arrived in Kitwara to echo the same complaints. In the end over 50 farmers were crowded into the small market centre.

***“We thought radio was about announcements, but after the meeting [with Kitara FM] we realised that radio could cover the problems of communities”*** Kizito Mutaagi, farmer and village chairman

On returning to Masindi, Alice made contact with one of the BAT buyers in the area to present them with these unsubstantiated accusations. The response was robust, firstly denying all the accusations and then threatening violence if the issue was covered on radio. Alice said that the farmer’s accusations began to sound more convincing when she perceived a contradiction in the wage and lifestyle of some of the BAT buyers. She explained that *‘I realised something was strange when I found out that one buyer was driving a luxury four wheel drive and was constructing a house in Muyenga [one of Kampala’s wealthy suburbs]. It did not add up since they were not that highly paid.’*

Alice provided the right-to-reply to the BAT buyers, which was refused, and she went on to run three thirty minute programmes on the issues involving the pre-recorded voices of farmers, phone-ins and discussions with farmers and guests including the District Commercial Officer. The programmes resulted in an immediate response. Other farmers from other areas called to highlight that this was not an isolated occurrence – it was widespread throughout the central-north growing area. The public also called to voice anger at the situation. During this time, pressure was exerted on the radio station management by one of the BAT buyers implicated in the scandal and Alice was again threatened with violence. She remembers one phone call when she was told *‘if you kill my job then you will also die’*.

But despite the local storm created by the radio programme, there was no official response from senior BAT management who had not heard of the story and it began to look as if the issue would die without being resolved. Alice therefore took an additional and critical step. She took the recordings of the programmes and travelled to the national headquarters of BAT to meet with their public relations manager. The response was immediate. The recordings were taken to the country manager and translated by local staff. An inquiry was almost immediately ordered which

was to herald significant changes in the way that the company would deal with smallholder farmers.

### **Impact**

Within a year of the farmers' story being broken on air by radio Kitara, BAT had radically restructured its field operations. Investigations had shown that bad relations between its field staff and smallholder farmers were common across the country. The majority of its buyers were therefore retrenched and a new model for weighing, grading and buying put into place. The 152 buying centres were closed down and 4 main buying centres established. Transport began to be provided free for farmers and their produce to travel these centres. Grading is now closely monitored and electronic weighing scales are used within sight of the farmers.

***"If radio was not there we would probably have learnt about this 2 years later which could have had a real impact on our business"*** Information Manager, BAT

Not only were the buying procedures restructured, but the tobacco company's approach to information also changed. BAT are now using local radio stations as a channel for both providing information to farmers and receiving information something they had not done prior to 2004. They use radio programmes and announcements to convey information on growing, production and quality issues to farmers and support interactive programmes that can provide a platform for farmers to raise problems and issues.

These changes have begun to revive the industry. Small holder out growers were down to under 30,000 in 2004 with what BAT management termed *'a complete breakdown in the relationship with farmers'* and has now increased to 47,000. In Kitwara village, farmers' average income from tobacco has more than tripled from US\$ 180 to US\$ 530 pushing these farmers above the national poverty line. Similar gains appear to have been realised nationally.

While there is a significant employment and income impact, there is also a social impact of the changes. When farmer incomes were marginal many tobacco farmers were resorting to cutting costs by using their children to grow, process and transport the tobacco, a practice which BAT has been working to eradicate. Farmers report that with higher incomes which allows the use of adult casual labour and with the provision of free transport from BAT, this practice has significantly reduced.

In addition, radio and the public outcry that ensued stimulated local government to enforce the 'Tobacco Marketing Act' and begin more effective monitoring of tobacco outgrowing. Checks and balances that should have been in place both internally at BAT and through government monitoring now appear to be operating more effectively.

***"Radio has woken us up...the plight of the farmers provoked the enforcement of the tobacco act"*** Fredrick Kasozi, District Commercial Officer, Masindi

### **Key observations and lessons from the case study**

- Radio in its role of bridging information divides, in this case between rural farmers and the management of an international corporate business
- The importance of field based reporting that involves investigating the problems and issues of ordinary people.
- Professional and effective journalism involving investigation, follow-up and providing the right to reply as a key contributing factor in the successful outcome.
- The role of radio in stimulating a public outcry and then stimulating local government to enforce existing legislation.

## **CASE STUDY 2**

### **Building public policy debate and stimulating the set up and operation of citizen's watchdog groups: Night Market in central Uganda**

#### **Background**

Micro and small enterprises in Uganda often lack platforms to engage in discourse and debate with local government. The decentralized nature of local government in Uganda makes such policy and legislative debate critical to the effective formulation, implementation and enforcement of policy and legislation. The lack of channels for policy and legislative dialogue therefore impinges on local policy processes particularly for the smallest enterprises that most lack effective representation.

This is true for Mpigi town and district in central Uganda. Mpigi is a trading hub for the district as a whole and a satellite trading and transport centre to neighbouring Kampala, the country's capital. At the centre of business is the municipal market which not only acts as a domestic market but as a wholesale market for traders and transporters. Space in the market and trading centre is at a premium and is highly sought after. As in many towns in Uganda, the competition between various interest groups that are reliant on the market for their livelihoods creates a tense and often adversarial atmosphere which can spill over into violence.

It is the local government, headed by the elected mayor that is mandated with overseeing investment in the market infrastructure, allocation of market space and management of the markets. In the local political process, government officials are often accused of ignoring the needs of the least influential and therefore the poorest in society over those who wield both financial and electoral influence.

Despite this, some of the poorest traders in Mpigi had managed to find themselves a foothold in the municipal market and a vibrant night market had grown up of what are known as the 'Nabyerengera' (a term which means 'I will display and sell them myself'). The Nabyerengera are farmers by day who take their produce in the evening to sell at the market to ensure that they maintain the margins usually lost to middlemen. Despite the presence of the night market for around 10 years, by 2003 the Nabyerengera were under threat of losing their foothold in the market. The small patch of land outside the town's market on which the night market took place was being filled with public taxis (small minibuses) that were over spilling from the official bus parks. The taxi operators, often a relatively strong group politically, were demanding that the night market be turned over to a night taxi park.

In addition, the Nabyerengera felt that the fees levied on them were unduly high. While a shopkeeper in a formal premises would pay between \$20 to \$60 a year for a trading license, the Nabyerengera were paying more (\$0.20 a day which translated to around \$70 a year) to be able to use a small piece of dirt road outside the market for two and a half hours a night.

#### **The role of radio**

Nekolera Gyange (I run my own business) is a twice weekly radio programme on CBS (Central Broadcasting Service), a radio station that broadcasts across central Uganda in the regional language of Luganda. Nekolera Gyange has run since 1999 and focuses on the issues of businesspeople and farmers. In 2003 the programme had been reformatted to include what had become known as the Nekolera Gyange mobile. This involved monthly town and village level business debates with public officials and representatives from local business communities. These debates were recorded and were used in the twice weekly programmes. Sponsored by a national telecommunications company, these programmes are perceived by CBS to be a success both with audiences and with commercial sponsors.

In July 2003, Nekolera Gyange mobile came to Mpigi town and organised a public debate with local government officials on business in Mpigi town. Over 100 people came to the debate which involved the Mayor, Town Clerk, 8 local councillors, chair people from outlying villages and the

market master who managed the town's market. Various business issues were discussed but most prominent was the tension over the town's main market. The mayor publicly committed himself to investing in improving the market with lighting for the night market, improved rubbish collection, sanitation and a separate parking yard for vehicles. In addition, the Nabyerengera were promised a permanent place outside the market and that a review would be carried out into the market fees being levied.

The proceedings of this debate were broadcast on 4 radio programmes over the subsequent weeks and the mayor of Mpigi was hosted on the programme to confirm his promises. In Mpigi town, some of the local traders and businesspeople, at the encouragement of the radio programmes presenter Hamzat Ssenoga, formed themselves into a listeners club. This listener club was encouraged to provide updates to Hamzat on the progress in the town and act as an early warning for the programme on any topical business issues. In particular, the listener club was encouraged to act as a watchdog on the fulfilment of the promises made at the Nekolera Gyange mobile meeting. The CBS team viewed the success of the radio programme as being inextricably linked to the programme achieving positive change for its audience.

***"We were being suppressed and could not see a way to solve our problems. CBS gives us a voice to talk about these problems"*** Trader and member of the Nekolera Gyange listener club.

After around 6 months, CBS returned to Mpigi at the request of the listeners and reviewed the progress in the market. The Mayor had fulfilled most of his promises installing lighting and new toilets in the market and ensuring that rubbish was more regularly removed from the market. The market fees for the Nabyerengera had also reduced by one third and the space available to the night market had increased due to the removal of taxis from the area.

Despite this positive outcome, the market has continued to be a point of tension in the market and since 2003 Nekolera Gyange has continued to cover the issues of Mpigi market and the business in the area. The listener club, which has 28 active members, views itself as a 'watchdog group for the issues of the community' and 'the contact point for getting local business issues onto the CBS radio programme'. For the Nekolera Gyange production team the listener group is a community contact point and a source for topical news and business information and they have gone on to support the formation of 3 other groups in other towns.

At the time of researching the Mpigi town case study, the market was in high tension with rumour running that the current mayor had done a deal with local taxi operators to convert the night market area into a taxi park. The Nabyerengera had been moved from outside the market into temporary locations on the floor of the permanent market while the outside was sealed with tarmac. CBS was called in and spoke to the market master and others to explore the rumours. The market master commented

*'It is not wise to go with rumours. CBS has not been dealing in rumours. Hamzat comes here to investigate and this avoids a clash and unnecessary friction'.*

***"CBS played a role in uniting those who thought they were being marginalized and the tension has been defused"***  
Market Master, Mpigi Market on CBS's role in a recent market conflict.

Nekolera Gyange gave a platform to the mayor and other officials to allay the fears of the traders while also getting the mayor to publicly reemphasize his commitment to the night market.

### **Impact**

This is an example of a process rather than a one-off intervention. The radio station has had an ongoing role in covering the issues and business problems of Mpigi town and market and can be seen to have had a number of impacts on policy priorities and local government investment.

In 2003 the incomes of 60 Nabyerengera farmers was secured by the intervention of the radio station and by 2007 the number of Nabyerengera had increased to 103. The incomes of these traders had not only been saved but had increased as a result of reduced market fees and the saving of not having to use kerosene for lamps following the installation of electric lighting. The traders also noted that the improvements and formalization of the market resulted in increased clientele and business. In total the traders estimated that the improvements resulted in them raising incomes by at least \$0.50 a day. This may appear a marginal improvement, but when considering that these are among the poorest traders, many of whom are on or below the poverty line, such an increase can in effect mean a 50 – 100% increase in daily income.

For the purpose of this case study the Nabyerengera was the focus of the impact but the ongoing activities of CBS in central Uganda are supporting local government dialogue with local traders and appear to be having various impacts outside that of the Mpigi Nabyerengera.

### **Key observations and lessons from the case study**

- The role of radio in catalyzing village and town based business forums which support policy dialogue and debate between local government and business communities.
- The model of listener clubs acting as a civil society watchdog on legislative and policy implementation.
- The potential role of radio in defusing conflict by investigating rumour and speculation and giving a public platform for officials to address public concerns.
- The merging of commercial media, business and social agendas: CBS aims to ensure that their Nekolera Gyange remains popular with audiences by maximising its potential to resolve rather than just report on issues and problems.

### **CASE STUDY 3**

#### **Tackling gender and social equity issues for the poorest in society. Women stone crushers in South-Western Uganda**

##### **Background**

Stone crushing is backbreaking work taken up only by those who have few other employment options. The work involves splitting large stone blocks from cliff faces, breaking these rocks into small chips and transporting these chips to the side of a road for sale for building and construction. No machinery is used in this business and the rocks are broken and transported by hand.

Outside the town of Kabale is one cluster of 80 such stone crushers. As in most locations in Uganda, the work is undertaken by women, very young men and unfortunately often, although illegally, children. The stone crushers either work on their own small plots of land, or more commonly rent land from others. A women stone crusher working on her own land may be able to earn up to \$60 a month, but more commonly will earn under \$20 a month when renting land or working for someone else.

In 2004, the women stone crushers of Kabale were struggling to reap the rewards of their hard work. While they broke the stone up in the hills, local men and youths from the area, who would habitually frequent the roadside bars selling locally produced alcohol, would intercept the trucks that come to buy the stone. They would then sell the stone saying that it was theirs and pocket the money. When the women found their stone gone, the men either denied knowledge or claimed the drivers had bought the stone on credit. In effect, the women's product was being stolen but despite complaints to both the police and local council representatives, the authorities refused to act.

This inertia among the authorities was explained as being a function firstly of the low esteem the women were held in the community and secondly as a result of a traditional concept that land, and therefore the proceeds of land, belong to men. Women were perceived to therefore have no traditional right to claim ownership over the rock despite the fact that they had broken the rock. This belief flew in the face of Uganda's relatively progressive law on gender equality.

The disempowerment of the women was compounded by their lack of effective representation and the informality of their income generating activities which were neither licensed nor recognised by the authorities. The women were therefore resigned to losing significant portions of their income to this theft. One stone crusher replied when asked why she continued in the work that it was *'our hopelessness that forced us on with this work'*.

While the most local levels of government (LC1 councillors) were unwilling to act to solve this problem, there were others at higher levels of local government who could have supported the women. Ugandan local government includes a gender officer and a more senior elected women's representative (LC5) at the Kabale District level. Despite this, most of the women stone crushers were either unaware of the existence of these officials, felt that they were unreachable or were sceptical that they would be willing to help them in their plight.

##### **The role of radio**

In 2004, Alex Akankwasa from the local commercial FM radio station, Voice of Kigezi, had recently returned from a training course in producing audience led business programmes. Alex worked as a reporter and presenter and was running a weekly business programme called Enkubito. The training course had highlighted the importance of 'taking radio to the people' and exploring the problems and issues audiences faced by undertaking field interviews and recordings. The training course had also emphasized the importance of not only focusing on the formal businesses but including the livelihood issues of the informal sector that was of critical importance to much of a rural radio station's audience. Alex therefore visited the stone crushers

of Kabale as research for his programme, at this point more as a ‘fishing’ expedition to see what he might uncover rather than as a hunter on the trail of a predefined story.

Alex therefore uncovered the plight of the stone crushers and realised that this was a topical and newsworthy story for his upcoming programme. After having interviewed the stone crushers, Alex endeavoured to meet the accused men and youths at the bar to provide them with the chance to give their side of the story. It was around 11am in the morning but Alex believed that the men were already under the influence of alcohol and they responded violently to the enquiry threatening Alex and beating the motorcycle taxi driver who had brought him. Despite this, he followed up the issue by interviewing the district gender officer and the women’s representative councillor thus bringing the issue to their attention. They both gave a commitment to follow up the issue.

About 8 weeks later Alex returned to the stone crushers to find out if the problem had been resolved but there had been little change. The Enkubito programme was being run at an off-peak time when there were few listeners and the issue had not been picked up by the public or responded to by the officials. Alex therefore changed tactic and on returning to the radio station got the story run on their popular news hour programme with a subsequent live phone in debate run on the Enkubito programme. This time there was considerable public response with listeners phoning in to voice their anger at the situation and demanding for action by the authorities.

***“The women’s resolve increased after they heard the programme and they knew that what the men were doing was wrong”*** Nora Busingye, Local Village councillor (LC1)

Within two weeks the women’s councillor had travelled to meet the women and village chairman. She appeared on radio to tell the men involved that they would be arrested if they continued with the theft and explained and emphasized the rights of the women. On revisiting the women 3 months later, Alex found that the situation had substantially improved through a combination of pressure placed on the men and independent consumer action. Some buyers were increasingly demanding to transact with the women stone crushers themselves and refusing to buy from male intermediaries. Even when men do sell the stone on behalf of the stone crushers, the women feel empowered to demand the money, as one stone crusher stated *‘Now it is up to us whether we give them [the men] a commission or not’*

***“When we heard the programmes the councillors, particularly the ladies, were touched because the women were sitting under the sun all day working hard but making no money”*** Lydia Turyahumura, Women’s representative counsellor, Kabale District.

## **Impact**

The direct impact in this case study was on 80 women stone crushers. There may have been additional impact on other stone crushers in Kabale district who heard and were empowered by the programmes that were broadcast, but this was not assessed during the study.

The women stone crushers interviewed estimated that their incomes had increased by between 40% to 60% as a result of both the programme and their gained confidence to increase the time they spend at their businesses. This is an increase of between \$8 to \$12 a month for those without land and \$24 to \$36 a month for those who own the land on which they work. While these appear modest gains they are potentially life changing to those at the bottom of the economic pyramid. Christine Tabo directly attributes the radio coverage and the subsequent increase of her income to her ability to open a small adobe (dirt) wall and tin roofed bar selling local brew that she produces herself. She is now serving the very men who were the source of her original problems but also keeps a close watch on the stone that is piled along the road and belongs to family, friends and neighbours.

**Key observations and lessons from the case study**

- The ability of radio to reach and impact on those at the very bottom of the economic pyramid and in areas of gender inequality.
- The power of media coverage in making officials aware of the plight of the most marginalised and stimulating them into action to enforce the rights of poor women.
- The importance of public opinion in urging elected government officials to act and the role the media can play in building the demand side of political economy.

## **CASE STUDY 4**

### **Protecting the drivers of political change. Activists on corruption in rural public transport in South Western Uganda.**

#### **Background**

The operation and management of vehicular public transport, buses and mini buses (known as taxis in Uganda), is a potentially very lucrative business. In Uganda's liberalized industry, public transport should be a potential opportunity for small investors able to raise the capital to purchase a single minibus. But in Uganda, as in many countries, the bus parks are often under the control or strong influence of large investors and powerful individuals. The smaller operators are often marginalized to less lucrative routes and in some circumstances squeezed out of the market altogether. Across Uganda there are accusations of extortion and rent-seeking in the bus and taxi parks by those who win the government tenders to manage the parks. The taxi and bus park management tenders are perceived to be highly desirable and much sought after but accusations abound that they are handed out without fair and transparent process.

The taxi and bus parks of south western Uganda are no exception. Tension in the parks of the main towns is high with the recent shooting dead of two protesters in a taxi park in the town of Mbarara by the guard of a well know businessman and bus operator. In Kabale town, the main Ugandan border town to Rwanda, the taxi park is particularly tense. There are numerous accusations that the bus park operator is in league with the 'big men' of the area; a term used to mean those who are prominent in both business and politics. A number of bus and taxi operators claim that they have been forced out of the bus park and passengers and touts (those finding customers on behalf of bus and taxi operators) beaten. A manager of one bus company who is in conflict with the management of the bus park claims to have been shot at and is in fear of his life.

While bus park management tenders should be advertised every year, the tender in Kabale is said to not have been advertised since 2003 and this lack of due process is viewed by some in the town as being the result of collusion and collaboration between powerful local businesspeople and local politicians.

The tension and violence in the taxi park and the lack of due process in the tendering procedures have not gone unnoticed. Julius Tituryebwa is an elected district councillor who perceives himself as an activist and reformer in Kabale. Julius has personally investigated the problems in the taxi park from both the perspective of taxi and bus operators and passengers. He believes that the impact on business is profound and is stifling the growth of transport on poorly served rural routes. In addition, Julius believes that the tender is being ineffectively managed with significant loss of potential revenue to local government. He estimates that the tender managers received in excess of \$17,000 US\$ per month in revenue in 2005/6 and while they should have remitted 80% of this to local government they had only remitted around 23% of the money. This amounts to a loss of 57% of the local government revenue from the bus park.

Julius has therefore taken up this issue, raising it at council meetings and writing to the public accounts committee of the Ministry of Local Government. His action has resulted in a letter from the Minister of local Government to the Kabale administration to advertise the taxi park management tender. He has also requested an investigation to be undertaken into the finance gap that would be included in the PPDA (Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets) report. Julius perceives his role of placing continued pressure on the Ministry of Local Government and public accounts committees as essential to bringing about change. In his view, a one off complaint will not bring about change.

But this activism potentially has its dangers and Julius believes that his security and life are in danger since he believes that he is damaging the interests of some of the areas most influential people.

## The role of radio

The role of radio and the wider media in this case was not in breaking the story or making officials aware of an issue. In this example Julius had been providing the local radio and national newspapers with information on his investigations and actions. When asked why he was doing this Julius explained that it was about right to information but also his own personal security:

*“People should get information of what is taking place and it is part of our security. I get my security from people. If they don’t get that information then my security would be at threat. So we are trying to attract sympathy such that whenever you are put in trouble you can be rescued”*

The media is also perceived to have played a role as a catalyst in getting local and national government to act. The taxi operators and Julius believes that it was when the issue got into the national media (newspapers) that it resulted in action from the Ministry. But it was also noted that the local media (radio) plays a critical role. While national media may cover the story a regional issue such as this would not stay in the headlines and would soon be forgotten. It was the local media that stimulated local public opinion and resulted in pressure being placed on local government to act. This local media kept the issue in the public eye through various news reports and local current affairs discussion programmes that, at the time of the research, had been ongoing for over 6 months.

***“We have been discussing this issue [taxi park tenders] in the council but it would not move out and it would have ended in the council. The radio people picked interest and investigated and made it public”*** Julius Tituryebwa, LC5 councillor, Kabale District.

## Impact

This case study is an example of an ongoing process of lobbying and activism for change by an elected government official. The radio has played a role in supporting this drive for change but at the time of the research the taxi park had not been tendered openly and the situation had not changed.

The current status quo appears to be having various business impacts on:

- existing taxi and bus operators whose businesses are being stifled
- potential investors in taxi and bus transport
- the businesspeople that rely on public transport to transport their goods and themselves.

It was suggested that the current situation is impacting on the availability of transport on rural routes and that the monopolies and cartels on routes are allowing overcharging and leaving travellers stranded. The research team was not able to ascertain whether this was the case since the threat of violence in the taxi park was so acute. The research team therefore had to withdraw from an in-depth investigation of this issue.

## Key observations and lessons from the case study

- The role of the media in supporting a government official in their role as a reformer and providing a perceived level of security through public awareness of their activities.
- The importance of local media in maintaining pressure and public awareness for local policy change compared to the role of the national media.

## **CASE STUDY 5**

### **Dialogue and debate on public investment in local market infrastructure: Market traders in Western Uganda.**

#### **Background**

As highlighted in the example of Mpigi market (case study 2), municipal markets tend to be focal points of conflict and tension both between business groups and between local government and the various business communities. Markets are also important generators of local revenue. But the fact that traders in markets feel that they pay relatively highly for space results in heightened expectations for investment in infrastructure and facilities. Demand for improvement and investment from local government is often therefore more acutely felt in markets and more vehemently voiced by market traders. Markets are therefore the focal point of much local government policy dialogue with local businesspeople.

The municipal market of the Western Ugandan town of Fort Portal is a particular focus of an ongoing local government / private sector dialogue, debate and at times conflict. The growing town population means that the ageing market is significantly exceeding its capacity. Traders have spilled outside the market walls to display goods in the open air and numerous ramshackle structures of straw, polythene and rusty corrugated iron have been constructed for food kiosks serving the estimated 3000 traders in the market.

The market has been an area of concern for health and safety. Lack of running water before 2004 meant that many traders were collecting water from a nearby polluted stream. The lack of toilet facilities made this practice highly dangerous and the traders remembered that as little as four years ago illness was widespread among then traders and their clients.

In 2003 and 2004 the lack of facilities in the market was the major concern for market traders and they were lobbying hard for improved toilets, running water and formal shade and stalls outside the walled markets. But the lobbying activities of the market traders were made problematic by their lack of formal organisation and representation. The traders do not have a market association or recognised leaders and the traders themselves are often divided.

By 2007, the focus of the market traders had changed into what they saw as a fight for their business survival. The Fort Portal local government had decided to invest in the construction of a new market away from the main street and was laying plans to forcibly evict the traders from the original market. This market, while having the space and the facilities which many of the traders had been lobbying for, was perceived not to be in a prime business position. The original municipal market was strategically placed on the intersection of the main street of Fort Portal and the newly upgraded main road from Fort Portal to Kampala (Uganda's capital city). The new market was on the other hand located off the main road and was perceived to be away from the main commercial centre of the town.

To make matters worse, rumours circulated that local government officials had struck a deal with a business investor to buy the market and redevelop it as a formal shopping centre. This rumour resembled a similar ongoing conflict in the proposed take over and redevelopment of a market in central Kampala which had resulted in violence and rioting.

#### **The role of radio**

Voice of Toro (VOT), the local commercial FM radio station, has been covering the conflicts, debates and deliberations on the market for the past 5 years. VOT runs a business programme, Ninyekora Eyange (I run my own business), modelled on a similar programme run on the vernacular language Kampala station CBS. This weekly programme focuses on local business issues and often covers the issues of the Fort Portal market.

Ninyekora Eyange has come to be perceived by many of the traders as an ally in their lobbying for improved conditions and perceive that many of the improved facilities are as a direct result of

the publicity generated by the programme. The town Mayor has been the public face of the council and at the frontline of the interaction with the Market traders. His view of the role of the radio programme is mixed. In the early days of his office (2004-5) he believes that VOT played an important role in providing him with insights into the issues in the market and provided him with a platform to address the concerns of the traders. At that time he perceived VOT as being neutral but with the recent escalating conflict in the market he believes that they have been partisan and 'one sided'. An accusation denied by VOT staff who say that the mayor has often refused to respond to issues and appear on air.

***“When you are in government you cannot know every corner and you have to listen and learn from the people. Radio gives me information and you can learn from it. Mayor Edison Asaba Ruyonga, Fort Portal***

The market traders believe that the radio is the way to force the mayor and other local politicians to take note and act. One market trader stated that “*radio programmes link us to our politicians*” another believed that “*the mayor would not listen to individuals but very many people are listening to radio and he fears loss of face and will listen*”. Despite the Mayor’s frustration with Ninyekora Eyange, it was clear that he was listening and he stated that even when he was out of Fort Portal he organised for his wife to record the programmes so that he could listen on his return.

***“When market vendors saw that the mayor had refused to talk to us we were forced to go straight to the radio so that everyone could hear and come to our rescue. This forced the mayor to come in to defend himself.” Market trader, Fort Portal Municipal Market***

### **Impact**

Both the market traders and the mayor attribute some of the early changes in the market to radio having brought the issue higher up the local political agenda. These improvements included the introduction of running water, the construction of new toilets, the building of drainage for waste water, and the construction of new market stalls and lock-ups. Business level impacts of these improvements of market facilities were hard to pin down across the whole market. In general traders noted that there had been a discernable improvement in their health with less days lost to sickness.

The impacts that were more measurable were on the 80 to 100 food vendors in the market. Many clients had avoided eating in the food kiosks outside the market due to their unsanitary conditions. The improvements in water and sanitation had therefore resulted in increased trade. One food vendor attributed a 100% increase in clientele on the fact that the conditions in the market had improved.

A second measurable area of improvement was the building of lock-ups (covered metal containers in the market). This has allowed the set-up of 30 businesses that can maintain and keep stock securely overnight in the market. This has resulted in businesses branching into high value products such as electronic goods which were absent from the market.

A valid question is whether these improvements would have come about without radio having provided a bridge for information flow between local government and traders. While this is difficult to assess, it is likely that many of these improvements would have come about without radio. The role of radio can more definitely be seen as having been successful in speeding up investment in the market and raising the issue up the local political agenda.

### **Key observations and lessons from the case study**

- The importance of an ongoing role of radio in policy dialogue between local government and businesspeople.
- The role of a regular focused business programme that can keep the spotlight on business policy issues.

- The balance and bias of programmes that focus on controversial and political issues. Unlike the Mpigi example (case study 2) VOT was perceived as having a bias and in recent events exacerbating conflict rather than providing a platform for dialogue.

## CASE STUDY 6

### National advocacy and campaigning for environmental policy change: Civil Society and national government.

#### Background

According to the FAO, Uganda has lost 26% of its forest cover between 1990 and 2005. More worryingly deforestation rates have accelerated in recent years and are estimated to be running at around 2.2% a year. The impact of this deforestation at a global, national and community level are potentially profound contributing to climate change globally and exacerbating the effects of climate change locally. Deforestation not only has impact on the natural environment but has economic impacts also. The Ugandan government clearly makes the link between forests and income in their National Forest Plan of 2002:

*'Forests provide incomes through employment or the sale of forest products. Work equivalent to about 850,000 jobs, 100,000 as full-time wage earners, others earning about US\$ 66 billion from the sale of non-timber forest products, up to US\$ 130,000 (US\$ 76) per household.'*

30% of forest, which includes the most important areas of biodiversity, are held in trust as 'central forest reserves' for the Ugandan people and managed by the National Forest Authority (NFA) and the National Parks. These gazetted forest areas are protected from encroachment with clearly laid out legislation and safeguards. Despite this, a number of forest reserves have been under pressure from commercial development. In 2006 senior Ministers placed pressure on the NFA (a government parastatal) to cede a gazetted forest area to the development of palm oil on Lake Victoria's Ssesse Islands. Senior NFA managers attempted to resist this pressure but four ended up resigning in protest as the plans were pushed through.

In early 2007 news broke that the Ugandan government was planning to de-gazette about a quarter of a world renowned forest reserve, Mabira Forest, to provide land for sugar production. These plans were discovered by local environmental groups and resulted in the formation of the 'Save Mabira Forest Campaign Group'. The group began a campaign involving public awareness raising and mobilization using multi-media channels. Information on the issue was sent out directly through leaflets, posters and SMS. The campaigners began interacting with newspaper, TV and radio journalists and presenters, participating in talk shows, discussion programmes and providing press releases and statistics to reinforce their campaign. The local campaign group tapped into international contacts and resources to collect and disseminate information more widely. Mabira Forest therefore became both a national and international issue.

The primary aim of the campaign group was to force government to adhere to the constitutional and parliamentary procedures involved in de-gazetting forest reserves. These procedures involved the plans being passed through cabinet, a sub committee of parliament on natural resources and parliament itself. The NFA procedures also dictated that a de-gazetting of one forest area could only be undertaken with the gazetting of another area of equal value in terms of biodiversity. With significant public and parliamentary opposition to the proposed plans, the de-gazetting of Mabira appeared impossible without government altering or ignoring laid out procedures. The campaigners believed that, as with the Ssesse Islands, the rules would be broken and that a public outcry would be the only way to force government to follow procedures. According to the campaign group, the key was not only to mobilize the informed and educated elite but to mobilize the masses that were the backbone of support for the government. As one of the campaign activists (one of the senior officials who had resigned from NFA) asserts:

*"the president realises that the mass is more important than the elite. If it was just the elite then the campaign would have been ignored".*

The Mabira campaigners therefore tailored their message to the masses and linked deforestation with the livelihoods of ordinary people across Uganda. The link was made by

explaining the connection between deforestation and reduced rainfall. This reduced rainfall over the past years had resulted in a significant reduction in the level of water in Lake Victoria which is the primary water source for millions and the major source of electricity for the country. The low water levels in the lake have been pinpointed as the cause of daily load shedding and a recent significant increase in the cost of electricity. According to the campaign group, Mabira forest, with its proximity to Lake Victoria, would exacerbate the electricity and water problems in the country and impact on both domestic households and commercial activity.

This message was effectively disseminated across the country with a corresponding public outcry. Mabira Forest became front page news and the primary topic of TV and radio talk and current affairs programmes. The various responses from government to counter the opposition appeared ineffective. The assertion made by cabinet ministers and the president 'that a forest can be grown anywhere' were countered by both national and international experts in the media. The availability of Ugandan newspapers on the internet and the internet streaming of Ugandan radio stations even allowed the Ugandan Diaspora, many highly educated and some professors at Universities, to participate in the debate.

***"Forests can be grown anywhere. Industries can employ thousands of people. The president knew that was good for the country but the media misinformed people and made them overexcited"*** Hon. Maurice Kagim Kiwanuka, Minister of state for Economic Monitoring, Uganda

In April 2007 a mass rally was held that spilled into violence and three people were killed. Government clamped down on campaigners arresting senior organisers and charging them with conspiracy to murder. The debate continued but government's resolve reduced with an increasing number of parliamentarians and previously close allies to government publicly expressing their opposition to the plans for Mabira. The president announced that the plans had been shelved in May 2007. The campaign appeared to have been won with the government backing down.

### **The role of radio**

The campaign for Mabira was both national and international and involved multi media channels. A key theme of the research was therefore to understand what value, if any, local radio had provided in the campaign.

The response to enquiries on the role of radio from informants from both sides of the argument was unanimous. Radio was the media that reached and informed the mass audience. It was the mass opposition to the plans that those interviewed attribute as being the reason for the shelving of the policy.

***"If radio was not driving the people then it would not have been an important issue."*** Hon. Maurice Kagim Kiwanuka, Minister of state for Economic Monitoring, Uganda

***"That medium that reaches the common person is the one that is most important. In Uganda it is radio"*** Frank Muramuzi, Chair of Mabira Forest Campaign Committee

***"If radio was not involved then the campaign would have lacked the broad-based support. Radio was the major element in this policy reversal"*** Hon. Kyanjo Hussein, opposition MP and Mabira campaigner

Radio primarily reached out to audiences by running live panel discussions and debates involving public phone in. The stations therefore provided public platforms for individuals to express their opinions and views on the Mabira issue. One of the most interesting programmes that perhaps played a pivotal role in the ultimate back down by government was Mambo Bado on the Luganda radio station CBS (Central Broadcasting Service).

Mambo Bado is a 'people's parliament' programme that brings politicians, senior analysts and lobbyists together to publicly debate topical political issues in front of a live audience. The programmes involve audience participation and have been a source of irritation to government since they began in the late nineties. At the height of the campaign the President took the unprecedented step of using Mambo Bado as a platform to directly address and debate with the

public and he participated via a live-linkup with the programme for 3 hours. The programme was broadcast live and according to a listener *‘the president was taken by surprise. He expected to be able to lecture the participants and tried to lecture but the people were too well informed and were all in opposition to it. He did not succeed in his aim.’*

The following week the president sent 7 ministers to Mambo Bado to present the government’s viewpoint. Again, the ministers were faced with significant opposition. It was these two public defeats that some see as the final decisive blow that forced the policy change.

***“The people who go [to Mambo Bado] are the ordinary people and not the serious ones. He tried to convince these people but they were overexcited so it was not possible’.***” Hon. Maurice Kagim Kiwanuka, Minister of state for Economic Monitoring, Uganda

***“Peasants came on the programme [Mambo Bado] and voiced their views. There was 100% disapproval”*** Hon. Kyanjo Hussein, opposition MP and Mabira campaigner

### **Impact**

The potential impact of the saving of Mabira Forest from a business and economic point of view is difficult to ascertain. The national newspaper, The New Vision, reported in one article that the country would lose US\$ 890 million as a result of degazetting and ‘giving away’ the forest (\$316 million in carbon credit, \$568 million in wood and \$5 million in land)<sup>14</sup>.

The campaign group ascertain that 1 million people derive their livelihood from the forest. This would appear to be a high estimate and another estimate puts it at nearer 3000 direct jobs. It is true that there had been recent growth in non-timber forest activities in the Mabira area. Honey production, fruit collection and harvesting of medicinal plants are being encouraged and Mabira is a centre for a growing bird and eco-tourism industry. An investor had recently invested in an eco-tourist lodge in the forest and Mabira is featured prominently in international birding websites as a unique site for bird watching. Tourism and the support services and industries of tourism would have therefore been adversely affected by the plans. The government on the other side argued that the proposed plans would bring additional jobs and finance to the country.

The majority view is that the greatest impact of Mabira was the fact that it has reemphasized the rule of law in issues of commercial use of gazetted forest areas in Uganda. This has potential knock on impacts for protecting the lake environment and ultimately the climatic conditions of a part of the world that stands to be most negatively impacted on by increasing global warming. This is potentially a huge, but difficult to tangibly and accurately estimate, impact that would impact on people, businesses and the environment.

### **Key observations and lessons from the case study**

- The relative role and importance of radio in a multi media campaign.
- The importance of an effective use of the media and partnership with the media by NGOs, lobbyists and civil society groups to bring about policy change.
- People’s parliament style programmes in giving platforms to public policy debate.

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<sup>14</sup> New Vision, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2007