Myanmar
Community Media Start-up Strategy

Building blocks for a sustainable beginning of community media in Myanmar

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Myanmar

This document was solicited by UNDP Myanmar and developed by EMPOWERHOUSE. The views and interpretations in this document are the author's and do not necessarily reflect those of the UNDP Myanmar.

This document is part of the 'UNDP Community Media Start-up Kit' which includes:

- The Myanmar Community Media Charter – what is it we want?
- This background Start up strategy outlining
  - o Building blocks for a healthy CR: the conceptual approach to community media
  - o Building capacity for a healthy CR start in Myanmar
- One week workshop for community champions and initiators to lead the early mobilisation
  - o Detailed programme day by day, hour by hour
  - o Materials needed for facilitating the workshop: presentations, handouts, films, etc

UNDP works with support to the development of community media in Myanmar in a partnership with the Government of Myanmar, with other international Cooperation Partners and with national and regional organisations.

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Part I

Building blocks for a healthy beginning of community media in Myanmar

Turning the idea of community media in Myanmar from the level of dreams and visions to a strong people's movement of sustainable community media stations (CR) all over the country, contains many different elements. The present outline of a start-up strategy will focus on steps needed to inform, mobilise and develop insight and capacity at community level, to ensure having community media that are community-based in all ways. It may seem a daunting task, but when building the process up, step-by-step, it is practically possible. It is these steps, and the capacity building needed, that the present 'start up strategy' aims to outline.

Recognizing that community ownership of community media are at the core of community empowerment and development, and it is the basis of community media sustainability, this is the place to begin – and then move forward step-by-step.

Why focus on community ownership of a community media?

Experience from all over the world documents that for a community media to become a platform for inclusive dialogue and a strong community development tool for all communities in the community, it needs to be firmly rooted in the community. This is also very much true for experience from Myanmar's neighbouring countries with many similar traits and realities geographically, politically, socially and economically.

There are other ways of starting community media. Sometimes NGOs decide to add community media to their activity areas to more effectively communicate and engage the population in the issues of importance for the NGO. By nature such a station may often especially reflect the area of work of the NGO, and it will usually not have all the communities within the community engaged in all of its work, including for instance their programming about their own lives. But such a station will often have some organisational strengths as long as the NGO remains strong.

Some donor organisations have - especially in emergency situations or other urgency - parachuted-in radio station equipment to a community with journalists or on-site trainers recruited from the nearest bigger city. They often call these 'quick fix' stations community radios. And these stations have in emergencies like earth quakes or flooding often brought important – sometimes lifesaving - information to a community in dire need. After the disaster, such stations have, however, often struggled with sustainability as the community have considered these stations as belonging to organisations external to them and with no share.

The 'parachuted-in' stations will often initially be received with enthusiasm by especially the younger men, engaging with dynamism and enthusiasm. When, however, it is realised, that there is no paid employment, and the absence of a common goal and dreams for the role of radio in the community, these stations usually dissolve or become commercial, or political or religious powers take over and fill the vacuum. An inversion process – turning the top-down, bottom-up - can, theoretically and through much effort and investment, happen. But this is not a desirable scenario, for which there is naturally no reason to plan.

How can we ensure that a licensed 'community media' is really community-owned and –run?

In the Myanmar reality, it is still not known how the process for inviting proposals for the opening of the airwaves will be presented. This will only be clear once the Broadcasting Council is established and the by-laws emerge. In the two initial community media sensitization workshops held by IMS, Fojo, DW-A and UNDP in July and October 2015, genuine concern was expressed by civil society groups as to whether it will – in reality - be possible for real community groups to get licenses. Would maybe groups of media professionals flood the council with ready-made proposals, leaving little space on the airwaves?

The legal framework is clear: at least 20% of the frequencies will be allowed for community radio stations, and with between 5 and 250 W transmitters[1], this could in a country as vast as Myanmar, be hundreds of potential licences possible, without any risk of mutual interference.

Also in terms of the profile of a community medium – or 'community broadcasting services' as it is called in the Broadcasting law – it is clear that the community medium shall (i) be not for profit; (ii) work to provide information, education and entertainment to a specific geographic community; (iii) "demonstrate 'a sufficient link' to the community to satisfy the council that warrants receiving a community broadcasting licence".

Furthermore the law proposes that "the council shall come up with distinct simple licensing policies and procedures application only to community broadcast service to encourage the setting up of such services and to support their development." This will be really important to ensure access also for real community based stations.

It will be important that the by-laws contain a set of criteria for community ownership, that can filter the external applicants wanting to 'make radio for the community' without being a real community radio from the real community initiatives that should have this unique opportunity for a voice and a role in the own community development process, using their community media/radio platform.

The present 'Community media Start-up Strategy' is aimed to support the development of community capacity to make competitive and viable bids for licenses, when time comes. While ideally the by-laws would propose space for a step-by-step regulated process, with time to organise and plan, this is not yet known. Still, it is our hope that this strategy can provide a basis to effectively build on the convincing regional and international experience, calling for community-owned and community-rooted stations, which are there for the long haul, sustainably, recognizing that development and change takes time.

Whose voices are traditionally heard in the community? And in the Myanmar media?
- Building the case for a special role of women in community media in Myanmar

To become a truly community-rooted and community-owned station, a community radio station/medium needs to map and know and engage all the many 'communities within the community'. Reaching also those who have not earlier had a voice – the so-called 'voiceless' - requires an understanding of and a desire to engage those traditionally marginalised in the Myanmar society. These groups are, in the traditional village set-ups actually quite a few in a community, where according to the study "Village Institutions and Leadership in Myanmar: A View from Below"[2] there are no tradition of election of leaders.

Leaders at village level usually emerge from among the so-called "Core Leaders". These leaders are usually men with a medium or high socioeconomic background, who play a central role in key village decision-making and other aspects of village life. They are very influential and provide, according to the above mentioned study, explicit sanction for most decisions related to village wide affairs and also resolve disputes. They usually hold officially or traditionally recognized leadership posts such as being village tract administrators or village administrators or that of Village Elders or Respected persons.

It is important to be aware of these structures when engaging at this level. Wanting to ensure a voice to the voiceless, a space needs to be provided where the traditional structures, where the 'core leaders' by default would move into also the community's radio as a natural extension of other responsibilities held,

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[1] This is not yet regulated by the broadcast law. It will be important to keep this open as 'a geographic community' may be small or large depending upon the location where it is. A rural community – the target of community radio legislation – is often large and will need up to 250W transmission capacity allowed.

[2] 'Village institutions and Leadership in Myanmar: a View from Below' A report for UNDP by MDR and Susanne Kempel, 2012

should be avoided. That close and respectful contacts with the community (village and village tract) authorities needs to be maintained is both important and obvious. But good community ways need to be found for these 'by default leaders' to realise and understand that the community medium is for those who usually do not have a voice and the power of interpretation and decision making in the community.

Women's engagement and role in CR needs to be built into the process from the beginning
That women traditionally are exempt from these roles and functions stands out and needs to addressed when starting a community radio/medium. In many countries with which Myanmar could compare itself, it has been found that if women's role has not been pro-actively defined and the space taken from the beginning, it can be hard to redress.

And it is not only in the traditional and still active community structures that women are not considered core movers and agenda-setters. When carrying out a Focus Group Discussion with a group of women in Mandalay[3] about whether and how their information and communication needs were met, they wanted to stress that they found it really disturbing that women are portrayed in such stereotypical ways in all the Myanmar media including in the movies: *"Women are always either in supporting roles or weak victims. But when we need it, no media bring stories about police brutality against women for instance!"* And they continued: *"This is also reflected in newspapers. Only monthly magazines may have a space for women-specific coverage, but then it is Fashion and make up like in Thazin FM and Mandalay FM."*

For news they resort to Facebook – correct or not. Among them in their group of women, they check all other channels irregularly, but always send out a question on facebook when in doubt or when something is important – to get feedback. They stress that they have actually, systematically, monitored the local radio stations – and while some are worse than others, none are good. They miss information on consumer rights (filtered due to commercial interests, they are sure) just like they find Myanma Radio and TV (MRTV) to be boring and unreliable, because it only bring news with delay, filtered and treated. The media also don't come when the women in the panel call for press conference. They stress that they really need a channel which is fair and unbiased and honest and trustworthy. They were really dreaming about having a community radio, where they could engage.

And the group of Mandalay women agreed: women need to be involved from the very beginning to have a chance to impact on the way a community radio is set up – and to do it in a way where women will feel that it is also theirs.

The gender balance in the Myanmar media
When looking to studies of the existing media in Myanmar, findings are slightly contradictory – and call for further studies needed. Whereas women's voices and representation in the media, in interviews with media managers and media workers were indicated as being fairly balanced in terms of numbers, also when all agree that the proportion of women promoted to more senior decision making levels are few.

In a 2015 gender analysis of the media workplace by FOJO Media Institute, women are found to constitute a significant proportion of the workforce in media houses; though,

> *"Myanmar's media industry reflects similar global trends to the extent that women are strongly represented in newsrooms in terms of numbers but media institutions remain significantly male- dominated at the decision-making level."*

While the number of women employed in the media sector identified in the actual situation could be found encouraging, a number of gender-based issues were found in an Article 19 study[4], which would need to be addressed to change the status quo, and which is also important to consider when looking to

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[3] This interview was carried as part the of field work for the IMS study: "Finding responses to rural information and communication needs in Myanmar". Foreseen to be released February 2016.
[4] 'Censored Gender. Women's right to freedom of expression and information in Myanmar.' Article 19, 2015

meet the information and communication gap in rural communities in Myanmar and to engage women fully in the future community media, and therefore listed in full:

> - Women journalists generally have more junior or gender-related roles than men.
> - Women journalists have no gender-based support or voice within the media sector.
> - Women journalists are 'protected' rather than empowered.
> - Gender-based stereotyping is rife across the media, particularly in broadcasting.
> - The government does not prioritise the provision of access to information for women.
> - Women's access to gender-specific information is hindered by cultural barriers.
> - Women's voices are excluded from decision making.
> - Women included in decision making are selectively chosen by government.
> - Women's gender and sexual identity are used to exclude them from civic space.
> - Women in Myanmar experience expression-related violence and its effects differently.
> - The current remedies and protective measures that exist to protect women from violence, make it worse

Minority voices in the Myanmar media

Besides from women – who cannot and should not be considered a minority, while maybe 'marginalised' will in some Myanmar realities apply – minority groups are in the same boat in terms of lack of representation in the media.

Minority ethnic groups are – not surprisingly - well represented in ethnic media in Myanmar. These media outlets are created with the goal of promoting the cultural heritage of a given ethnic group and providing media content in a given ethic language – and staffed by the indicated ethnic group.

While some initiatives to promote ethnic media including that of the 'Ethnic Peace Network' having a model community radio station and already training ethnic groups to be ready for licence applications, there is a discussion as to whether some community media should be dedicated to one ethnic groups only, i.e. exclusive, or whether they should rather be inclusive, covering a community, with a space for all the ethnic groups living in the catchment area of the radio?

These positions are also found in the private print media where for instance the Marnagar Journal identifies itself as ethnic, of and for the Palaung people, but written in Myanmar, to get the issues out to a broader group. The position and choices of the Myitkyina News Journal is a Kachin newspaper appearing three times a month, writing in Kachin to be available to all Kachin readers and thus intended inclusive to all ethnic groups living there.

It can be foreseen that these differences will also get to play themselves out in the community media area. It will be important for the supporters and champions to observe and prevent any unhealthy factionalism to emerge.

In principle a geographically defined community broadcaster (as per the broadcast law) ought to – from a conceptual and a peaceful point of view – embrace all in the community and amplify the voices of all.

Putting words to and action behind the subtle marginalisation – maybe CR would go first?

When asking a journalist or media worker, or most other educated Myanmar people, they will with strong conviction insist that there is no discrimination of women, and little of ethnic people, and that Myanmar is so unique that experiences from elsewhere cannot be relied on, and not transplanted.

Still, the clear differences area there – undeniably.

One more example is that many from the before-mentioned educated group generally were of the (automatic) conviction that a community broadcaster ought to be places in the religious halls in the community, where community gatherings traditionally take place. However, women generally insist that the hidden challenges for women like rape and domestic violence (which is generally is seen as hardly happening) could not be discussed freely in these halls – so also in terms of location, a free space needs to to found.

Community media sustainability has to be built in from day 1

Making community media sustainable is a challenge everywhere in the world! By now, it is generally acknowledged that sustainability is made up by external factors, such as an enabling environment (legislation, political climate, history etc.), and internal factors within the station itself including: social sustainability, Institutional/ organisational sustainability and financial sustainability.

Any talk about starting community media is linked to why we are doing this. What are our dreams and what is therefore the vision we have for starting this station? And in which way can we foresee that it will fulfil its mission and stand by our identified values – the soul of the community broadcaster, so to speak? We know – or we should know this from day 1, and this leads directly into the first of the three: the social sustainability.

What is sustainability?
Sustainability means to keep going over a period of time. To endure and with resilience be able to absorb disturbance – of whatever nature – and remain viable.

For a community radio to be sustainable, three aspects have to be considered: Social, organizational / institutional & financial sustainability. Without one of these, a community radio will not have the resilience needed when meeting the challenges of running a small organization – most often in poor, rural areas, where nothing comes by itself.

But it is possible and it is worth it!!!

Social Sustainability: Participation at the centre of community ownership and change

Community media are as varied as the communities to which they belong. What these communities have in common is the desire by the community to use their radio as a platform for community debate and dialogue. They wish to spread—through a multitude of voices — their experience and local knowledge, to bring justice, accountability and rights, generate social change and a move towards the development vision and dreams of their community.

Community media give people a voice, and an opportunity to speak for themselves, leading to the empowerment required to trigger an avalanche of positive personal and community change. The power and potential of this type of has also been discovered by development partners aspiring to meet their priority development goals. Increasing numbers of individuals, organisations and institutions have seen the powerful impact generated by community radio stations, identifying it as the potential 'missing link' between development support being provided and true development actually taking place.

And it is powerful to realise the power of community engagement and the resulting community ownership to the station and its life, which can bring sustainability in so many ways.

Institutional Sustainability: Management and organisation -transparency and accountability

When working to empower community-oriented media, it is obvious that they faces many different challenges, depending upon the setting in which they operate, their organisation form and orientation. While maintaining a strong community engagement is at the core, effective management and organisation is also very important for community media to become sustainable. Clearly defined roles of the coordination committee or board, of the executive including station coordinator, administrator, mobiliser and technician, and of the all-important volunteer community broadcasters not only prevents many possible conflicts and ensures a powerful organisation, but it also renders the station a viable and reliable partner.

Ongoing capacity building is another important area that needs to be in place due to a high turnover of volunteer community broadcasters. The organisation around the programme quality and appropriateness, and of "who does what" is of importance in the organisation of a radio. Leaning on the social sustainability and community participation here, it is recommended to organise the radio in

thematic editorial groups, each with responsibility to produce programming around a certain theme. This develops capacity and insight in the community, and the listeners will respond with trust and following. Finally mastering the rapid technical innovations needs to be in place to make a community broadcaster the most effective platform for dialogue and debate possible.

## *Financial sustainability – the third pillar of community media sustainability*

Getting ever demanding expenses covered by an appropriate financial mix and learning how this is done in a small community media reality, is similarly important. Financial sustainability is still considered the major stumbling block by most community media. And when looking for answers, we find that they are closely linked to the organisational capacity (and sustaina-bility) of a station, as well as social sustainability aspects, such as community ownership and participation.

The work to get the financial sustainability right is central to a station's overall well-being! Realistic budgets and reliable operations will be crucial as will full transparency and capable financial management, based on the principles of accountability. Building and strengthening capacities on good financial governance, financial planning, etc. of a sufficiently broad group of community members and sometimes also some radio station/ community media staff, is of paramount importance for the longer-term financial sustainability of the station.

How to build these insights into the planning of a new community media in Myanmar?

While every community btoadcaster is different because every community – of which the station is a reflection - is different, there are some generic phases or stages of action, clarification, decision-making and development that every community planning a community radio/broadcaster needs to move through, to ensure a healthy, well rooted and in the longer-term perspective sustainable broadcasster.
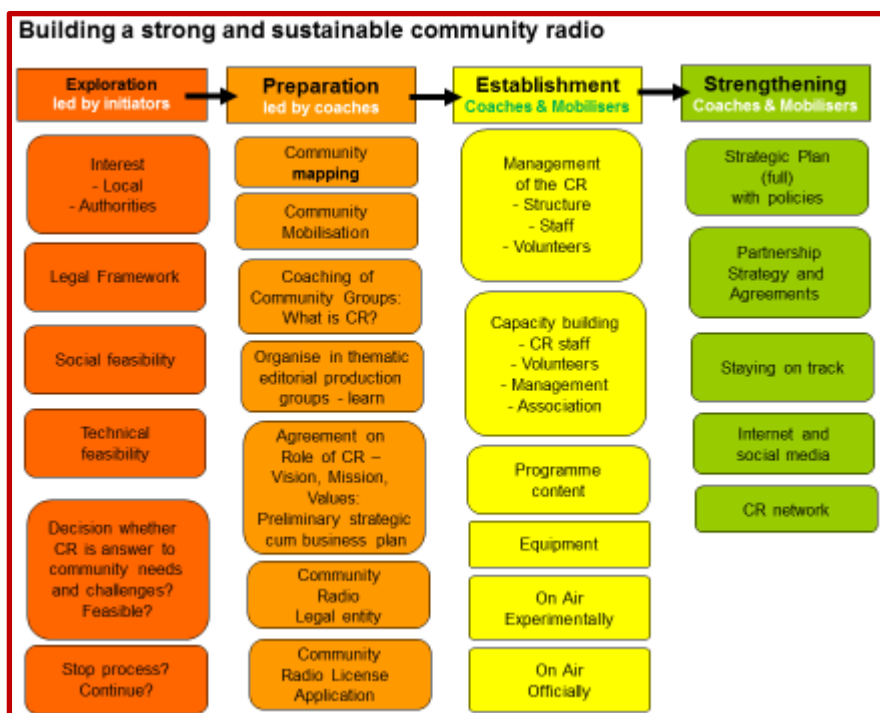
While the order of the individual elements is not necessarily written in stone, a good logical sequence of the most important stepping-stones in the process, are outlined in the model[5] to the right: First of all explore whether the preconditions for a successful community medium are present? If the answer is yes, then move into the preparation focusing on mapping, mobilisation and organisation of the community around the station, based on which it is then possible to build.

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[5] Adapted from: EMPOWERMENT RADIO – Voices building a community. By Birgitte Jallov. EMPOWERHOUSE 2012

Building up Community media – the roles and the timing

CR development facilitators – Roles and responsibilities

Building up community media in a community for the first time, requires facilitation. In different stages of this work, the facilitators have different roles and responsibilities.

Initiators: In many communities in Myanmar, individuals or groups want to bring CR to their area, and reach out for help to start up the process locally. These self-nominated development dynamos we call "initiators" in this paper. Their role is to initiate the exploratory process without being elected and with no representative responsibility

Coaches: When the coordination forum has been elected in a community meeting, the forum identifies a coach. The coach should be a CR champion who really believes in the plans, and who can plan and organize, and mobilise, and is a trusted person in the community – maybe a teacher; a person with CSO/community experience Coaches work maybe one evening a week and some weekends, initiating new volunteers, training the board etc. Coaches are paid an allowance for systematic, ongoing work, managing (initially) capacity building in community. When the coach is no longer needed depends on the quality of the mobiliser. Sometimes coach becomes mobiliser

Mobilisers: Usually one of four (modestly) paid staff of a CR station along with Coordinator, Administrator and Technician. Continues the Coach's capacity building role, manages and coordinates the thematic editorial groups of community volunteer broadcasters. Ensures continually that all 'communities within the community' are part of the group around the radio and if not, invites, mobilises and builds capacity of new volunteers, while integrating them.

A generic framework for the process of building up a station can give an indication of the way forward, step by step. While many steps happen at the same time if, say, the community radio coordination forum has distributed tasks to different working groups or individuals, it is useful to look at time general sequence of activities.

#	Action /month:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Budget*
1.	**Exploration/assessment --- led by initiators** leading initial assessment of community readiness, mobilisation																			
	Build capacity of initiators	▓																		
	Community start-up, assessment		▓																	
2	**Preparation --- led by community-based coaches,** building capacity in community to begin CR																			
	Capacitate community coaches		▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	
	Community mobilisation		▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	
	Initial strategic planning			▓																
	Community mapping			▓																
	Community meetings:what is CR?			▓	▓	▓														
	Organise thematic prod. Groups				▓															
	Build production capacity above				▓															
	Formalise CR group as legal entity				▓															
	Radiation studies, financial plans				▓															
	CR application finalised				▓															
3.	**Establishment --- led by community-based coaches and station mobilisers**																			
	Build new capacity of coaches			▓																
	Elect board of legal entity/CR				▓															
	Board identifies/employs four staff				▓															
	Coach builds capacity board,staff				▓															
	Develop programme schedule				▓															
	Identify, fundraise, order equipm't				▓															
	Find, prepare, paint etc.house				▓															
	On air experimental scheme						▓													
	On air Officially							▓												
5.	**Strengthening . Longer term**																			
	National forum/association																			
	Etc etc…																			

Budget: many types of expenses: capacity building, facilitation of processes, establishment/purchase, running costs

The stepping stones in the process to get a healthy community radio on air

Based on the above, which is again based on experience with the beginning of a lot of community media/community radio stations in many countries, the process should include the following steps, which may overlap substantially. The stepping stones / building blocks for a sound start-up process are presented in 4 ways:

1. In the section above, in the model showing the main stepping stones in CR development: exploration, preparation, establishment, and strengthening.
2. On the previous page they are the organising principle in **the timed overview**, step-by-step;
3. Hereunder they are **explained with some depth**.
4. After the below presentation, the last section of this document discusses **the capacity that needs to be built in the community** – and around – to ensure effective implementation of each of the steps.

Again: what is presented here is meant as a start-up guide & inspiration to develop further along the way

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What is 'a community'?

In the framework of this document and in Myanmar's new broadcast legislation, 'community' is geographically defined: people who share a geographically identified area. They may share the same culture, ethnic background, and language. They share the same natural and climatic conditions, the same infrastructure (such as roads/transport, as well as access to mobile telephony and internet), they are serviced by the same authorities. And so on. The people of the same community share the contextual reality at the same time as their lives in other ways may be vastly different. What is certain is that by working together, using community media/ the radio as a platform for identification, analysis and search for solutions to challenges in their lives, can be very effective, when systematically done. One precondition is to know who the many different 'communities within the community' are. And then base the work on this. More below on this.

In Myanmar the understanding and sense of 'what is a community' is different in urban and rural areas.
In a town, the first level of 'community' is the street, where the religious house is the place to gather. The next geographic level of 'urban community' is neighbourhood, which is generally understood in a similar way by the community in question. Finally the broader understanding of 'urban community' is the town or city.

In a rural area 'a community' the village is the first level of 'community'. But as a village often is only a couple hundred houses, the next level, the village tract, the basic administrative unit in Myanmar, is made up of one or more villages depending upon the size of population in each village. Village Tracts are then organised in wards and wards in towns, which are again organised in townships.

For a rural community broadcaster, a village tract would usually be a good size of 'community' to operate with. Or if a certain tract is too small, maybe two? It is only the community, the people living in the area, who will know the natural extent of their 'community', i.e. the people with whom they feel connected, with whom they would like sharing information (when someone dies or is born, or when other important things happen) and with whom they share similar life conditions.

The natural variations of the physical size of a community broadcaster's 'community' thus underlines the importance of having space in the bylaws of the broadcasting legislation to have from, say 30W transmitters to 250-300W.

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1. Exploration and assessment of community preparedness – 2 months approximately

In the Myanmar reality at the present time, where the broadcasting law has just been passed and the opening of the freedom of expression and of the press only started a few years back, many communities naturally are eager to get their own community radio station/community medium. As there is no prior experience with community media, it is not necessarily *'community owned'* stations involving *'all the communities in the community'* that the emerging champions are thinking of. But a small group of some 50 potential community media champions have had an opportunity to take part in two workshops so far – gaining some initial understanding of what community media can be – and what it is not. There is, however, still a lot to be done in this area: Government and parliament along with the relevant ministries also need to have a full understanding that community media is not just a small station. The same is true for organisations engaging in this process such as UNDP, IMS, Fojo, DWA, UNESCO, BBC

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media action etc. And there is a general strong information need in the society in general. UNDP and its partners are working on addressing these information and knowledge needs separately.

Practically the first step in such a process can be for **the initiators** to call all the communities in the community[6] for a big meeting in a place where all 'communities in the community' feel comfortable, free to speak and respected. It is recommended that this meeting is at least 3 hours long to allow for some presentations, questions and answers, group work to further open for ideas and reservations, report-back, more discussion and finally the election of a coordination forum of some 12-15 persons (as big as possible to have many voices, yet small enough to be able to work).

Depending upon the result of the meeting the work will stop – no radio – or continue. If it continues, the meeting may have established some groups to examine and assess whether some of the preconditions are in place to begin to plan the radio, really. Such examinations and assessments could cover:

Infrastructure/technical feasibility including: (i) presence of electricity at the location should be considered – and if not, would solar powered or other solutions work in that locations? (ii) is the site within acceptable reach by road (and air, maybe) for support systems, and support visits – or if not, what is the thinking about how to go about this? (iii) the availability of a suitable location for the station, ideally at the centre of the community in a place where all communities feel comfortable and free to come and to talk about all issues (when at all possible, big windows should allow the demystification of what happens in the station – but that can be secured later).

People/social feasibility including (i) are there locally individuals who have demonstrated the qualities of a champion with trust from most of the 'communities within in community', who could either spearhead the work of the station as potential 'station manager'/ 'mobiliser' or who would not want to get directly involved, but could be a coach? (ii) Enough of a general interest in engaging on a volunteer basis in a community development initiative? (iii) The language challenge needs to be considered when working from bottom-up in Myanmar. Operating in the local language – and not just local language, but actually the specific dialect of the local language that "we" speak in "our" area where "our" community radio finds itself - is of utmost importance. In the Myanmar reality this means that many communities where community media could have the greatest value and success (e.g., in remote areas in Chin, Kachin, Shan, Mon, Kayin) we also need to identify local ethnic language speakers who can bridge the communication during – initially – the pilot phase with possibly limited bilingual Myanmar language.

Political feasibility including the many related issues that need to be clarified, but which are expected to include (i) not to engage in realities in open conflict. Whereas CR is known to be even very important and effective platforms for mediation and change, it may not be advisable to include such sites in a first round of CRs in Myanmar's reality – but very desirable in post-conflict areas. (ii) would there be any considerations towards ensuring that Government is comfortable and not back-fire, through maybe having the early stations within reach and in language areas not too distant to potential oversight by the political establishment? The council, granting licenses will decide this, but it is good to considers by all. This would not be an ideal consideration. It is, however, very important to start up in a realistic manner, where the political system becomes familiar and at ease with this new development in their country. This all with a view to a future of a hand's length policy for autonomous community media.

When, after the assessment of feasibility, **the community chooses to move forward with establishment of a Community Radio/medium, a community meeting needs to elect a Coordination Forum.**

This Coordination forum needs to be representative of the many 'communities within the community', and it needs to possess the different qualities and qualifications needed to support the radios start: community engagement, ability to raise and manage funds, strategic planning, analysis of development issues etc… And it is important that members of this group are not leading religious or political figures. This would make the true open and inclusive community nature of the work hard. This group will lead the next phase of the work and end often up being the first board of the station – in full or partially.

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[6] Local CSOs and authorities can help with identification of how to reach all.

One of the first responsibilities of this group is to identify a community coach, who can be with some ease become the champion and inspiring capacity builder of the community. When the coach is identified, the role of the initiators is over. Sometimes the coach will be one of them, but often not.

2. The Community prepares for the community radio/medium – approximately 2-4 months

The second major step in the process is to prepare the community for community radio (media), builds on the first stage's initial mobilisation. This includes, as listed in the matrix with timing phase by phase 3 pages ago: the capacitation of community coaches; Community mobilisation; Initial strategic planning; Community mapping; Community meetings: what is CR?; Organise thematic radio production Groups; Build production capacity of the production groups; Formalise CR group as a legal entity; Have radiation studies and other required technical studies carried out for the application process; elaborate the financial plans: where will our funding come from? And finally wrapping all of this up in the CR application.

This is a very intense and important process. We mention here that it can take from 2-4 months. It can also easily take 6 months. The speed should not cost some of the community engagement. One of the reasons from many actors in Myanmar feeling a certain pressure is the uncertainty of the sincerity with which the Broadcast Council will adhere to the idea that community licences should be preserved for true community groups. There is a worry that some of the professional journalists and commercial media might apply for pseudo-community licences, and fill up the space on the airwaves, leaving no options for the slower community groups. This issue will need to be raised with the broadcasting council, when it is constituted. Or measures brought in place to ensure true communities on air.

To achieve a sense of community ownership of the radio station, and above that the trust and confidence of all in the community, the radio station must work, research, speak, recommend and act on behalf of all — this does not happen automatically. The radio station will need representation across all ages, both genders, all geographic parts of the community; all religious and philosophical orientations and all socio-economic trades and occupations to know who they are and their (power) interrelations.

To maintain this diversity of participation perspective when the radio is on air and the daily production routine takes over the main focus and attention, these aspects need to be integrated into the organisation of the radio station and kept active and operational by appropriate management routines.

Community mapping is a way of identifying all the 'communities within the community' followed up by an analysis of interrelation and significance. This will enable outsiders, as well as community members themselves to identify different interests that are alive and 'operating' in the big group of people, villages and farms within the area of reception of the station. While people who live in a given area will think that they know well all of the groups and sub-communities in their area, many are surprised when actually mapping their area, just how many different backgrounds and interests exist in the community. Community mapping will be further discussed below.

Initiation of the social mobilisation process needs to be based on a careful identification of the many sub-communities within each community: who are we? Which groups can we identify? Generic groupings include women and men, youth and elderly; but also different ethnic or religious groups are often important, as can be different livelihood or professional groups. Each of these groups will have its own specific context (traditions, rules, challenges, vulnerabilities etc.), hopes and interests as well as resources and possible contributions to make. In addition, these issues do not usually exist in isolation, but within a close inter-relationship between the different sub-communities, and every person will always belong to several such sub-communities.

Community mapping is best done by the community itself, ideally with some external facilitation. In this way, the exchange of information and dialogue inherent to the mapping process already forms a natural part of the mobilisation process – and it is a powerful learning process.

To effectively mobilise, organise and train the community members representing most of the different community groups identified in the mapping exercise, it is necessary to identify who will take this

process further. During this phase, a multitude of issues need to be sorted out before going on air: call a general assembly and form an association based on required background work. Carry out the necessary radiation studies [don't yet know Myanmar requirements]; a transmission licence and other necessary registrations must be obtained; the 'legal body' to hold the transmission permission needs to be decided upon, e.g. a community association as mentioned in the new law.

There are at least four good, tried and proven groups of people who may be appropriate to undertake particular tasks:

- the coordination forum, which may already be called and functioning as the community media board or coordination committee, and could be the forerunner in community mobilisation, organising processes, meetings, contact points, initial training in 'what is a community media', 'community organisation and community media management', 'radio production' etc.
- local NGOs, CBOs or other locally organised groups may be involved in getting the radio organised, and able to take on the initial organising tasks
- a community media coach can be identified (see more below), who has insights into community communication and development, is recruited locally and has knowledge of the local community, culture and language(s) can be tasked (paid or unpaid) with the task of providing coaching. This could be a local school teacher, a community organiser, a community-oriented NGO worker or another suitable person.
- a mobiliser can be identified to be a core part of the station's staff, with the responsibility to continuously ensure that all communities in the community are involved in the life of the radio station, that the radio station has enough programmers. The mobiliser could, in principle be responsible for managing the editorial production groups that will be presented as a way of organising the programme production below.

In most situations all of the above functions will be at play when getting a radio station up and running. The coordination committee is usually made up of very motivated people and may overlap with the second group mentioned above. Similarly the Coach will often be identified at the beginning of the organisation process, and the work of the coach will often be gradually taken over by the mobiliser, who comes on board when the radio station is getting more organised.

3. Establishing the station - ready for take-off   – approx.3 months

As in the two phases above, the first step is to develop the insight and capacity of the community coaches to lead the next, important phase and process.

First of all the first (annual) general assembly of the legal entity, the community organisation, needs to elect its board or management committee (same thing, different names). The board then needs to form all the elements of the station:

- Identify and employ the four core staff members (recommended): Coordinator, Administrator, Technician and Mobiliser;
- Ensure that the Coach builds the capacity of the board and the staff
- Ensure that the programme schedule is developed in a participatory manner, with the participation by all thematic programme groups and others engaged with the station;
- Get the financial situation under control including preparing a realistic (modest) budget and find out from where the funding can come
- Identify equipment need, procedures and funding - and from where to get it
- Find and prepare (repair and paint) house for the station
- Go on air experimentally
- And launch the station and go on air Officially
- Work…'

4.   Ongoing strengthening

When getting to this advanced state in the development process, (i) the broadcast authority and council will have been in place for a while and the by-laws will have found a level of normality and (ii) a lot of experience about how things work, what the challenges are, etc will have emerged. At this point the 'meat' can most sensemakingly be 'added on the bones' of the below skeleton, or framework for elements of importance in a strengthening process. It will be know exactly what is needed and how to address this.

The elements here, however, include:

Once on air, each of the actors will need to refine and fulfil their function to continually strengthen the radio:
- The board
- The staff
- The community volunteer broadcasters
- The coach (if still on board – maybe the mobiliser has taken over?)
- The community

It will be important to review and improve the strategic plan at least once a year, and the same with the sustainability strategy. Partnerships need to be carefully maintained both for linkage, information for programming and for funding opportunities.

It will be important to work on improving technical opportunities including social media.
And it is needed to continue to follow up on the community's appreciation of the programming and direction of the station.

It is powerful to document the community development impacts emerging from the work and life of the station. Here the issues about the role of women and of minorities – including ethnic – should be always included, as well as the 'service check' on whether 'all the communities within the community' remain engaged in the life of the station.

And it will be important – at at point – organise a community media network, national and/or regionally**.**

The details of this all will grow from a sound and effective implementation of the first phases and experience with the radio.

Part II

Building capacity
for a healthy CR start of
community media
in Myanmar

In a community radio station/medium capacity-building is never completed. Due to the nature of the radio and the fact that most of the programmers, technicians, managers and mobilisers are working on a volunteer basis, a natural, continual cycle of people leaving and new volunteers appearing will be the order of the day. While the initial influx will be almost automatic and spurred by the novelty of the community radio/medium, the continued renewal of the volunteer base — and securing its representativeness of the community — will require some strategic mobilisation efforts (see above).

While some volunteers will manage to match their engagement in the radio with their work and private life on a longer-term basis, an important share of volunteers traditionally is young people. These people may move away from the community when one phase in their schooling ends, or when they realise that a volunteer position in the radio did not, after all, result in a paid job and formal training.

In any case, there will be some movement on an ongoing basis. And while some will lament the disappearance of a trained and capable volunteer community programmer, technician or manager, training a new one simply means that the radio station adds to the number of community members receiving a lot of skills and experience that can be of use far beyond the role in the life of a community broadcaster.

The continued loss of trained volunteers does, however, also mean that for the radio to continue on a sustainable basis, capacity building and training has to be an ongoing exercise. This is tackled in different ways. One of them is to have a community media coach (see below) who can support the radio station on an ongoing basis, by running introduction training sessions with regular intervals, and by providing ongoing training of the corps of volunteers.

Ongoing boosting of capacity for all volunteers and staff is often integrated into a weekly or fortnightly planning-cum-evaluation session. This provides a forum for regular evaluation of areas identified as needing improvement. These sessions also provide opportunities to run crash-courses, short lectures by the coach, and for the sharing of advice by more experienced colleagues, etc. Based on this, the group can plan how to move forward with issues, themes, community challenges and volunteer development in the coming week or fortnight.

Training in this broad understanding becomes an ongoing, cyclical event, where all are learners and all have the potential of becoming trainers and 'sharers'. This is lead by the station manager or a coach and adds one more aspect to the meaning of 'empowerment radio'.

Capacity building as an ongoing process building on capacities existing in community

During the process of community mapping, the needs, interests and capacities of the community will be registered, including many individuals and groupings with extraordinary knowledge and experience. This information provides the basis on which the radio station will build programmes.

At the same time the mapping will identify some of the local challenges and problems, as well as insight into how a radio station is seen to be able to assist the community overcome some of these. And most importantly, the mapping will show the community's many-faceted development dreams and aspirations — where it wants to go and the lives they want their children to live.

With the community being aware of its own needs, and the existing capacities being registered, it is possible to identify capacity gaps: what does the community have to be able to do in order to carry out and sustain the activities that are expected to lead it to its goals? The identified gaps can then be addressed systematically through capacity building in the form of training and coaching.

In order to create their own radio stations, communities will start from scratch in many areas: community media management, organisational development, staff and volunteer management; administration and financial management, including donor relations and fundraising; programming and programme format production, including audience research and continued audience relations; and technical operation and (preventive) maintenance skills.

In all communities there are people who possess some of these skills via training and education and/or real life experience in making life work in what may be extremely adverse conditions. The challenge is to identify these people, ensure that they become involved in some way in the organisation in or around the radio station, and to create a number of adequate ways to further strengthen this capacity and the many others that are needed.

Building sustainable capacity for sustainable stations: Coaching, training, study visits, or?

Thousands of community media training courses have been carried out everywhere and the results vary significantly. Many courses are organised on a national or regional level, bringing together perhaps one or two people from a number of different radio stations. These courses have the advantage that they can focus on very few thematic subjects, with which all of the participants work in their stations. They also often provide positive personal experiences and exchanges for the participants and offer them a broader sense of perspective on their own work situation.

However, one of the core experiences over the past ten to fifteen years, on several continents is that such courses – "training" - usually achieve very limited impact in the station, as returning participants find it difficult to apply newly acquired skills or changed attitudes in their 'old' environment, where the majority of people has not been exposed to the same training experience.

By contrast, coaching and ad-hoc or crash courses carried out at one radio station at a time with all station staff and volunteers usually have a powerful impact, provided that time and coach quality and background are adequate. This has the added benefit that coaching is usually more cost effective.

The best results will normally be achieved by a good mix of forms of capacity building activities. As always the specific choices to be made will depend on the specific objective of the capacity building, the target audience, the topic, the budget and feasibility. Effective capacity building activities include:
- Coaching station by station
- Study visits – a bigger group from same station –otherwise limited results
- Larger seminars/'festivals' where different stations showcase work and
- Training in specific skills – especially for admin/accounting and technicians

Such considerations can be made on an ad hoc basis, or they could be included in an explicit training and capacity building policy.

Coaching

Where the aim of capacity building is not a specific and individual skill, but the development of well-anchored, effective community media as an organic organisation (including a number of specific responsibilities and functions), coaching may provide an effective way forward.

In sport coaches accompany their team, follow them from the side-line with a clear notion of how they need to improve to get to where they want to go. They remain open to unforeseen developments, dynamically and creatively working with the team to increase their capacity to reach their desired goals.

A community media coach is not very different from a sports coach: available to oversee and review work at the radio station, to help increase capacity and thus ensuring that all staff from management to volunteers do the best they can to reach identified targets and objectives. The tasks of the coach will be a mirror of the organisation s/he is working with, its needs, its existing capacities, and the capacities that need to be strengthened. A coach's role is to support positive developments in individuals and the organisation as a whole.

In community media coaches are used for many different objectives and needs in the areas of management, organisational development, and improved (radio) programme production. A coach, in this context, will be a facilitator and a process guide. The key skills necessary for any coach is the ability to analyse a situation, to identify and extract support needs, and to turn these into a good and effective learning process. An effective coach facilitates the development of relevant skills and fosters organisational change.

Any coach should possess good analytical skills, the understanding of organisational development and capacity building, and they should have a good personal understanding and insight into human beings. An appreciation that we are all different and that issues can be and sometimes need to be tackled in different ways is fundamental.

Who can be a community media coach? Which capacities to look for?

If you are looking for a coach to cover a very specific, already identified need, like editing using specific software, designing a research plan or developing a financial management system, you should design the coach's job description to match the well-defined need.

Specific needs aside, a coach meant to generally facilitate the development of a community broadcaster should possess some of the following qualities:
- ❖ a good and thorough knowledge of what a community radio/medium for development is and can be, or similar knowledge of community empowerment and development processes
- ❖ a good understanding and interest in community development — working with and involving all
- ❖ a good and systematic capacity to plan
- ❖ a good understanding of organisational development
- ❖ a good analytical capacity — ability to match identified needs with required 'answers'
- ❖ a good ability to listen, and readiness to change plans to match situations and requirements – interest and ability to build on existing capacity to the extent possible (and not insist on processes fitting into pre-designed frameworks)
- ❖ humility towards, respect for, and interest in people from all communities within a community

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A 'coaching session' will usually be a planned sequence of inputs, where the coach observes the unit/person(s) in action, then comments, suggests and discusses with the person or group ways of improving practice. Examples for such work could include:

- ◆ observing the work routines and interactions in the station across all of the many functions, e.g. the station manager interacting with volunteers at the station, proposing more effective ways for her/him to lead and inspire co-workers
- ◆ leading the research group through a planned sequence of capacity building sessions, using the time needed to make the group able to 'fly' on its own;
- ◆ observing an editorial group editing a programme or putting a programme on the air in the studio — proposing better and more effective ways of making this happen

- when specific needs or weaknesses are identified, then schedule an ad hoc crash course, providing the necessary training identified

Often a coaching process includes providing 'crash courses' in different areas as needs emerge. Some of these, the coach will be able to give by her/himself, for others it will be necessary to call in specialised assistance. Basic in-coaching is a process where a tailor-made capacitation process is designed based on observation and analysis, to match relevant needs. Compared to training where usually one to three people from a station are invited to a training course in a 'foreign' environment, coaching takes place at the station, with the station's own equipment, in the everyday environment of the participants and the participation (in principle) of all relevant persons.

While a local coach may provide far less exposure to international expertise and other radio stations, the tailored training solutions which meet the specific needs of the radio, which are delivered at the radio station and involve all relevant staff are far more effective and provide much more promising and lasting results than offsite and/or generic training courses.

For the Myanmar reality now, three different types of coaches are considered:
- As a first step **"initiators"** are prepared to facilitate development of a community broadcaster in their community. This is a coach from that community with the skills mentioned above and trained by UNDP (Birgitte & Nimmi)
- For the next stage – 2 and 3 as presented in the section above and on next page – UNDP and partners will build the required capacity of the **"coaches"** (identified and recruited by the community 'coordination group' /'installation group') first for step 2 and then for step 3 , both of which have important elements that the coaches need to learn to pass on, taking the initial mobilisation onwards towards becoming a station
- In parallel it could be considered to develop 'Super coaches' responsible for a state or region, with an initial special capacity, and developed to train new coaches in their area and to be a backstopper for the existing coaches in their state or region
- For the medium or longer term a national CR network will be formed and it could have some Super-coaches (maybe a network with one in different states/territories) who could train coaches and trainers.

Developing a culture of continual learning…

Is important for the sustainability desired – in all ways:

- Everyone needs to have a clear understanding of their role in station
- Weekly meetings (above proposed to be managed by coach every Saturday morning) of evaluation of the past week, extracting points of success and things to learn from and change – and planning of the coming week
- Instilling all with the right to make mistake and learn – no embarrassment, no competition (or little) etc… a culture of learning
- When someone has learnt something – from a training course, from a meeting, from the Radio/TV, from school, seminars of dissemination are organised…
- Regularly (annually?) all core people in the station are having a performance assessment talk with the station coordinator or the board chair to identify capacity building needs

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> - In view of the foreseeable high turn-over, it is important to always have two people in each function – and to keep and open management dialogue with people in and around the station to know about movement coming up.

In view of the introduction above, reflecting what appears to be a broad interest all over Myanmar for bringing community media to many communities, a dual process is proposed:

1. Training of Coaches identified (criteria above) to be local, community coaches who coach say, one evening a week (programme developed with different themes and focus areas) and every Saturday morning as a weekly evaluation cum planning and capacity building in one – for all volunteer programmers.
2. Training of Super Coaches – meant to train other coaches in their area: state or part of state/territory (some of the champions who have taken part in our two CR workshops July and October – CSO networks etc.)

   These could include (list has been started – to be continued):
   - Story tellers
   - Northern Shan Women's Network
   - Michael Suantak (Organisation: Phandeeyar, MYA) Chin, 09 33 567 018, 09 260 850 567
   - SRG network
   - Kachin CSO forum
   - … from CR workshops

Longer term Capacity Building perspective
National Community media Forum (or Association or Network…) could have some Super-coaches (maybe a network with one in different states/territories) who could train coaches and trainers.

Capacity building step by step:

Not all will (or should) happen in coordinated manner. But it could be that the larger 'forum' of CPs emerging could line up resources available at different stages of process.
[Again: just started. Will continue. Please share ideas!!!]

#	Activity	Output	Who offers what?	Budget?
1.	**Getting started** Exploration and assessment of community preparedness – Sensitization			Total phase?
	Coached process for **initiators**			
	• Workshop: 'training of initiators' • Coached support in community • Distance support		UNDP develops module – and 5 subregional w/s	?
		After community work.Identification of local champion Coach/mobiliser		?
2.	Preparation: Community mapping and mobilizing the community			
	Developing **coaches**: workshops, coaching		UNDP could consider to also develop this capacity building module?	
	Coach capacity to… strategic planning ++ (curriculum for learning)			
		Good community level coaches (in turn: radio boards, executive)		
3.	Establishment: Organising the community			
	Coach capacity beefed up to include knowledge about association/organization, formation of prod. groups, organizing the place=the station Applying for license, raising funds for equipment, ordering equipment	Organised station Licence application	UNDP could consider to also develop this capacity building module?	
	Production of Code of conduct +++			
	Learning about laws, dos, donts (using above)			
	Programme production	Trained volunteers	BBC media action-modules, manuals on drama prod.++	
	A learning environment instilled			
	In prep.	Equipment		Donors?
5.	Strengthening			
	National association/forum/network			

Budget: coaching, capacity building … also national network