This course introduces students to the principles, concepts, models, and practices of community media.

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Introduction

The UNESCO International Program for the Development of Communication (IPDC) has been supporting the project University-based Learning of Community Media Specialists submitted by the Community Media Association in Kyrgyzstan since 2019.

The project has prioritized the thematic area of capacity building for journalists and media managers, including improving journalism education (using UNESCO's Model Curricula for Journalism Education). We therefore proposed strengthening 12 journalism universities and their interaction with community media in Kyrgyzstan, as well as promoting the international consensus and mechanisms on media policy issues.

Community media play an important role in providing rural communities with reliable information, helping citizens practice their right to information and participate in local self-governance. Today Kyrgyzstan demonstrates its own result of the development of community media approaching its 20th anniversary since the opening of the first multimedia center in Talas city with the support of the IPDC in 2003.

In 2020, the IPDC celebrated its 40th anniversary. The ongoing support of 24 community media organizations in Kyrgyzstan forms one of its milestone achievements. The IPDC made a significant contribution, almost annually supporting projects for the development of a pluralistic media environment, including the recognition of community radio broadcasting. Since 1992, the programme has supported numerous projects ranging from radio stations over press organizations to information centers and universities throughout the country.

For the first time, this project on community media focused on journalism universities, recognizing the importance of generating and disseminating high-quality information based on authentic stories provided by local communities. Faculties and journalism chairs have the right to know what is happening in the mountainous communities of Kyrgyzstan, what the level of development of community media is, what the concerns of local communities are, and which news agenda local community media pursue. In this regard, future journalists’ understanding of the interaction and partnership with local community media channels raises the quality of information on rural residents – and their needs.

This community media course was developed during a series of training workshops with the support of UNESCO Almaty and resulted from a discussion of the sources proposed by the wider UNESCO series on journalism education. Young journalists build the future for Central Asia’s prosperous public life. Therefore, we hope that this tutorial will be included in the list of recommended literature for journalism faculties in UNESCO member states of the Almaty Cluster Office.

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Course Title: Community Media

This course introduces students to the principles, concepts, models, and practices of community media. The course developed by Kalinga Seneviratne focuses on the radio culture of the Asian community and makes the subject applicable to other situations in developing countries, encouraging teachers/instructors to be contextually innovative in their pedagogical approaches. Currently, there are 4 community radio stations and 21 multimedia centers in Kyrgyzstan. Therefore, this course is necessary for Journalism faculties of higher educational institutions of Kyrgyzstan to study the format, functions, development conditions and content of community media and to train future personnel for community media in the country.

Level of the course: Tier 3- final year elective for mass communication bachelor degree students majoring in radio.

Course Description:

The commercialization of media across the globe has created a counter-movement for community-based media, especially in radio, which is the most accessible medium for poor and marginalized populations. The aim is to demonstrate to students how the radio skills they have learned during the course could also be used to produce radio of a non-commercial nature oriented towards the community and produced with the community.

Course objectives:

▶ Demonstrate how participatory communication theories could be used to produce radio programming with the community;

▶ Introduce the principles and concepts of community radio;

▶ Provide students with practical experience in producing radio programs in collaboration with the community;

▶ Equip students with knowledge and skills to work in and/or manage community radio stations/programming collectives.

Learning Outcomes:

The student who took this course must have the following competencies:

KNOW:

- principles of community media;

- the establishment of community media and development of program content;

- theory of development and participation

- working with volunteers and developing a plan for the financial sustainability of community media

Be ABLE to:

- development of a business plan for community media;
- production of audio-video and text broadcasts for community media;
- technical skills in preparing materials for community media.

**Prerequisites**: Basics of journalism, history of journalism, writing and editing Skills, Network journalism.

**Post-requisites**: Theory and practice of mass communication, theory of journalism, Conflict in journalistic creativity, Basics of advertising, international journalism, Legislation in the media.

**Course duration**: Sixteen weeks, one semester, 3rd year of study

**Number of hours per week**: four (one-hour lecture and three-hour tutorial/ workshop) plus field work for program production/research.

**Note**: the students need to have done at least one module of basic radio production. This course does not teach the fundamentals of radio production or broadcasting. They should be able to record and edit radio material using simple, cheap digital technology. It is preferable that students have done a second-stage radio production course as well, where advanced radio programs have been produced such as radio news features or talk shows.

**Mode**: This module in theory and practice of participatory communication methodology for community radio contents production and station management is designed as a final-year elective to be taken by mass communication students in a four-year bachelor’s degree course. This could also be set up for online training of community broadcasters with the assistance of a local instructor who will guide trainees on field work and contents production.

The course involves weekly lectures, class exercises and field work spread over eight to ten weeks, or could be delivered as a two-week intensive course. This curriculum will be slightly modified for the two-week training. An electronic library could be set up to access resource material for this course such as notes, articles, electronic publications, radio capsules and videos.

Digital teaching works only in combination with conventional classroom/workshop meetings. In order to work online, the participants – students and lecturer – should know each other. Second, for improving motivation one classroom meeting is needed to discuss issues, problem-solving and identification of the community and its needs at the beginning of the course. There should also be regular classroom/workshop discussion to monitor progress – especially playing radio recordings/projects and discussing their contents and effectiveness. A last classroom meeting should be dedicated to a presentation of the outcome of the final project by each of the students/trainees.

**Pedagogical approach or method**: This course uses a combination of various pedagogical approaches. It can be taught at a university environment as a final year course spread over a thirteen- to sixteen-week semester. In that case, the methodology adopted will be traditional classroom meetings, with resource material either presented through a CD-ROM in the classroom or accessed via an online link.

This course could also be offered online for training of community radio broadcasters on location, with weekly lessons followed by exercises and field work spread over a period of sixteen to sixteen weeks. The students’ field work for grading may also be broadcast on the local community radio station. However, this online teaching in an electronic learning environment should be combined with classical classroom meetings (a first meeting and one more during the
course, or preferably meetings on a weekly or fortnightly basis) and tutorial/supervision on project work.

The course is practical/hands-on and student-centered. This implies that the students are responsible for their work in the classes and the timetable attached to it. Lecturers generally work as coaches, helping the students to make their first steps in this field, and to overcome the problems in assignments.

Lecturers on this course should be familiar with radio broadcasting. Preferably they should be former or current radio broadcasters, especially with public service radio or community radio. They should also know how to work inside an electronic learning environment. In some developing countries extra training for lecturers in both areas is needed; a training of trainers workshop should be the first step. A program for this training based on the outline of this course needs to be developed. A pilot of this course can start, attended by a select group of lecturers in cooperation with the trainer of trainers. After fine-tuning, the course could start at various selected universities or community radio stations.

Note however that community radio broadcasters and universities in different countries work in different languages. The original English version of this curriculum and some of the resource material may need to be translated and published in a select number of languages.

**Grading:**

For universities: the students will be assessed through a number of individual and group assignments as listed below. There will be no final exam and as the course is designed mainly as a hands-on and consultation-based learning model, class attendance will be taken and a grade given. However, an individual essay is assigned to test students’ understanding of participatory communication and other mass communication theories applicable to community radio.

**The recommended grading formula is:**

▶ essay on community radio (individual): 20 per cent
▶ program proposal (group exercise): 10 per cent
▶ news bulletin (group exercise): 10 per cent
▶ radio feature on MDGs (group exercise): 10 per cent
▶ final project magazine program (group): 40 per cent
▶ class attendance: 10 per cent.

**Equipment:** any university or community radio station conducting this course needs at least three digital voice recorders, three computers with internet access and audio editing software.
Course outline

**Week 1: Definition of Community media**

This lecture will be devoted to the following questions:

1. Community media Functions
2. Study and survey on this topic
3. Viewing videos and videos on Community media

This lecture begins with the question what is Community media? The theory of development and participatory communication, including the background of its evolution, and its practical application in different countries and conditions. (Experience of domestic and foreign countries)

Video: AMIC, AIBD and Global Eye Media (2009), Mahaveli Community Radio. Alternatively, students could download the evaluation report of the project at: [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000055973](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000055973)

Guideline: How to do Community Radio [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000134208](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000134208)

**Tutorial:** Watch the video/and or read the evaluation report and discuss the concepts of communication for development reflected there such as ‘development support communications’, ‘development communication’ and ‘participatory communication’. Divide the class into groups with the lecturer giving each group a development problem, which needs to be addressed using a participatory communication methodology. The students will suggest one methodology – not necessarily by radio alone.

**Readings and references:**


**Week 2: Understanding the community and communication**

This lecture explores the question of ‘What is a ‘community?’ then looks at aspects of the process of communications such as changing perspectives, the function of media and their limitations, media’s role in the society, media and communication for education and development versus empowerment, and communication for nurturing cultural and cultural empowerment. It considers the links between community and communication, such as mediated communications, interdependency and non-profit media.

**Tutorial:** Students should divide into groups to identify a community in the area where a community radio project will be established. They should be presented with a profile/mapping of the community, and any available data and reports on its development and communication needs or sociocultural issues. The students/trainees may visit the community and carry out
consultations before drafting the proposal. Present to class a brief proposal on how the radio station will be established.


**Week 3: Community media in the world and Kyrgyzstan and its difference in development**

This lesson examines the History of the emergence and development of Community media in the world (examples from the Philippines, India, Solomon Islands, Bolivia, Denmark and Sri Lanka, Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan and the CIS). The history of the emergence and development of Community media in Kyrgyzstan.

**Tutorial:** Divide the class into groups. Allocate an alternative media project from Alfonso’s Making Waves (2001). Students should read this and summarize its main role as an alternative media for the community. Alternatively, they may watch the video Free Media, Free Minds (Cape Town Community TV) and discuss some of the issues featured in it in the local context.

Organizing and conducting guest lectures for practical classes with the involvement of practicing journalists, as well as organizing a “Media Caravan” will be appropriate.


Videos: Free Media, Free Minds (Cape Town Community TV) focused on alternative media; Rural Radio in Africa, Building Strong Community Radio in Latin America.

**Week 4: Opportunities of Community Media**

This session introduces students to the basics of community radio. These include:

1. Community media in the context of globalization
2. Advantages of community radio
3. Information security of community radio (risks)

**Tutorial:** Select a relevant reading from among the list of readings and references presented below and discuss different aspects of community radio raised in the reading in terms of the discussion and the reality in your country.
Graded assignment: Research a community radio station from your country (or from the region) and write a 2–3,000-word essay looking at the background to its establishment and discussing how it fits into the definitions of community radio given by UNESCO, AMARC and Tambuli. This assignment should be handed over to the lecturer at the tutorial in Week 6. Run an interim test on features of local community radio.


Week 5: Policies and procedures for launching community media

The lecture covers the following topics:

1. Development of the concept of a community media center
2. Making a list of material-technical base
3. Defining the direction of Community media

This session focuses on principles, writing style, news focus, and current affairs for community media. How does it differ from the main news? Students study alternative sources of news from the Internet, the local community, national and other sources. They discuss the role of community news radio in disaster situations, during periods of political or social conflict in the country/region, as well as promoting alternative models, economic models and models of development through news coverage / focus. Examples of research in Africa and Asia, USA, Australia are studied.

Tutorial: Divide the class into four groups. In the first hour, one group each prepares to argue for and against the following motions. In the second hour, hold two twenty-minute debates with the tutor as the moderator.

► Debate 1: Community radio is economically unsustainable
► Debate 2: Community radio will create conflict in the community.


Week 6: Models of community media

This session explores different community radio models from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe. Some of the models explored are:

► independent community radio model
► collaboration with tertiary institution
► collaboration with local government
► religious institution-initiated model
► NGO-run community radio
► union-initiated model
► ethnic community model
► commercial community radio model
► windows within public service radio.

PowerPoint: ‘Models of community radio’ (AMIC).

**Tutorial:** Listen to the radio features mentioned below and discuss:

► the pros and cons of a local council owned/funded (LGU) community radio model
► the different sound of community radio and why the mainstream radio voice may be inappropriate to community radio.

Each student should write a community radio presentation script of not more than two minutes’ duration and present it to the class, followed by a discussion.


**Readings and references:** Fraser and Estrada (2001, ch. 8), and Tabing (2008, ch. 3). Also Gosh (2010), IRIN (2008), Miglioretto (2008), Seneviratne (1989), Shankar (2010), Voices (n.d.).

**Week 7: Community media business plan. Conditions for creating a community radio and multimedia center.**

Community media initiated by a professional Association, independently managed by an organization, or a collective at the community level.

This session explores the issue of economic viability of community radio and how to market a community radio station or program to the community. Case studies from Asia and Africa are examined. It also considers whether governments should set up community radio assistance funds, and if so, how. Case studies from Australia, South Africa, the USA and other countries are examined.

**Tutorial:** Divide the class into three groups and assign them to discuss and present a funding model for a community radio station in their community/region which will adopt one of the following models:

► in collaboration with an educational organization
► run by a local NGO
► in collaboration with an LGU
► independently run by a community-based organization or collective.

Week 8: Community media and selection of participants / volunteers. Community TV broadcast

1. Community radio policy
2. Selection of participants / volunteers
3. Development of plans for news and cultural and entertainment programs
4. Making a broadcasting grid

This session focuses on how to create participatory communication models of programming for community radio so as to establish a model of ‘radio by the people for the people’. Topics include forming programming collectives which may include youth, women, workers and other communities of interests; setting up talk shows with the community; live programming from community events; and promoting of local artistic expressions on radio. Case studies from Philippines, India, Solomon Islands, Bolivia, Denmark and Sri Lanka are examined.

Tutorial and graded assignment: Divide the class into groups of three and ask them to draw up a proposal to produce a community radio program with the community. This proposal needs to be produced as an assignment for grading, and submitted to the lecturer at the next week’s tutorial.


Week 9: Economic viability and marketing of community radio

This session explores the issue of economic viability of community radio and how to market a community radio station or program to the community. Case studies from Asia and Africa are examined. It also considers whether governments should set up community radio assistance funds, and if so, how. Case studies from Australia, South Africa, the USA and other countries are examined.

Tutorial: Divide the class into three groups and assign them to discuss and present a funding model for a community radio station in their community/region which will adopt one of the following models:

▶ in collaboration with an educational organization
▶ run by a local NGO
in collaboration with an LGU

independently run by a community-based organization or collective.

Advice for teacher: whenever possible, the teacher can record and play a segment of the leading news of any community radio station available on national radio - as a way to start a comparative discussion.

Practical lesson with a teacher: divide the class into two groups. Each group is asked to write a 15-minute news program for community media, which includes 3 minutes of national and international news (made in the style of "snatched-and-read" using Internet sources) and 12 minutes of community news, including business, political, crime, and transport and health news.

You can use "audio fragments" of local interviews, but they will be imitations of those recorded in the audience. Then the program must be recorded and played in the audience.


Week 10: The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and community media. Creating relationships and collaboration between community media and their partners.

1. Relationship between Community media and local self-government
2. Coverage of local government activities through Community media
3. Management in Community media

This session focuses on how to use development and participatory communication strategies in promoting SDGs via community radio. Models are discussed in which community radio stations work with development experts, government officials and community members to devise and produce radio programs to promote SDGs. The radio is seen as a development delivery tool working with the community to facilitate development, while at the same time acting as its watchdog in promoting good governance and democratic participation at the grassroots level.

Tutorial:

► Play news bulletins and discuss in class;
► Discuss ideas for community radio programs addressing SDG issues.

Graded assignment: Students work in groups of two to produce a ten-minute radio feature linked to a SDG issue. This feature should include voices from the community but not exclusively. Other relevant voices like government servants, local government officials or development experts may also be used. The feature could be a panel discussion or a radio news feature. It should have at least three different ‘voice bites’ from the local community. The recorded program is then played at the next tutorial and graded by the lecturer.
Week 11: The internet, new media and community media

This session focuses on how to use the internet and other ‘new media’ technology both as a source of information to enrich community radio broadcasting, and as a distribution channel for community radio. The pioneering ‘Radio browsing the internet’ project of Kothmale Radio in Sri Lanka is examined along with other similar projects which followed. The use of technology such as internet streaming and mobile-phone-based broadcasting is also examined, with case studies drawn from the students’ region and internationally. The concepts and structure of community multimedia centers are also examined, along with new communication technologies on the market such as sound cloud and Hindenburg audio software.

Tutorial: Students work in groups of three to browse the internet and draw up a plan for a half-hour program using the concept of ‘radio browsing the internet’. They present this to the class. This is a non-graded exercise.


Week 12: Preparation of Community media materials

1. "Elet bayany" (Folk Stories)
2. "Eldik talent" (Folk Talent)
3. "Aiyl okmotu (Local municipality) live"

Community radio could play an important role in poor and marginalized communities in bringing education to people’s doorsteps through formal and non-formal education via radio. There are many community radios stations around the world that have won international recognition for providing such services to the community. Many have established ‘school on the air’ projects where people can gain education and qualifications via the use of radio. This session looks at the concepts and models of ‘school on the air’ via community radio broadcasting and examines some of the internationally acclaimed models. What are the differences between formal and non-formal education? Within your local context, what is the gap in non-formal education that a community radio could fill?

21 community multimedia centers were established in Naryn, Issyk-Kul, Jalal-Abad, Osh, Batken and Chui regions of Kyrgyzstan. They create content that includes audio stories, surveys, photo reports, and video materials using various formats and media services. Content can be found mainly on their websites, social networks such as Facebook, Odnoklassniki, Twitter, as well as in the mobile apps "Voice of Ail" and "Community Media". The Birinchi radio broadcasts PTRC column "Eletten khabar" (News from the village).
**Suggestion for the teacher**: the lesson can start with a preview of any relevant video and/or Power Point presentation that highlights the role of ICTs in the production of radio communication in communities.

**Practical session with a teacher**: divides the class into two groups. Each group is asked to write a 15-minute news program for community media, which includes 3 minutes of national and international news (made in the style of "snatched-and-read" using Internet sources) and 12 minutes of community news, including business, political, crime, and transport and health news. You can use "audio fragments" of local interviews, but they will be imitations of those recorded in the audience. Then the program must be recorded and played in the audience.

**Assessment task**: divide the class into groups of three. Each group records news for 15 minutes for community radio with real news and audio snippets. The recorded program is played back in the classroom during the next week's class and evaluated by the teacher.

Website: Government of Australia School of the Air.

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**Week 13: Community radio and activism**

1. Functions of Community media
2. Pros and cons of Community media
3. Risks of Community media
4. Community media and Advocacy

This session explores how community radio could be used as an activist tool to get the voices of the people heard over the glut of commercial and government media/propaganda. It looks at models from Fiji and South Africa. At the same time, it considers the dangers facing radio activists, with a special look at the killing of radio journalists in the Philippines and Mexico. The model of community media in Kyrgyzstan is also being studied: status, prospects and development.

**Practical session with a teacher**: Select the appropriate literature and discuss various aspects of community radio in the material presented compared to the current situation in your country. You can take one of the examples to carefully analyze the issue of activity with students and listen to their opinions.


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**Week 14: Community radio and disaster relief**

Community radio can play a leading role in both disaster preparedness and disaster relief. The role of community radio in disaster relief was well demonstrated in Indonesia and Thailand during the 2004 tsunami. In many countries around the world community radio is increasingly employed in warning against impending disasters and preparing the populations to overcome...
these. This session examines how community radio has been used before, during and after disasters, and also discusses how it could be applied locally in disaster situations.

Community media can help (information) the local population during disasters occurring in the mountainous nature of Kyrgyzstan: landslides, avalanches, floods, earthquakes, etc.

**Tutorial:** The lecturer explains the final project of the course, producing a magazine program of thirty minutes’ duration. The different formats of a magazine program are discussed. Students form groups of three to work on the final project. They should draw up a plan for it, and present it to the lecturer before the end of the tutorial for discussion and approval. The plan must show clearly assigned roles for each member, the subject matter and the format used. Once the lecturer’s approval is obtained, the students start working on the project outside class time.

**Readings and references:** Putra and Pahlemy (2006), Win (2009).

**Week 15: Managing, evaluating and assessing community radio**

This session discusses concepts of community radio station management, evaluation procedures and how to assess the success or failure of a community radio station/model.

**PowerPoint:** Community station management – prepared by Louie Tabing, Tambuli Community Radio, Philippines.

**Tutorial:** There is no tutorial this week and students should use the class time to do field recordings, scripts or editing and packaging of their final project. This project has to be completed by the next tutorial and played in class.

**Readings and references:** Bullo (2008), Mainali et al. (2009), Hollander et al. (2008).

**Week 16: Analysis and summary of the Community media course (Final presentation)**

Representatives of mass media, Community media Associations, experts from international organizations and public organizations will be invited to the final session. Projects recognized by the Commission as "excellent" will be posted on the websites of the University, faculty, presented to the media, and awarded a diploma of the Association of Community media. Agreements on internships for students will be signed between the media and educational institutions. In cooperation with the Association, it is proposed to hold a "round table" or conference "days of community media" among University students studying the course "Community media".