



Radio Ada

Person Interviewed: Mr. Djabtetey Isaac

A) Questions on History about Radio Ada

1. When did your station register to obtain broadcasting license and when did actual operation begin?

Ans: 17/April/95 Submission of GFRCB of Radio Ada's application.

16/Aril/96 Approval of application

4/May/96 Award of original Frequency

July/96 First community level survey (42 settlements)

8/Auguast/97 Installation of tower at 120 feet

8-11/August/97 Special 'Asafotufiami' broadcast

19/November/97 Start of installation of studios

13/December/97 Test transmissions

9/January/98 Award of new frequency (93.3 FM)

26/January/98 Successful test transmission on new 93.3 frequency

01/February/98 Start of broadcast

14/August/99 KPO JEMI (Formal outdooring) of Radio Ada.

2. How many staff members and their respective positions did your institution start with when it began operation?

Ans: The station begun with 62 people. All of them were volunteers who were not paid.

They were teachers, farmers, drivers, etc. who lived within the coverage area of the station. They served as news reporters and writers who lived in Asesewa, Odumase, and other towns and villages of the coverage area. In July, 1996 training workshop in PRA tools was organised for the workers. In August, 1996 three volunteers received training in Nigeria. Finally in July/Aug, 1997 production training workshop was organised for the workers.

3. What are the problems encountered when your station begun operation?

Ans: On the whole, the issue was about funding, particularly concerning the payment of workers. Because the station could not raise money to pay workers it relied on

volunteers. However most of these volunteered workers were no reliable. The workers could not be punctual and regular to work because they were teachers, farmers, etc. who have other commitments. Secondly, the workers easily abandon the station when they had secured a more demanding job or when they felt they can no longer continue to sacrifice, by working without being paid. This problem had affected the performance of the station.

4. Did your station face the problem of mobilizing enough capital?

Ans: Yes the station faced the problem of mobilising capital. The station broadcast to the poor and marginalised. Therefore raising fund by commercialising the service of the station was not feasible. For instance what would the poor farmer or fisherman advertise on the radio and even if he has, how much can he or she pay?

5. What about the acquisition of the necessary equipment?

Ans: The station did not face much problem in the acquisition of equipment because they were provided by some benevolent individuals to the people of Ada.

6. Did the station have sponsors then?

Ans: It was later that the station started getting sponsorship from international organisations.

7. If yes, mention them.

Ans: The major sponsors are;

CAF – Communication and Advocacy Foundation, based in Holland

IBIS – From Denmark

PANOS – West Africa, Head Quarters in UK.

The station also has links with local institutions like the School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

8. After which period (months or years) did your institution start breaking even or making profit when it had begun operation?

Ans: The station is a non-profit making organisation. It largely depends on benevolence and sponsorships of individuals and institutions.

9. Indicate some successes achieved by the station

Ans: The successes are many:

First, there is the creation of awareness among the people on social, political and economic issues.

Secondly, the people have become well informed about their environment such as sanitation issues and the weather forecast helps both the fishermen and arable farmers.

Thirdly, the station offers equal platform for the poor and the rich to express their views

Fourthly, the people have become well educated on the issues of health, farming, etc.

Fifthly, the living standard of the people had improved. For example the station offer information on the prices of goods particularly during market days such as the market day at Asesewa, and farmers may rush with their produce when the prices are favourable.

10. Indicate the catchment or coverage area of your station.

Ans: The primary area of the station is culturally homogeneous but geographically dispersed over a radius of approximately 100kms. It comprises the Volta Region, and Manya Krobo and Yilo Krobo in the Eastern Region. Part of the area lies along the Gulf of Guinea and the rest flows towards the Krobo and Osudoku Mountains and Shai Hills. Most of the land is coastal or hilly savanna. Coverage also extends (spill over) to Ashiaman and Tema where there are large Dangme-speaking populations and some parts of the Volta Region and Accra. On the whole, the station officially broadcast to four districts; Dangbe East, Dangbe West, Yilo Krobo and Manya Krobo. One district has approximately 145 villages. The listening community or target audience of the station belong to several traditional groups: Ada, Klo, Kpone, Ningo, Prampram and Osudoku.

11. What local language is used in broadcasting

Ans: The languages of these different groups are mutually intelligible and are together referred to as the Dangme language. Although a “standard version” of Dangme is being developed, Radio Ada as an oral and aural medium, uses the different versions, depending on the home language of the speaker. The use of the spoken versions of the language is also important in an area where the majority of the population does not yet communicate through the written word.

12. What are the current problems facing your institution?

Ans: It is still staffing problem. The station still can not employ salary workers because it is not commercialised.

B) Questions on Community Broadcasting

1. Comparing with the national and regional radio/FM stations, what is different and special about community radio station?

Ans: First, community radio is non-profit institution, hence both the can afford its service. Second, unlike some commercialised private radios, community radio is non-sectarian. Thus it does not support and promote one ethnic group against others. Thirdly, it is relatively sensitive to the culture of the people in the community. Thus, it always promotes the good aspects of the culture and discourage the people from practicing the “dark” aspect of the people’s culture. Fourthly, unlike national station, the staff of community radio usually hails from that community. Thus, workers in community station would know better the problems and aspirations of the people in the community, hence providing the type of broadcasting service that meets the needs of the people. Fifthly, Community radio, due to their limited coverage area can afford to employ hubs at vantage locations (towns and villages) within the community who will verify information before the station broadcast them. These hubs can hardly be afforded by the national radio whose coverage extends to every part of the country. Finally, community radio first seeks the interest of the people. For instance Ada Radio was once given some huge money by Liver Brothers to promote frytoil (edible oil). The

station rejected the offer because the people in the Ada community are in coconut oil business. The station felt the promotion of frytoil will kill the coconut oil business.

2. As a community radio, what are the problems likely to constraint your station.

Ans: The problem of familiarity complex. The workers of the station are native of the community. Hence, the people always want free services or unreasonable reduction of fees charged for example adverts and announcements. Failure to grant them their request will mean that you are not a good product (native) of the land. Secondly, employing permanent skilled labour is a major problem because the station can not afford to pay them. In view of this, most volunteer workers have used the station as training ground to gain experience and then leave for greener pastures.

3. As a community radio, what needs to be done in order to ensure effective broadcasting of local development?

Ans: If the District Assemblies can serve as resource providers by supporting the station financially. In other words the District Assemblies must realised first, the importance of community broadcasting

4. As a community radio, what would you say the future look like (is the future bright or gloomy)?

Ans: The future of community radio largely depends on future government policies. For instance, if future government policies determines that a portion of the district common fund should be allocated to community radio stations, the future could be bright.

C) Questions on Community Development Broadcast

1. What is the main goal (philosophy) for the establishment of your station?

Ans: The philosophy of the station is development oriented. It is to give voice to the voiceless and to help the marginalised.

2. To what extent is your station satisfied in operating to achieve this goals (indicate in percentages)?

Ans: The station does periodic focus discussions with the people in the community on the benefits they (people) have received from the station's programmes. The results from these focus discussions have largely been favourable. The people claim they have learnt about keeping their environment clean, new technologies in farming, balance diet, etc.

3. What impedes your station in operating (broadcasting) according to this goal?

Ans: The inability to employ permanent skilled labour continues to be the major problem of the station.

4. To what extent does you station include in its programmes, information on livelihoods of the poor living in the Ada community within which your station operates (indicate in percentages).

Ans: About 60% of the station's programmes are geared toward the improvement of the livelihood of the people of Ada.

5. Specifically mention these programmes; the title, the day and time of such coverage.

Ans: The station has the following programmes:

OCUPATIONAL

“Ahooje”, the fishermen's work call

“Wabi Nye Ngmlaa”, farmers, men and women.

“Lasuku womi” or “by the smoke”, fishmongers.

“Keblo no nge ke”, public transport drivers and their mates.

DEVELOPMENT THEMES

“O he mi ne”, how is your health?

“Be bi” or “it's never too late”, on literacy.

“Waa je sikpa”, a village-to-village environment tour.

“Osra nge je mi”, mobilizing for disaster.

CULTURAL

“Do wo tso”, daily hour of traditional music recorded in the villages.

“Kusumi ko laa mo”, discussion and interviews on Dangme culture.

“Yayo kpataa mi”, keeping alive or reviving traditional foods and cooking.

“Nyaza siami”, traditional story telling.

GENERAL INTEREST

“Waku kpa no tsami”, family life.

“Waa wo ga”, advice in response to genuine cases presented in letters.

“Je mi ba mi, ba”, different local drama groups.

6. As community radio station, indicate some physical development projects that the people had benefited due to the broadcasting programmes of your station.

Ans: Sanitation in the community had improved. So many toilet facilities had been provided for the people as a result of the sanitation programmes of the station. For example 400 million Cedis were provided by the district assembly to improve the sanitary condition of the people.

7. Give examples of to prove that through educational broadcasting programmes of your station, the people of Ada are well informed about specific development issues.

Ans: Because of our socio-economic programmes the people of Ada usually walk to the station and report on political, financial, legal, health and economic issues; and the station always direct them to the appropriate quarters for solutions. For instance so many thieves have been arrested as the station alerts the police and the community when people had reported to the station of their missing properties. Secondly, the fishermen in the community uses the station’s regular weather forecast before going to sea.

8. Indicate educational or development programmes that are sponsored by NGOs.

Ans: USAID use to sponsor a programme of the station titled; “Students and Teachers Programme” which deals with the discussions of school management.

Also IBIS has been sponsoring “Good Governance” programme of the station.

9. Indicate educational or development programmes that are sponsored by Government.

Ans: The government does not sponsor any of the programmes of the station. However, for once the District Assemblies of the Ada community sponsored a Christian music contest broadcast by the station

10. Indicate educational or development programmes that are self-sponsored.

Ans: Most of our programmes are self-sponsored. They include story telling, church service, traditional music, folklore, quiz for school children, etc.

11. What are the problems associated with broadcasting development news about the local people of Ada.

Ans: The people are too sensitive to issues around them. For instance they feel peeved and betrayed by their own people (the workers of the station), when the station broadcast negative things about them. The people get offended over issue such as poor sanitation, negative cultural practices and superstitions.

12. What needs to be done in order to ensure effective community radio/television broadcasting about local development?

Ans: Effective dialogue with the people to understand and change from negative lifestyles which they get upset when broadcast. Secondly there is the need to attract sponsorships.

13. In terms of broadcasting local development, what advantages if any, does community radio broadcast have over community television broadcast.

Ans: They are many. Comparatively radio is more affordable than television hence poor people may afford to buy radio than television. Also radio is portable enough to keep at any place – in the bathroom, toilet, vehicle, etc. Furthermore, radio is more

transportable than television. Cordless radio can be kept in the pocket, bag, etc. and listened to while walking along. It can be sent to the farm, sea or any work place.

14. In terms of broadcasting local development, what advantages if any, does community television broadcast have over community radio broadcast.

Ans: The old adage that “Seeing is believing” greatly applies to television. Thus seeing and hearing at the same time registers better in the minds of viewers of television than radio listeners.

15. What does the future hold for community development broadcast?

Ans: The future of community development broadcasting largely depends on future government policies. For instance, if future government policies determine that a portion of the district common fund should be allocated to community radio stations, the future could be bright.

D) Questions on Broadcasting Regulation

1. As far as your station is concerned, are the current broadcasting regulations (laws) in the country favourable?

Ans: In practice some are not favourable.

2. If no what is wrong with these laws?

Ans: The policies are too liberal and the regulatory mechanism in the broadcasting industry is not effective. Therefore many of the radio stations, particularly the commercialised ones, operate to thwart the efforts of the few radio stations which attempt to be principled. For example it is the policy of the Radio Ada not to broadcast any claim by any individual or group that he/they has/have cure for AIDS. Yet there are other radio stations in the country which are making huge monies by constantly advertising and promoting certain questionable medicines which they claim can cure AIDS. This, of

course negates any effort at campaigning against irresponsible sexual habits that may result in the spread of the disease.

3. What needs to be changed in the current regulations to make broadcasting feasible?

Ans: Personally, nothing should be changed in the regulation. Instead, the authorities should do effective and regular monitoring on the radio stations to ensure that they are law abiding.

E) Questions on Finance

1. At the moment can you say your station is satisfied with its financial standing?

Ans: The station is not satisfied with its finance particularly when it can not employ salary workers.

2. If no why?

Ans: The station is a non profit institution. Furthermore, majority of listeners of the station are poor and can hardly afford if the station decides to go commercial.

3. What is the estimated total monthly/yearly expenditure (running cost) of your radio station?

Ans: 24 million Cedis monthly.

4. What is the estimated revenue generated monthly/yearly by the station?

Ans: The average amount is 20 million Cedis monthly.

5. Mention some of the sources of your revenue generation.

Ans: Sport advertisements
Funeral announcements
Music requests
Messages

Sponsorship
Voluntarism

CHECK LIST

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14. When did actual operation begin?
15. How many staff members did your institution start with when it began operation?
16. Mention the office positions held by each of these staffs.
17. What are the problems encountered when your institutions begun operation?
18. Did your institution face the problem of mobilizing enough capital?
19. What about the acquisition of the necessary equipment?
20. Did the station have sponsors then?
21. If yes, mention them.
22. After which period (months or years) did your institution start breaking even or making profit when it had begun operation?
23. Indicate some successes achieved by the station
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