

Radio

Introduction

Radio has enormous potential to communicate to a wide audience, especially with the mushrooming of FM radio stations throughout the world and access to radio through the internet. Radio also has the advantage of being able to 'bring to life' development issues, events and activities, thus often transmitting messages in an interesting and effective way.

In terms of practical advice on how to write and produce radio programmes, the Communication Initiative (see: <http://www.comminit.com/>) offers useful guidelines. For example, the book *Writing and Producing Radio Dramas* (by Esta de Fossard) is one of a series called *Communication for Behaviour Change* and gives practical guidance on how to design, write, and produce radio dramas aimed at motivating social change. Divided into three parts, the book begins by introducing the concept of Entertainment-Education and its use in radio serial drama. It goes on to describe the duties of the programme manager of such projects, and concludes with tips for drama writers.

Box 8: How Internet Radio Can Change the World

An Activist's Handbook: How to listen, how to broadcast, and how it will change the world (by Eric Lee)

This handbook is for trade unionists, environmental campaigners, human rights activists or anyone working to change the world. Eric Lee is the author of 'The Labour Movement and the Internet: The New Internationalism (1996)', the first book on the subject of how trade unions could make use of the new communications technologies. He has pioneered the use of the Internet by unions around the globe, and the website he established in 1998, LabourStart, now appears in 19 languages and is used by thousands of activists every day. In early 2004, the author launched the first online labour radio station and this book reveals exactly what was involved in setting it up. It also delves into the short history of Internet radio, revealing how what began as a radical project to reinvigorate the liberal wing of the Democratic Party was turned into a commercial success – and yet remains a vital tool for activists.

Source: <http://www.labourstart.org/radio/book.shtml>

A good example

A radio soap opera called 'Twende Na Wakati' focused on issues surrounding HIV/AIDS in Tanzania. A study on the effectiveness and reach of this radio programme compared one region of the country where no one was able to hear the broadcasts (due to technical limitations) with the rest of the population, many of whom did hear the broadcasts. The study found convincingly that radio positively affected people's behaviour in relation to HIV/AIDS in the 'treatment' area, and demonstrated direct cause and effect (Vaughan, Rogers, Singhal and Swalahe, 2000).

Further resources

- Vaughan, P. W., E. M. Rogers, A. Singhal and R. M. Swalahe (2000) 'Entertainment-Education and HIV/AIDS Prevention: A Field Experiment in Tanzania' *Journal of Health Communication* Vol 5 (supplement) 81-100.