

PANOS SOUTHERN AFRICA

DTR RADIO LISTENING CLUBS, ZAMBIA

IMPACT EVALUATION REPORT

**October 2001
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1. Summary

The project ran from November 98 to May 2001, involving 13 rural women's clubs in the Mpika district of Zambia, 600 km north of Lusaka. The clubs recorded their discussions of development issues or requests for development support; the tapes were sent to a radio producer in Lusaka, who recorded a response from a relevant service-provider or politician. The discussion and response were edited into one programme and broadcast as a regular weekly programme by the national broadcaster, ZNBC. The clubs listened to the programmes and discussed them at their weekly meetings.

This evaluation assessed the development impact of the project, principally by talking to members of the clubs and others in their communities. An audience survey was also carried out, in three different areas.

The main findings of the evaluation were:

- The project has brought substantial material benefits and new information to the communities. To some extent the clubs and communities have been empowered to access development inputs themselves, though the mediation of the radio programme producer has also been an important factor.
- The success in achieving material benefits for the communities was probably a strong force in building community support for the clubs in the early months of the project, but now their role in providing information and stimulating discussion is equally appreciated.
- The Clubs have not achieved material benefits specifically for their own income-generating activities, which was the original aim of the project, and which they see (on a video) happening in Zimbabwe. Income-generating is still the clubs' main purpose, so the project should seek to help them strengthen their income-generating activities.
- The project has stimulated intense discussions, in the clubs and the communities, about social issues. The clubs' ability to discuss and present issues clearly is greatly appreciated by men and young people in the communities.
- There is an emerging perception of a role for the clubs as educators for their communities. They are confidently passing on their own experience, and information from outside sources, as well as "hosting" outside experts in their radio programmes.
- The programmes are widely listened to and appreciated all over Zambia.
- Politicians have been very willing to speak on the programmes, and this has contributed to the communities' positive attitudes towards the project. No information was available about whether the project has influenced the attitudes of politicians and decisionmakers towards rural women and development.

2. Recommendations

1. Panos S.Af must establish a system of documenting the radio programmes – topic, content, respondent, clubs, outcomes. Tapes should be kept of all programmes, and transcripts into English should be made of a proportion of the programmes. Fackson's idea of employing people to monitor and record the programmes as they are aired may be an efficient way of solving the problem of documentation.
2. The Mfuwe Clubs repeatedly complain about the difficulty of communication in their area – it is hard for the local coordinator to visit all the clubs regularly, and hard for the clubs to visit one another. It is not at all obvious what Panos can do to solve this problem, but the request of some of the clubs for bicycles should perhaps be considered seriously. When will mobile phones be a possibility?

3. Some of the clubs that do not have their own equipment for listening and recording have requested this. For the sake of equity among the clubs their requests should be considered – but bearing in mind that this will lead to the clubs collectively producing a much larger volume of recorded material for programmes, while the airtime available is not likely to increase. To avoid creating frustration, the question should be carefully discussed with the clubs themselves.
4. This evaluation mission did not succeed in getting many comments from NGO or government officials and politicians who had participated as respondents in radio programmes. This is a serious gap in our understanding of the impact of the project: does it change their attitudes to and knowledge about rural women and development? I suggest that an effort to elicit feedback should be built into all contacts with actual and potential respondents (just one or two questions could be asked). The Programme Officer should also try to interview respondents by telephone on a regular basis (eg every two or three months), to “capture” their comments while their participation in the programme is fresh in their minds.
5. The project’s success to date in getting material benefits for the communities and high-level respondents in programmes has no doubt been important to the communities’ support for the project and to its development impact on the ground. We do not know to what extent this success has been due to the personal commitment and political contacts of the producer. In new projects being launched in other languages, and in future phases of this one in the event (quite likely) that the present producer leaves, it will be important to monitor the effectiveness of other producers, and the factors that contribute to this.
6. The Clubs expected, but have not achieved, support for their income-generating activities. The project should attempt to achieve this, through accessing material support, through building stronger links with the Clubs in Zimbabwe, or some other means.
7. This project has evolved in ways its originators might not have expected. It would be interesting to compare it with the DTR projects in Zimbabwe, KwaZulu Natal and Malawi (and any others that have been established elsewhere), which have all probably evolved in different directions. This would help to identify the real long-term benefits and strengths of DTR projects, and the inputs and conditions needed for these to be achieved.
8. An emerging question is, what would be the best way for an outside agency to give the clubs information or new ways of looking at issues without contradicting the essential characteristic of the project, which is that the clubs make their own programmes according to their own ideas and priorities? This question is arising in relation to HIV/AIDS, other health information, and (with the Borana pastoralists in Kenya) conflict resolution. It is important partly because as other organisations start adopting the model, they are likely to want to use it for their own information agendas, and we should be in a position to recommend the best way of doing this. This project in Zambia has a lot to teach us. Panos should start systematically testing different ways of supporting the clubs with information input, evaluating the experiences and learning from them. HIV/AIDS would be a good subject to start with, as it is arising as an issue for our radio projects in several different countries – Zambia, Malawi, Kenya and probably others.
9. There are many favourable conditions for launching the project in other languages in Zambia – the positive experience so far, the commitment of ZNBC, and the presence of a nation-wide partner NGO (Women for Change). Panos must plan this expanded phase very carefully, and must make sure there is sufficient management capacity, within Panos or the partner NGO. Two aspects that will need to be monitored and supported are:

- the role, commitment and effectiveness of the new producers, and whether the amount of work demanded by the project can be sustained on a longer-term and broader scale, without financial incentives
 - Document and monitor closely the quality and content of the radio programmes and discussions – because this project will be a significant step in a new direction for the Panos DTR project.
10. It is time for Panos to start thinking about an exit strategy from the Mfuwe clubs. This should probably be done in consultation with the Clubs and ZNBC. Would ZNBC be willing to continue the project indefinitely? Can the project gains be institutionalised in some way within the clubs?

3. Description of project

This DTR project ran from November 1998 until May 2001, a partnership between Panos, ZNBC Bemba service and a group of thirteen previously-existing rural women's clubs. The clubs meet weekly to listen to the radio programmes and discuss development issues. They make tape recordings of their discussions, and these are sent to a radio producer in Lusaka who listens to them and approaches a relevant official donor or expert for a response to the issues raised by the club – information and, if possible, commitment to practical intervention. The tape and response are edited together to make a radio programme which is broadcast weekly on the national broadcaster (ZNBC Bemba language service) for the clubs to listen to and discuss, and at a time that also appeals to

5. Project objectives and impact evaluation indicators

Project objectives		Impact Evaluation Indicators (and source of info)
1	Enable clubs to bring development to their communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ material benefits for clubs and communities ▪ social benefits 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Material benefits 2. Capacity to access benefits 3. Information gained and shared in community 4. Innovative local solutions to problems 5. Changes in social relations
2	Empowerment of women: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Domestically ▪ In project communities ▪ Politically ▪ Impact on national audience 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confidence that they can achieve things 2. Developed community spirit (content of programmes) 3. Seeking and getting information 4. Debating issues 5. Developed skills in moderating debates and presenting arguments 6. Respect and being listened to at home and in community 7. Speaking in public 8. Awareness of and demanding political rights 9. Development agencies seek out clubs
3	Getting voices of rural women heard and influential in national development discourse	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Size and spread of audience 2. Audience recall of topics 3. Advertisers like the programme slot 4. Rural women feel they have power to expose failures 5. Politicians recognise power of women's clubs and radio programmes 6. Ease of getting responses 7. NGOs respond, have more information about rural women's needs 8. ZNBC's commitment to expanding project 9. Wider media coverage of issues (eg Mail and radio coverage of the Country Services story) 10. Comments on programme heard in Lusaka
4	Stimulating debate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Within clubs ▪ At home and in communities ▪ In development agencies ▪ political 	Reports and anecdotes, references etc

The indicators were developed by the evaluator and staff of Panos Southern Africa, as part of a staff development workshop on Monitoring and Evaluation.

6. Evaluation Report

Objective 1: Enable clubs to bring material and social development to themselves and their communities

Material benefits for clubs and communities

The following list is probably not complete. It is drawn from discussions with some of the clubs and with the radio programme producer, but records have not been kept documenting all the broadcast programmes, their topics, respondents and outcomes.

Benefit	Source	Status
Benefits actually in place		
Boreholes for two clinics	Ministry of Health	Completed. Also supply water to surrounding communities
Solar panel to provide electricity for one clinic		Completed
Supply of medicines to clinic improved	Spokesman for the Central Board of Health instructed the Mpika District health authorities	Drugs now supplied on schedule
Roofing sheets and cement for construction of new school building and teacher's house (Chito)	Area MP's constituency development fund	Completed. Community provided bricks and labour
Borehole for school. Rebuilding of school and teacher's house (Kapengwa)		Borehole completed; funds approved for rebuilding.
Community school for AIDS orphans	"Tuanga" programme, Ministry of education and ZNBC	Voluntary school for children who cannot pay fees. Taunga programme provided books, radio for access to broadcast lessons, and some training for the volunteer teacher. The school (21 pupils) meets in her home.
Polling station	Electoral Commission	Established in Chito school
Signs on main road (Lukulu)		Signs to slow traffic, requested because of high accident rate on the main road running by the village
Waiver of school fees and uniforms (Chito)	Ministry of Education	
Benefits committed but not yet received		
Materials for rehabilitation of access road and bridge to village, Nyanga	Zambia Social Investment Fund (a World Bank funded government fund)	Agreed, but not yet complete: the village asked for too little money, and were advised to increase the request. The community supplies the labour and directs location, course of road etc
Grain shed, Buyubele	Programme of Economic Expansion for rural areas (govt)?	Grant of c \$5,000 agreed but not completed
Rehabilitation of school buildings (Lukulu)		Agreed but not completed

Benefits committed but not yet received (cont)		
New building for market, (Mununga)	Zambia Social Investment Fund; stone and sand donated by quarry manager.	Agreed but not completed
Financial support for families caring for AIDS orphans	Zambia Social Investment Fund	Not yet complete. The community is drawing up a list of eligible families.
Benefits which have been discussed but not committed		
Electricity supply for the other clinic		The clinic is near a mains electricity supply, and could be connected if the MP's Constituency Development Fund provided the funds to pay the elcectricity company. This is being worked on.
Oil press (for linseed, sunflower etc)	Africare	Africare promised to visit to assess the possibility of supporting acquisition of a press, but have not yet come.

The benefits gained have been for the communities, not for the clubs. The clubs have several times requested assistance for their income-generating activities, but to date no assistance has materialised. A particularly serious effort was made to obtain access to small business loans: the Clubs' local coordinator visited the Executive Director of a microfinance NGO, ECLOF (Ecumenical Loan Fund), in Lusaka to discuss the possibility. However, ECLOF could not respond because there is no locally-based intermediary body to manage the loans.

The Club members and president are disappointed that the principal benefits they had initially hoped for from the project have not been forthcoming. However, there was a striking change between this evaluation visit and a previous one eighteen months earlier. Then, requests for tools to help the clubs – often based on quite unrealistic hopes of what NGOs might provide – seemed to form the content of most of the programmes that had been made and of the clubs' vision of what the project might achieve. This time, the value of the project is seen much more broadly. Relatively few programmes seem to have been made requesting inputs specifically for the clubs, and complaints about the lack of responses were only occasionally voiced. The focus seems to have moved to benefits for the community, and discussion of social and political issues. The flow of material benefits received, and evident readiness of the communities to respond to discussions of social issues, has raised the status of the clubs and the project in the community and helped maintain commitment to it despite the disappointment.

To some extent the clubs and communities have gained the capacity to access funds and inputs from outside themselves. For instance, the Clubs coordinator visited the ECLOF office in Lusaka, and members of one club went to Lusaka to visit organisations such as the Society for Women with AIDS (SWAZ) which works on behalf of AIDS orphans. For some of the funds accessed, such as from ZAMSIF (Zambia Social Investment Fund), the communities had to submit proposals with budgets. So far, the Programme producer has played a key role in helping the communities do this, for instance suggesting a number of appropriate projects they could propose. Time will tell whether the communities can do it without his support. In other cases, assistance came because the producer was able to speak to highly-placed officials and ministers. Again, it remains to be seen whether a different producer would be able to mobilise the same level of influence, and whether this is necessary for the success of the project in gaining material benefits.

Social benefits

As mentioned above, through the course of the project social benefits have emerged and been recognised as a strong feature. It was not clear whether this was the result of a deliberate intervention by Panos, or whether it arose spontaneously from the clubs themselves. It began early on with a programme about use of condoms, after which the club concerned took on very explicitly a role as educators and promoters of community solutions to problems. (Whether one agrees with their solution or not is another question).

The social aspect of the programmes has grown because of the strong habit the clubs have developed of listening to and debating one another's programmes (in contrast to the situation of the clubs in Malawi evaluated a week later). Club members meet and listen together if they have a club radio set, or in the homes of one or two individuals if not. In this case, a few club members listen – in some cases delegated by the club – and report to the club when it meets later. The programmes are broadcast on Saturdays, and the clubs meet for discussion regularly on Mondays or Tuesdays. This habit of listening has built up over the course of the project – at the time of the previous monitoring visit, the clubs were more interested in hearing themselves than anyone else. Intervention by Panos after that evaluation, to reiterate to the clubs the value of listening, probably contributed to this very significant change.

The listening habit is self-reinforcing: listening together as a club, followed by a good debate, produces more interesting topics and programmes for the next broadcast, which attracts more attentive listeners in the clubs and communities. The growing confidence of the clubs in their role as educators or mobilisers of their communities, and their growing skill in presenting complex debates and stating their views forcefully and clearly, must also contribute to making the programmes more stimulating and appealing.

Information

Sharing of information, from outside respondents and from the clubs themselves, is generally seen as one of the principal benefits of the programmes, both by the clubs and by members of the communities. A farmer explained the value of a method of learning which “brings understanding from the base, rather than somebody coming with an idea which may sound alien.” He recalled an experience of farmers' groups set up for the exchange of information, a project now apparently defunct. Another man pointed out that women often don't pay much attention to the radio, because they are busy with household chores, so in many households the man listens instead and afterwards explains what was broadcast to his wife. “Men should be encouraging women to pay particular attention when the programme comes on air, because in a rural area like this, women don't always have time – for instance to go to the

times we sell the surplus. Sometimes people come and demand to accompany us to the garden, and we tell them, 'You see how our vegetables are coming out, without artificial means.'

- b) Programmes about nutrition and food preparation were high on the list of programmes spontaneously recollected by club and community members, and appear to have also struck chords with audiences across the country. Salamo club's programme about nutritious crops - soya, beans and sunflower - elicited requests from other clubs for more information: "Some of the groups approached us to get details about how they can make milk from soybeans and a beverage which is similar to coffee from ground soybeans." Lessons in food preparation were the first benefit mentioned by a male farmer: "It's not always that the women are there to prepare food, and the man can learn something which he can apply when the wife is not there."
- c) The programme most frequently mentioned was Tazama's programme about HIV/AIDS prevention and the use of condoms. It stimulated a lot of discussion and a follow-up information initiative from an NGO and then from the club members themselves, and both the original programme and the club's follow-up were praised for the information they gave about how to avoid AIDS. Another programme (not mentioned during the evaluation meetings but of which there is a transcript) featured an HIV-positive woman speaking about living with AIDS.
- d) A programme on Family Planning by Mununga club, with input from the Society for Family Health and the Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia, helped improve people's receptivity to the information on child spacing that was already available: "When the health workers were going round the villages trying to educate people, a lot of people were not interested, they didn't think it was important, but when it started coming from their fellow women, from the clubs, a lot of people now have got interested and have started following." The respondent organisations also sent information leaflets for the club to distribute.
- e) The perceived value of the radio programmes for health education is shown by the establishment of a new club, "Clinic", by a group of young women living near Mpumba clinic. They see a role for themselves as health educators, and hope to make programmes "about health, health education, to teach people nutrition and how they can look after their children....We will be drawing a lot of knowledge from the health worker, and also if we can be availed of booklets, for instance about nutrition, we will be able to read them."
- f) Information about law (abortion, inheritance) and political procedures (voter registration) was also valued and stimulated a lot of discussion. In the case of abortion, the programme was in response to a disturbing event in the community; the family concerned were unhappy about the programme calling attention to their problems, but on the whole the community felt that the club had performed a service by addressing a subject that is not often discussed so openly.
- g) Some community members attribute to the project a raised awareness of the value of information and education in general: "Children never used to be keen about going to school, but of late, because of what the parents talked about on radio they feel very encouraged and each one of them wants to go to school."

Innovative solutions

The programmes have a significant effect in opening the minds of individuals to accept or experiment with new ideas: for instance, the examples of low-input agriculture, family planning, foods and food preparation mentioned above.

They have also stimulated some new community actions. One community built and established a community school. Another established a voluntary school for orphans, as a result of a radio programme about the problem of AIDS orphans who can't pay school fees. The community identified a volunteer teacher and premises – in this case, her own house. The programme officials (from the ministry of education) approved her and the premises, then provided her with some training, books and a radio – the curriculum is broadcast by ZNBC. It is to be hoped that the community gives the teacher and school enough support to sustain it. It has 21 pupils, and according to the retired headmistress who is president of the clubs, seems to provide a sound basic 3Rs education.

Overall, the DTR project seems to have stimulated a recognition, in the clubs themselves and widely in the communities, of the valuable role women can play as educators. The clubs see their role not just as a channel for information from other sources, but as passing on their own experience and as reflecting on and proposing solutions from within the community – a role that women no doubt played before, but which has been given more formality and status by the radio project. Sometimes the habit of discussing together leads women to new ideas: “A lot of men are preoccupied just with work like farming and so on,... Women are more advanced because they sit together and share ideas. One example is the segregation between men and women practised by men – because they are not able to sit together and share ideas and cope with new trends - that's why they are backward.”

At other times, the conclusions the women arrive at are conservative reiterations of traditional values, which may not be so directly valuable for problem solving: “The group that came [to give Tazama club more information about HIV/AIDS] was from the Copper Belt, they were encouraging the use of condoms. But from the village point of view, we are against that, we think that encourages promiscuity among men, so when we went round the other clubs to share the information, we were emphasising abstinence - trying to correlate that with the traditional beliefs, because in the past that was very strongly emphasised.” But some of the clubs are perceiving the value of being more inclusive in their discussions, which might open the way for more new ideas. On the question of whether the project should be opened to include men and youth, one club member said: “Looking at the youth in this community, the first thing is they should change their attitudes, A lot of them are very playful, they are not constructive. But the women's club will try and see how they can incorporate them. There is a feeling that if and when the programme resumes they should be given an opportunity to talk about a few of their concerns.”

Changes in social relations

Improvement in gender relations was mentioned spontaneously by the chief as one of the benefits of the project. He ascribed it to the fact that “men can now hear what's going on in the clubs.” So many informants commented on the respect men have for the women's ideas as expressed in the programmes that it seems reasonable to conclude that this is an improvement attributable to the project: one man observed, “Even in our homes, men are now saying that what the women are saying is what the men should also follow.” Women's space for talking also has a negative side, however, at least for men: one man complained that the Tazama club women, in their programme about the use of condoms, “wanted to put

blame on men. If men were there, they could have also given reasons why the whole blame

how we present them. We feel we have advanced in that way.” The clubs’ president feels that the whole discipline of weekly discussion meetings has been beneficial. “In the past women used to just go for beer-drinking, but now we make them busy, preparing what we are going to discuss next week. ‘On Monday we are wanted, what are we going to discuss?’”

Her club, with a higher number of educated members than most, and particularly respected for its presentation of issues, spends three or more weekly meetings discussing a single topic. On condoms, for example, “We said how good it is to use condoms, how bad it is... we even came to traditional manners, how people were doing such and such and were living alright, now these days we have AIDS because of using condoms...we have different views, so we collected them together to make a tape. We looked at both sides, the old people and how they looked after their children, and young girls these days. The inheritance law also took a long time, because we asked other people who are not members of the clubs, how they looked at it. Up to now we are still talking about it. This discussion won’t end early. Where we walk we are still collecting something, some news about it. I don’t know what the government is going to do...”

A very different club, in one of the less accessible villages and with less education among its members, has 39 or more members participating in discussions. Despite this large number, they say they are able to get input from each and every member and reach agreement at the end of the session. This club pays careful attention to the programmes made by other clubs, analyses their own position or situation on the issue and tries to see how the lessons may apply to their own community.

Improved power of women in project communities

The list of topics covered in programmes indicates the extent to which the Clubs have a sense of their capacity to address problems and issues for their whole communities, and indeed for women in general.

This list is incomplete, because records have not been kept. The list was compiled from fragmentary records and from conversations with club and community members.

Partial list of Programmes broadcast		
Date	Club	Topic
1/7/00	All leaders	Made programme in ZNBC Studio
8/7/00	Chito	Lack of national Voter Registration Cards
15/7/00	All	Failure of NGO “Community Services” to fulfil promises
22/7/00	Lukulu, Kapololo, Chito	Delimitation of wards;
29/7/00	Chito	Local Councillor not known to them
5/8/00	Repeat of July 22 nd	
12/8/00	Chito	Lack of teachers in school
26/8/00	Chito?	Treatment of orphans
1/10/00	Tazama	Request agricultural inputs in time for rainy season
9/12/00	All leaders	Forming Business Associations
16/12/00	Mpumba	HIV/AIDS orphans
23/12/00	Mpumba	Women’s NGOs
13/1/01	Chito	Women in politics
20/1/01	Nyanga	Inheritance law
3/2/01	Mununga	Access to micro-credit

List of programmes broadcast (continued)		
Date	Club	Topic
	Mpumba	Lack of water and electricity in clinic; difficulties for expectant mothers
	Lukulu	School needs refurbishment.
	Chito	School needs refurbishment. In one of these programmes, the Minister of Education explained the role of PTAs in school management.
	Nyanga	Lack of school
	Nyanga	Poor state of road and bridge
	Lukulu	Road accidents, need for road signs
	Tazama	HIV/AIDS and the use of condoms
	Tazama	The benefits of joining women's clubs
	Mununga	Family planning

Women's confidence extends to speaking to outsiders: "When the deputy Minister for Community Development visited the area, it was basically the women from the club who were speaking on a number of issues, more than the other groups." "When visitors come here to make some meetings, they usually ask first, 'Where can we find the Women's Club?'"

Political empowerment

Discussion of general political issues has emanated from just one of the clubs (Chito), but it has stimulated intense debate in the others. The young Chairlady of the Club in one of the smallest and inaccessible villages was very clear about the empowering effect of the project: "Women never used to discuss (political things) – such issues have arisen as a result of the radio programmes. This is very important and can change people's attitude and even the way they live. Before, women didn't even know that they had the right to speak about certain things and ask for correction when it was necessary, but with the introduction of the radio programmes women are able to speak about a lot of things. They didn't know that it was the fundamental right of women to freely talk about issues. ...It has improved our thinking and understanding of things."

As well as general rights, Chito club also discussed specific political rights and duties. Members were angry at being ignored by politicians. "When the officials from the ruling party were going round they were giving out *chitenga* cloth and other things to the people, but they skipped this place, claiming that 'People here are not interested in politics, they haven't even registered to vote'. But we said, In fact we are interested, but there is no registration office here." So the club made programmes about services needed to facilitate voting such as polling stations (result - one was established in the village) and accessible centres for voter registration (a visit by the mobile voter registration unit was promised but did not take place); and the importance of voting for women MPs. Hearing this programme about MPs sparked off particularly lively discussion in one of the other clubs: most members disagreed, because they had seen little benefit from their current woman MP. Nine months after the broadcast, the subject still aroused passions: one member insisted on stating in the evaluation meeting her dissenting view that women MPs are important.

Objective 3: Getting the voice of rural women heard and influential in national development discourse

The national audience

The club members know that they are heard and attended to by people across the country, and many anecdotes illustrate this. One member had heard from former schoolmates in the south of the country that they listen. Another had heard of a group of women interrupting their exhausting walk up from their remote valley home to join a group of women they passed on the way who were listening to and discussing a programme about nutrition. Several members had been urged by people they met while travelling to make further programmes about some issues – abortion, the inheritance law. The clubs coordinator recounted a conversation she had on a train: "I was talking to some people and one of the railway workers recognised my voice. He asked me, Was I Mrs Matabula, and I said, yes. He said, 'I listen to your programme, and we like the way you bring up issues and you speak them.' I said, 'Well, if you do wrong things ---look at this coach, it is very untidy, if we talked about that would you like it?' He said, in fact he tried to keep it as clean as possible, but people like throwing rubbish."

The audience survey carried out just before these evaluation meetings confirmed the remarkable popularity of the programme:

- Of a sample of 328 respondents, in the outskirts of Lusaka and two different Bemba-speaking parts of the country, 54% were aware of the existence of the women's clubs, and 57% had heard some of the programmes. This included 45% of the people surveyed in Kabwe, a Bemba-speaking town several hundred kilometres from the project area, and 57% of the people surveyed in a district near Lusaka, for many of whom Bemba was not their first language.
- 51% of the sample described themselves as regular listeners, although only 68% of the sample had radio sets in their own homes.
- Of these regular listeners, 64% could recall topics they had heard programmes discuss, and 59% said they had learned significant lessons from the programmes.
- The programme was listed as sixth in popularity out of twelve Bemba-language programmes – in competition with long-established dramas, current events and family reunion programmes.

See appendix for the survey report.

ZNBC's commitment

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that there would be members of ZAMWA, employed within ZNBC and ready to take up the challenge of the DTR project. The short period in 2000 when a ZAMWA member replaced the present producer showed that we can not take for granted that ZAMWA members will be willing to make the extra effort needed, without incentives. The present producer commented that ZAMWA is not a strong organisation at the moment, and its members don't take on activities for the organisation unless there is payment.

Power to expose failures

There is a clear feeling that voicing complaints through radio is much more effective than writing letters, which can more easily be ignored. One club chair said, "Everyone knows that everything has come from the radio, because in the past although you wrote a letter asking for something, [the authorities] were not considering it. Now they fail to hide it, because it was told openly, everyone was listening...so the one concerned has a problem thinking how he is going to answer."

The clubs' requests have sometimes had very direct effects: a programme about a local councillor's obligation to make himself known to his community resulted in his being brought to visit them. (The club members are not entirely satisfied with this result: "Because we complained he was compelled to be brought here, but after that he has never appeared here again.")

The project also led to the national exposure of a failing NGO. An NGO, Country Services, had made clear promises to provide some inputs to the clubs; when it failed to deliver, the clubs made a follow-up programme. This led to investigation by the authorities, and national media coverage of the discovery that the NGO was collapsing.

Dialogue with and influence over politicians

Do the clubs and communities feel they have power over politicians? The size of the audience must boost the power of the women's voices, though no evidence was gathered from politicians and decisionmakers themselves to show how they regard this.

Some club members feel the beginnings of dialogue - "We are proud that someone of that social standing responds to our concerns" - and confident that from their distant home they are communicating with ministers. In small ways there is evident influence: the area MP initially responded to complaints by providing materials for a school building from her Development Fund. Politicians and officials, including senior ones such as the Ministers for Home Affairs and Education, have been willing to appear in the programmes, explaining issues, making commitments and ordering action by district-level officials. It is not clear to what extent this has been the result of the producer's personal connections in the political world, rather than the politicians' feeling that radio in general is too important to ignore. All responses from senior officials and politicians have come about as the result of the producer asking them for a response. No clear evidence was found that they listen to the programme on air of their own accord.

An early and continuing supporter of the project, a development cooperation officer at the Netherlands Embassy in Lusaka, believes that politicians will continue being willing to speak on the programmes. They like the exposure, the campaigning platform, and the contact with rural people. This willingness to participate could potentially become dialogue, if the Radio Clubs are able to maintain response and counter-response, and hold the politicians accountable for what they say.

It is too early to say whether the clubs will be able to make their voices heard in policy discussion and influence legislation. A test case will be the inheritance law. The programme about this was the one that stimulated the most discussion in the clubs and communities. On the whole, the clubs rejected the existing law as it was explained to them by a Lusaka-based women's legal aid NGO. The law is supposed to favour widows, by preventing a deceased man's relatives from grabbing all his property. In the village view, however, it disadvantages the older generation, the deceased man's parents, who are likely to end up with responsibility for bringing up his children once his widow remarries. One thing the debate has achieved is to show how difficult it will be to design a law that will ensure justice in many different circumstances. The clubs were not yet sure what action they should take to get their views heard once a new government is in power after the forthcoming elections. A follow-up radio programme is proposed.

New information for NGOs

For ECLOF (Ecumenical Loan Fund) their appearance on a programme triggered a number of requests from other groups all over the country for ECLOF support. ECLOF realised that there was much more demand for their support than they had been aware of, and as a result they speeded up a process they were already engaged in, establishing partnership with the nationwide Chamber of Small and Medium Business Associations, to spread ECLOF services more widely.

After a DTR broadcast on maternal health problems and the lack of facilities in rural clinics, the USAID-funded Zambian Integrated Health Programme sent the producer to investigate the issues further, in June 2001. (He made two programmes as a result of this investigation, one documentary and one dramatised. They have been entered for a competition organised by the ZIHP). Other radio and print journalists were sent to investigate in other (non-Bemba) regions.

A Lusaka-based NGO, the Programme Against Malnutrition, invited the producer to participate in a workshop on empowering small-scale farmers. This NGO had not been invited to be a respondent in a DTR programme, so the producer assumes they must have heard the programmes on the radio.

Objective 4: Stimulating debate

Many illustrations of how the programmes have stimulated debate within the clubs, in the communities and more widely have already been mentioned. Topics include agriculture, nutrition and balanced diets, gender equality, protection against HIV/AIDS, political rights and processes, the inheritance law, traditional customs, care of children, care of orphans, education and its cost. People were mentioned as discussing the programmes at home and in drinking places. "When we meet people from other villages, for instance at church, people always talk about the programme that was on - 'Did you hear the programme? It was very interesting.' And a lot of people, even if they have gone to the gardens or something on Saturday, they make sure they are back in time to hear the programme."