Strengthening Youth Livelihood Opportunities in Rwanda

Review of the Akazi Kanoze Radio Drama

Search for Common Ground - Rwanda

Based on Research Conducted in October and November 2011
I. Introduction

In the framework of the USAID-funded Livelihood Skills Development Project, Search for Common Ground (SFCG) collaborated with the Education Development Center (EDC) to support the development of livelihood opportunities for Rwandan youth; with the overall goal to provide youth with the fundamental skills and knowledge necessary to become healthy, productive workers and participants in civic and community affairs.

As part of this sub-award, SFCG produced and integrated 18 radio drama skits into its weekly *Kura Wikorera* radio program, which specifically targets youth around livelihood opportunities. The drama captured key concepts presented in the EDC *Akazi Kanoze* training modules, thereby increasing understanding of these concepts among the target population, and highlighting the information and resources available through the EDC livelihood programme. Listenership studies and other field research have shown that radio drama is the most popular form of radio programming among youth audiences. Because they do not require literacy, radio dramas appeal to both educated and non-educated youth, both of which are target audiences of *Kura Wikorera*. As part of this project, SFCG produced and aired eighteen (18) drama skits over a period of five months.

This report presents the findings of the Focus Group Discussions conducted at the end of the project to measure overall interest of the target audience, relevance of the content to the targeted population’s lives, and results achieved through the broadcast.

II. Focus Group Objectives and Methodology

To assess the quality of the radio dramas, their content, and the changes they were causing with the targeted audience, SFCG conducted a final review using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). FGDs were organised in two target areas: in Butare with young people who listen to Radio Salus, and in Kigali where youth are likely listening to Contact FM. These two areas reflect the primary target areas of the pilot project.

As SFCG had already collected listenership statistics for *Kura Wikorera* through a program evaluation\(^1\) conducted in December 2010, the purpose of the FGDs was not to try to assess listenership, but rather to focus on the content of the program—i.e. whether people like the drama, relate to the characters, understand the concepts, and see opportunities to apply what they are hearing in their own life, as well as what changes the *Akazi Kanoze* drama has brought to their daily life.

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\(^1\) The December 2010 program evaluation found that the *Kura Wikorera* radio program is heard by 23% of all respondents (750 people drawn from the four provinces and Kigali), and by 40% of respondents from Southern province where Radio Salus is located.
In total, six (6) FGDs were held: four (4) in Butare and two (2) in Kigali City. In Butare, the FGDs were broken up as follows:

- 1 FGD with young women trained by EDC,
- 1 FGD with young men trained by EDC;
- 1 FGD with young women not trained by EDC,
- 1 FGD with young men not trained by EDC.

For the composition of the FGDs, EDC helped to identify young people from among their training participants for the first two group discussions. SFCG took responsibility for identifying the young men and women who had not participated to the training, drawing them from existing listening clubs, specifically in the Dushishoze Youth Center, in Huye district. In Kigali the FGDs were only held with youth who were trained by EDC. Listening to Kura Wikorera was not a criteria for a selection, and this oversight affected the quality of the discussion as many participants had not heard the series prior to the FGD. To make up for this weakness, the FGD facilitator played four sample episodes—episodes 10-14—for the participants before starting the discussion. This approach ensured equal knowledge of the programs among all of the participants, including listeners and non-listeners. It also made sure that those who thought that they knew the program were actually recalling the correct one, as many people confuse the specific titles of various radio programs.

Each FGD was facilitated by two SFCG staff members - one discussion facilitator and one note-taker. The notes were taken in Kinyarwanda and then translated into English. The question guide for the discussions is attached in annex.

The analysis of these FGDs compared the feedback given by young people who had participated to the EDC training and livelihood activities, and young people who had not. It explored their responses to the questions raised by the facilitator regarding the information provided, the characters used, and the clarity of the messages.

III. **Key Findings**

1) **Key messages retained**

After listening to the four radio drama episodes, participants were asked to recall some of the messages that they heard. Important points that they retained included:

- How to manage money without wasting it;
- How to manage conflicts;
- The importance of customer care when doing business;
- The importance of having goals/objectives in your life;
- The potential value of a cooperative and the livelihood opportunities it can offer;
- The role of siblings in financially supporting each other.
All participants were able to cite different characters and scenarios where these points had played out. The main difference between those who had participated in the EDC Akazi Kanoze training and those who had not was the following: while the former said that the radio drama helped them to deepen their understanding of what they had learned during the training, the latter said it was the first time they heard such messages. These answers were similar between the male and female focus groups.

Here are some quotes from the FGDs participants about what they learned:

“We have heard some lessons we learned in Akazi kanoze training”
“How to manage your money without wasting it as Melisa spent all her salary”
“How to manage the conflicts (Nzigiye helped to resolve conflict in their tontine)”
“The importance of customer care while doing business”

2) Clarity of the messages and interest of the radio drama

After listening to the four radio drama episodes, participants were asked to share whether they found the story clear and interesting. Important points noted included:

- The story is clear
- The story is easy to understand
- The story is not boring

Participants from all groups said that the story was clear, interesting and easy to follow. They gave some examples. The fact that the participants were able to retell the main elements of the story that they just heard – even though for most of them it was for their first time listening to this radio drama – shows that the story was indeed very clear, interesting and easy to follow.

Reactions from the FGDs participants included:

“I found this story interesting and easy to follow because it talks about my daily life experience” (Female participant from the Kimironko FG)

“The story is easy to follow and interesting because it’s not boring and it is funny and it helped me to understand what I learned during the training” (Male participants from the Kimironko FG)

“I think for us it is important because it reminds us what we learned but is very important for people who were not trained in Akazi kanoze because it tells them the new things that they did not know” (male participant from the Kimironko FG)

“It is interesting because it reminds us what we learned. It talks about how to contract a loan at bank and how to deliver good services as Bea does” (Male participant from the Kimironko FG)
“The story is good because it is short and interesting it has many lessons” (Female participant from Dushishozo)

There was no major difference between participants who were trained in Akazi Kanoze and those who were not. There is also no difference between responses from female participants and male participants.

3) Main characters and Youths’ favorites

After listening to the four radio drama episodes, participants were asked to recall the main characters of the drama and to say which one was their favourite.

Many participants said that their favourite characters was Nzigiye who appears to them as wise and well-behaved. Bea who gives advice to Melisa also emerged as a popular character. Others cited Karuranga, who despite his education level (secondary school) decided to remain in rural area to run an agribusiness. The other frequently mentioned character was Kiromba, who did not support his son Kamangu in his misconduct.

Comments explaining these choices included:

“My favourite character is Bea who gives advice to Melisa” (Female participant from the Kimironko FG)

“My favourite character is Nzigiye, who paid back the money taken away by Kamangu because he was the one who brought Kamangu in this cooperative” (Male participant from the Kimironko FG)

“My favourite character is Nzigiye, when he gave advice to Kamangu” (Female participant from Rwabuye)

Participants were also asked about the characters they didn’t like and why. Many participants cited Kamangu who drinks a lot of beer, and Melisa, who did not deliver good services at work.

“The character that I did not like is Kamangu because he drinks too much beer” (Female participant from the Kimironko FG)

“I don’t like Melisa because she does not deliver good services to the client” (Female participant from the Kimironko FG)

“I did not like the character of Kamangu because he did not pay back the money he took from the cooperative” (Female participant from Rwabuye)

“I did not like the character of Melisa because she mismanages her salary” (Male participant from Dushishoze)
In terms of geographic differences, participants from Huye were more likely to say that their favourite character was Karuranga, because despite of his more advanced education level (secondary school) he decided to stay in a rural area to develop his business. There was no disparity in the responses of male and female participants.

4) Relevance of the radio drama to the challenges that youth face

Participants were asked whether the story and the challenges that the characters faced adequately reflected the challenges that they or their friends saw in their daily lives. All of the participants agreed, giving examples either from their own lives or those of their acquaintances.

Almost all participants cited some challenges that their friends had met, which they also saw within the drama. They gave examples of some of their friends who misbehave by drinking a lot of beer, or who did not back the money they got from cooperative or bank, or who did not deliver good services when they have been hired for a job.

“I have a neighbour who had a pub and he gave a lot of money to girls and finally he lost all his money” (Female participant from Kimironko)

“I have a friend who is a vendor. When a client arrived he would be on the phone talking to someone else and immediately the customer would go away” (Female participant from Kimironko)

“I know someone who got a loan from the bank. He failed to pay it back and his property (house) was auctioned” (Male participant from Kimironko)

“I have a friend (a girl) who got a job in Kigali as a customer care representative. After getting a lot of money she used to go out with her friends and she failed to perform at her job and finally she was sacked” (Female participant from Rwabuye)

There was no major disparity between the responses from EDC trainees and those who did not benefit from the training. There were also no differences between men and women around these questions.

5) Things to change about the Akazi Kanoze drama

SFCG asked participants to recommend any changes that they would like to see in the Akazi Kanoze radio program and to explain why. Here are the main changes they suggested:

- Improve Kamangu’s character;
- Change Melisa’s character;
- Increase the length of each radio drama episode;
- Introduce a new character.
Participants from different groups suggested that Kamangu become a good man with better behaviour; and that Melisa follow the advice given by Bea and Mama Rafiki. Some participants suggested adding more funny stories to the drama, while others proposed to reinforce discussions related to the existence of cooperatives in Rwanda because they are encouraged by the Rwandan Government.

Specific responses included:

“I suggest Melisa to follow advices given by Bea and mama Rafiki” (Female participant from Kimironko)

“I suggest to add more funny stories” (Male participant from Kimironko)

“I suggest to add more lessons on cooperatives because they are priorities of the government” (Female participant from Rwabuye)

“To tell us stories about someone who has a big enterprise and who have failed because of mismanagement” (Male participant from Rwabuye)

“I suggest to broadcast the drama twice a week and increase the length of the drama to between 20 and 25 minutes” (Male participant from Dushishoze)

Female participants were more likely to cite Melisa’s character and male participants were more likely to cite Kamangu’s character in terms of recommendations for improvement. There was no significant difference between the responses given by Akazi Kanoze trainees and those who were not.

6) Lessons learned

At the end of the discussions, participants were asked what they had learned from the radio program. Here are the lessons they mentioned:

- How to manage money without wasting it;
- How to manage conflicts;
- The importance of customer care when doing business;
- The importance of having goals/objectives in your life;
- The potential value of a cooperative and the livelihood opportunities it can offer;
- The role of siblings in financially supporting each other.

When participants were asked about what they had learned from the Akazi Kanoze radio drama and what it changed in their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior – including towards employment - some respondents said that they would try to follow the good characters portrayed in this radio drama. There was no difference between participants who had followed the Akazi Kanoze training and those who had not. In terms of gender disparities, there was no difference between the responses from female participants and those from male participants.
IV. Conclusion
All the youth who participated to the FGDs and who listened to the Akazi Kanoze radio drama, even when it was their first time to hear it, were able to elucidate some important messages provided through the program. Participants said that the radio drama was clear and easy to follow, and found it interesting because it described the challenges that youth face in their daily lives. All the groups, both those who had been trained by EDC Akazi Kanoze project and those who had not, said that the radio drama was interesting and appropriate to their interests.

Based on the key findings from the FGDs, SFCG has extracted the following recommendations:

- An 18 episode drama series is too short to attract regular listenership and change knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. The drama series needs to run for a more extended period of time to reach its full value. This observation was supported by the discussions from the youth who cited listening to other dramas like Musekewaya and Isano but not Akazi Kanoze.
- Youth clubs can serve as listening clubs to reinforce the audience. This is particularly true for a new radio program, as it is trying to attract a loyal listenership. They can also offer channels for discussion, peer exchange, and further learning.
- Contests and other incentives launched by the program can also increase listenership.
ANNEX: Question Guide for the FGDs

FGD Outline
Location: (Huye or Kigali)
Date:
Number of participants: ....... (M: F : ...)
EDC Akazi Kanoze Participants: Yes No
Name of Moderator:
Name of Note taker:

Questions
1. Before today have any of you ever listened to Kura Wikorera, the radio program?
   Mbere y’uko tuganira uyu muns, ese hari umuntu muri mwe wari warumvise ikinamico Akazi kanoze?

2. Have you heard the new format of Kura Wikorera, with the Akazi Kanoze drama included in the program?
   At this point, the radio program will be played for the participants, and then discussion will follow.

3. What were some of the key points that you heard in the drama programs? What was the program about?
   Niba warumvise ikinamico Akazi kanoze, Ni nyigisho wumvise? Sobanura?
   (Answers: Setting your own Short term objectives, How to seek a job and how to maintain job after obtaining it, disadvantages of misconduct at work, advantages of taking notes of daily spending, obstacles of starting business, --but don’t offer these points).

4. Did you find the story clear? Was it easy to follow? Was it interesting? Please give examples or more detail.
   Wabonye iyi nkuru yumvikana, ese kuyikurikira biyoroshye? Yaba ishimishije? Tanga urugero

5. How do you find the main characters? Which is your favourite? Why?
   Ni iyihe myitwarire wabonye, ni iyihe yagushimishije, kubera iki?

6. Was there any character that you didn’t like? Why?
   Hari imyitwarire waba utarakunze? Kubera iki?
7. Does the story, and the challenges that the characters are facing, sound like challenges that you or your friends have had? Why or why not?
   Yaba inkuru, imyitwarire mwumwise ihura n’ibibazo muhura nabyo cyangwa inshuti zanyu zihura nabyo? Ni iyihe mpamvu?

8. Is there anything you would change about the radio program? Please explain.
   Ni iki twahindura mu ikinamico itaha? Sobanura.

9. For those focus groups that include EDC participants:
   Does this radio drama help you to understand more what you have learned in training you got from the EDC project? How?
   Ikinamico akazi kanoze yaba yagufashije kumva birushijeho inyigisho wabonye uhawe na EDC project?