AN ARISE RESPONSIVE FUND CASE STUDY

KOCH FM
NAIROBI, KENYA

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INTRODUCTION

Supported by the ARISE responsive challenge fund, the African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC) worked with Koch FM to address water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and solid waste management (SWM) issues through community radio. Community radio usually refers to short-range, not-for-profit radio stations that cater to the informational needs of people living in a particular locality, in the languages and formats that are most suitable to the local context. They are key channels for dispersing developmental information from numerous actors on subjects such as health and wellbeing. In Kenya these stations are usually initiated and controlled by members of a community of interest, or geographical community, and are platforms to express their concerns, needs and aspirations without outside interference or regulation from the Independent Broadcasting Authority. Despite a wealth of knowledge on the role of radio stations in advocacy around health and wellbeing as well as SWM and WASH related concerns, in informal settlements it is still an underexplored and underutilised medium. This brief presents activities, key outcomes, lessons and recommendations based on our activity.

KEY ACTIVITIES

A) Advocacy for solid waste management

1. **Radio talk shows and street talks:** From May to July 2023, Koch FM radio talk shows focused on solid waste management and specifically on the issues around garbage collection at household level, and how waste ends up in landfill. The shows were an hour each and incorporated text messages, calls, and social media engagement. The programs included the following:

• **Tenants and the business community:** Tenants and the business community expressed their challenges with garbage, as well as how it affects their lives.

• **Landowners:** This program invited landlords on as live guest speakers. It also included vox pops (pre-recorded audio clips) from landlords interviewed at their premises, describing their own experiences with garbage and SWM.

• **Solid waste workers:** SWM workers spoke through their work, challenges, opportunities and how they worked with local government and other stakeholders.

• **Local leaders:** The local leaders like ward managers were interviewed with a focus on the Nairobi county laws on garbage collection, the mandate of the county, and how to address issues raised by community members who expressed concerns about the underperformance of the county on these issues.

2. **SWM infomercials:** Infomercials on SWM were run on Koch FM four times a week. They focused on the right to a clean environment as stipulated in the constitution and the responsibilities of county government in promoting a clean environment.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

• **Interactive and participatory programming:** Radio shows should be interactive, incorporating call-ins, text messages, and social media to encourage listener participation and amplify community voices and experiences.

• **Best practices and success stories:** Service providers, community and government officials should use radio shows to showcase successful initiatives, innovations and case studies that demonstrate effective SWM and WASH practices.

• **Community needs and preferences:** Radio presenters should conduct initial research, community assessments or use data from researchers to understand the specific WASH and SWM challenges faced by the community. This will enable them to tailor radio show content to address these needs, using local language and culturally relevant examples to enhance understanding and relevance.

• **Sustainable partnerships:** Radio presenters should collaborate with local leaders, community organizations, and stakeholders involved in WASH and SWM to co-design radio programs. They should involve representatives from different demographics, including women, youth, older persons, and people with disabilities, to ensure inclusivity and diverse perspectives.

• **Utilize social media to extend reach:** There is a need to integrate social media platforms to extend community radio advocacy. This enhanced sharing allows for online audience engagement, and encourages further discussion.

B. Advocacy for water, sanitation and hygiene

3. Radio Talk shows and street talks: From August to October, 2023, radio talks on Koch FM focused on WASH services. The program focussed specifically on the water, sanitation and hygiene services in Korogocho and specifically highlighted the issues raised by the audience which related to the inadequate toilet facilities in compounds, water scarcity, unclean toilets, open defecation, inadequate toilet facilities in schools, open sewage lines and policy guidelines. Callers also highlighted possible solutions to address the challenges identified. Programs included:

- **Community members:** In this program community visits were made to establish the community's main WASH challenges. Audio clips of these conversations were then played for local leaders, landlords and interested actors to discuss the matter. Opportunities and responsibilities were discussed by actors.

- **Tenants:** This program focused on the responsibilities of the tenants, county government, and other actors.

- **Schools:** This program specifically focussed on the issue of WASH in schools, highlighting the issue of inadequate and poor quality of WASH facilities in schools and the role that different actors should play.

- **People with disabilities:** This program focussed on the experiences of people with disabilities (PWD). This included highlighting challenges they face in accessing toilets at residential level as well as in public places. Representatives from PWD institutions were invited to take part, and proposed solutions to challenges.

4. WASH infomercials: Infomercials on WASH were run on Koch FM four times a week. The infomercials focused on the right to clean and quality WASH services as stipulated in the constitution and the responsibilities of county government in promoting WASH.

C. Strengthening partnerships

5. Koch FM hosted teams from Child Space and Slum-Child on a talkshow about their ARISE project activities. During the session, ChildSpace sensitised the community on the issues affecting child headed households and advocated for their rights. In another session, Slum-Child discussed their activities on WASH forums in schools and the community, and advocated for quality WASH services in in different settings.

KEY LESSONS

- **Persistence is crucial:** Community radio is a key tool to advocate for policy changes that benefit the community. Persistence is important as advocacy may take a long time to yield results.

- **Communication platforms:** Radio shows proved to be effective platforms for engaging communities in informal settlements. They allowed for interactive discussions through calls, text messages, and social media, facilitating direct feedback and participation from listeners.

- **Blame game:** There was blame passed between community members and the government. The community members blamed the county government for issues, whereas the county government blamed the community.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTD.

- **Capacity building:** Key actors in urban health should invest in capacity building initiatives for local leaders, informal workers, and community members to enhance their knowledge and skills in sustainable waste management practices, hygiene promotion, and community development.

- **Behaviour change and action:** Radio presenters should include practical tips and demonstrations on air about how to improve hygiene practices and manage waste in different spaces. The presenters should also encourage listeners to adopt sustainable behaviours and take collective action, such as community clean-up drives or advocacy for improved local services.

- **Monitor impact and follow-up:** Radio presenters should collaboratively establish mechanisms to monitor impact of radio advocacy on service providers and government policies. This could be done through follow up on commitments made during radio discussions, tracking progress, and reporting back to the community on actions taken.

- **Community-centric approach:** Tailoring radio content to address specific community needs and concerns was crucial. Programs that focused on local challenges such as inadequate sanitation facilities, open defecation, water challenges, and waste management resonated more with listeners and generated meaningful discussions.

- **Educational and awareness creation:** Radio infomercials and talk shows raised awareness about rights, responsibilities, and the importance of clean water, sanitation, and effective waste management. They served as educational tools that informed communities about hygiene practices and environmental stewardship.

- **Ownership:** By featuring community members, local leaders, workers, and representatives from vulnerable groups like people with disabilities, the shows amplified diverse voices and perspectives.

- **Empowering local radio producers:** Empowering of local radio producers on technical skills is paramount as community members can become storytellers and advocates through radio forums.

- **Collaboration with local stakeholders:** Building partnerships with local community leaders, organisations, and influencers is key in gaining credibility and support for advocacy efforts.

- **Community is a key resource:** Community members provided several suggestions on solving WASH and SWM challenges through radio forums.

KEY OUTCOMES:

- Urban marginalised people are better able to come together, identify their priorities on health and well-being, and develop action to achieve these.

- Stronger relationships between community organisations, between urban marginalised people and government/other organisations/ community.

- Increased accountability and responsiveness to meet priorities of urban marginalised people from local government, community-based and development organizations.

- **Sustained impact:** Sustainability of impact was achieved through consistent radio shows focusing on different aspects of WASH and SWM, and has ensured continuous dialogue, and adaptation of strategies based on community feedback.

- **Behaviour change:** Over time, radio advocacy contributed to behaviour change towards better WASH practices, and active engagement in local governance and environmental stewardship.

SUGGESTED CITATION

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ABOUT ARISE AND THE RESPONSIVE CHALLENGE FUND

The ARISE Hub – Accountability and Responsiveness in Informal Settlements for Equity – is a research consortium, instituted to enhance accountability and improve the health and wellbeing of marginalised populations living in informal urban settlements in low-and middle-income countries.

The ARISE vision is to catalyse change in approaches to enhancing accountability and improving the health and wellbeing of poor, marginalised people living in informal urban settlements.

ARISE is guided by a process of data collection, building capacity, and supporting people to exercise their right to health. ARISE works closely with the communities themselves; with a particular focus on vulnerable people living in the informal settlements; often overlooked in many projects and initiatives.

ARISE was launched in 2019 and is a five-year project. It is implemented in four countries: Bangladesh, Kenya, India and Sierra Leone.

Through a £1 million Responsive Challenge Fund, ARISE provided small grants to organisations that test innovative approaches to improving health and wellbeing linked to the ARISE Theory of Change.

ABOUT APHRC

The African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) is a leading pan-African research institution. Headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, the centre seeks to drive change with evidence led by a growing cadre of research leaders from across Africa.

APHRC has for the last two decades run numerous research projects and generated evidence that has shaped policy and practice across African countries. The center has actively engaged policymakers and other key stakeholders to achieve measurable policy impacts informed by rigorous evidence -based research.

ABOUT KOCH FM

Koch FM is non-partisan, non-discriminatory and voluntary association of community change agents. The radio station was created to educate, entertain, and organise and mobilise communities for meaningful participation in societal processes. Koch FM strives to be a part of creating an empowered community that celebrates its diversity and actively participates in its development. Koch FM provides a platform for the community to address their issues through information sharing, education and communication, and works to promote the social, political and economic well-being of its listeners.