

## RADIO PROGRESS – 'OUR VOICE'

the benefit Community Radio can bring  
for the development of its audience  
in the Ghanaian Upper West Region



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## Abbreviation

AMARC	World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters
CR	Community Radio
CRB	Community Radio Broadcasting
CRD	Community Radio Development
CRS	Community Radio Station
DC	Development Communication
DRB	Development Radio Broadcasting
ICT	Information- and Communication Technology
LDC	Least Developed Country
NMC	National Media Commission
NCCE	National Commission of Community Education
PC	Participatory Communication
PDB	Participatory Development Broadcasting
PDC	Participatory Development Communication
RRB	Rural Radio Broadcasting
RUW	Radio Upper West
UWR	Upper West Region



## Introduction and Rationale

*Broadcasting has to be changed from a means of distribution to a means of communication. What a wonderful apparatus broadcasting could be if it would only receive instead of just transmit, make the recipient speak instead of just listen, relate him to others instead of isolating him from them.*  
(Bertolt Brecht 1932)

What Brecht had already discovered in the early 1930s took the ‘International Development Community’ decades to realise and was an ideal suppressed over years in most developing countries – the centrality of free communication and the crucial role of free media like private radio in this process.

Media plays a crucial role in facilitating information- and expression processes. Against all ‘technical prophecies’ of the Global Information Revolution<sup>1</sup>, radio remains the predominant and most important form of media for most African countries and particularly the rural areas. Due to its low costs in production and distribution as well as its advantage of being an oral medium, radio is the medium that includes the ‘poor and marginalised’. A gap in media-access does not only exist between the continents and countries, but also within developing countries in which large asymmetries can be observed. Enormous disparities exist regarding the development status of possibilities in media receptions, and therefore, participation in the information age. Many African rural areas are still completely left out to any media access. Specifically in marginalised regions radio is the dominant and foremost medium of access. However, media communication is about more than just receiving information. It should attempt to combine the transmitting of relevant information to recipients while providing means for

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<sup>1</sup> I will get back to that in the next chapter.

recipient self-expression. Community Radio (CR) is one form of communication which has a specific potential to fulfil the needs of those left out of the 'Information Revolution'. Community Radio is designed to be based within and produced by the community, tailoring media to specific cultural backgrounds. As such, it does more than only inform those people who have no access to media like the internet. It also gives voice to local people by allowing their own issues and demands, like overcoming language obstacles, illiteracy and issues of cultural exclusion, to be broadcasted. As Girard notes, "It speaks the language and with the accent of the community" (Girard 2000).

Unfortunately, decades of governmental control in many African countries have restricted private- and thus Community Radio Broadcasting (CRB) in the sense of Participatory Communication (PG). In development politics the relevance of communication — and as such Participatory Development Broadcasting (PDB) — was suppressed by a top-down, linear modernization paradigm in development thinking. Although the need for community participation in development had been recognized since the 1970s, the direct link between participation and communication was often overlooked. Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2002: 69) underlined this phenomenon by stating that "[...] it has not sufficiently been recognized that participation and communication are different sides of the same coin."

However, perceptions are changing. The wave of democratisation and liberalisation which developed in the 1990s opened up the airwaves for many African countries. Parallel Development Communication (DC) moved towards the top of the development agenda and recent studies of communication and development have moved toward emphasizing issues of participation, access, empowerment resulting in a more interdisciplinary and integrated approach to development. Awareness began to develop that communication and the people themselves should be included into the implementing processes of development programs, thereby giving individuals a voice in which to express their needs. This is a crucial factor for succeeding – for making a change.

Paolo Freire's model of conscientization and dialogue has been of outstanding contribution in this process. His model of conscientization and dialogic communication will form the core methodological framework for my research. Freire was 'the pedagogue

of the oppressed<sup>2</sup>. Freire contends that DC can support people in order to change themselves but not change them. His work emphasised the crucial necessity of dialogue to conscientize<sup>3</sup> people of their situation and take developing action out of common reflection on their situation.

Nevertheless, Richards (2001) as well as Dagon (2006) critically assert that despite these theoretical cognitions relatively few explorations have been undertaken during recent years. Current research which addresses specific community development capacity of CR in particular has so far been scarce (Barlow 1998, Coates 1997, Vuuren 2002). Most research dealing with CR focuses on specific development programs that use radio as a tool to communicate their message in a rather top-down way, such as in specific educational programs. Furthermore, Fraser and Resetrepo-Estada (2002) underline that there has yet to formulate a precise methodology for evaluating the impact of CR based on appropriate social indicators which have developed. However, the demand is existing as several communities have managed to bring about crucial social change and development initiatives as result of a thorough discussion and debate of issues broadcast by their own station.

The relevancy of CR for rural communities becomes clearer upon analysis of results of a World Bank survey conducted in 2000. This survey concluded that the prior need the people themselves regard as crucial for their development is not materialistic. Since the majority identified 'having a voice' as most important issue (Deane 2005), CR can supply the demand. It can be concluded with the words of Gumucio Dagon that

*It looks like, at the grassroots level, the need for communication has been deeply felt by the people who took action to make it possible, while at the planning and implementation level of donor and government driven projects there has been little consciousness about change. (2001: 9)*

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<sup>2</sup> Although oppression in the Freirean sense is not the cause of underdevelopment in the Ghanaian Upper West Region in the same sense like it is in Latin America I will use this term here.

<sup>3</sup> Stemming from Freire's theory of 'conscientization' I will use the verb conscientize in this context in this paper.

The Republic of Ghana provides an outstanding illustration of extreme inequality in media distribution within the country. As will be shown in chapter four, the most rural parts of Ghana, found in the country's northern regions, are the least served. Rural Radio Broadcasting (RRB) is the most important aspect of broadcasting in Ghana (Abbey-Mensah 2006). The dominantly rural Upper West Region (UWR) belongs to the poorest area of the entire country. The region offers little access to a diversity of media in the sense of a plural media system that should consist of a variety of all forms of a trial media system<sup>4</sup> (Ghana Statistical Service 2000).

CR claims to be the only medium talking in the people's language and giving them a voice to express their needs and interests - as does Radio Progress in the UWR. This little station, based in the region's capital, Wa, has the potential to benefit its community by offering not only a platform for self-reflection of the community's needs for development, but also a program profile situated in a community-relevant background. However, to fulfil this prophecy several institutional aspects as well as matters of performance have to be considered.

My research will evaluate the impact of CR by applying specific indicators developed from the underlying theory of Development Radio Broadcasting (DRB). The indicators have been developed from the methodological framework of Paulo Freire's model of conscientization and are applied to the specific case study of Radio Progress in the Ghanaian UWR. The results will shed light on the potential of this station to contribute to its community's development. By this I additionally hope to make contributions which embolden and enlarge the scope of scientific research in the subject area.

## **Thesis Outline**

Chapter one will present the ongoing alteration of the global media system in which participatory media is embedded. This background information illustrates the significance of media in general as well as the importance of an inclusive and diverse

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<sup>4</sup> A healthy, democratic media system is dual or even trial, consisting of private, public and community media to offer a wide range of information and option of participation for all groups of society.

media system. Furthermore it will offer a thorough description of changes in development thinking over the last decades and range the role of Participatory Development Broadcasting (PDB) in this process with specific contribution to the critical theory of Paolo Freire.

The second chapter will compile the essence of the theoretical stance behind my research and draw the linkage to my empirical approach. Thereby, I will define the main concepts applied to my research to clarify the methodological approach of my work which I will present in the third chapter. That chapter serves to facilitate the connection between my applied theoretical background and the transfer into my practical research on the basis of the case study on Radio Progress and its listening community. It will lead to the presentation of a conceptual scheme which visualises the linkages and objective targets of the fieldwork.

The third chapter, deriving from the developed scheme, will present my overarching research question as well as the subsequent sub-questions. Referring to the set research questions, I will furthermore introduce the methods I used to gather data and to answer the research questions.

In chapter four, I will briefly refer to the development in the Ghanaian media system and the underlying legal situation of the country. Furthermore, this chapter will illustrate the circumstances of my research location as well as the target of analysis of my case study – Radio Progress.

In chapter five I will present my research findings and analyse them according to my conceptualisation. In doing this I will offer conclusions in answers to questions surrounding my sub-research-questions. These intermediate conclusions will pave the way towards the final chapter of which contains final conclusions to the research.

This final chapter will illustrate theoretical and empirical data in order to resolve the main research question. This final conclusion will build upon the intermediate conclusions which explicitly refer to the sub-research questions while paying specific attention to the leading theory of the research as whole: the critical dialogue of Paolo Freire. Referring to the analysed findings of normative characteristics, I will present a final assessment over the extent to which Radio Progress can contribute to its listeners' development and as such the potential impact of CRB.

# 1 Research Background

For my theory I will point out the Western-developed top-down development thinking and the dynamics of concentration in the media industry. Deriving from this I will explicate the efficiency of participatory development strategies with specific focus on CR in a dialogical way of development and apply this to my case study.

## 1.1 Dynamics in the global media system

As mentioned in the introduction, the world is talking about the global 'Information Revolution'. New Information- and Communication Technologies (ICT) are conquering the globe. Satellites facilitate the broad distribution of audio-visual media and the internet brings an incredible amount of information into the homes of millions of people. By 1962, Marshall McLuhan praised the mass media for its ability to form a 'global village' and with the new ICT it would seem as though the world society is in fact moving closer together. But this new revolution is by no means a global one and thus the 'global village' remains a mere utopia. The gap does not only exist between continents and countries, but within developing countries, large asymmetries can be observed. Enormous disparities exist regarding the development status of possibilities in reception, and therefore participation in the information age. Many rural African areas are still completely left out from diverse media access.

Some countries in Africa, like other developing countries, are increasingly reliant on western media providers<sup>5</sup>. This results in a dominance of western media content, shaped by the demands of advertisers and without respect for different cultural backgrounds, interests or concerns for the majority of African societies. Such processes result in an increasing bias as former state monopoly broadcasters face rising competition. To remain competitive, many providers have to adapt profitable strategies. This often results in the

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<sup>5</sup> The audiovisual industry is stamped by a rapidly growing motion of concentration. The diffusion of communication markets proceeds highly concentrated on a few big western conglomerates. Growing vertical integration on a transnational level leads to the formation of gigantic media and entertainment concerns that dominate most media- and sales channels.

cutting of broadcasting in minority languages and to rural areas and adopting western cultural styles that mainly fit the urban interests (Dean, 2005). Homogenization of cultural expression and the emergence of dominating cultural forms is a further negative consequence of globalization (Buckley, 1998). These consequences are especially distributed through media and lead to the exclusion of large parts of the world population. Going one step further, Asante (2004) emphasizes the danger in which this process could completely erode the cultural base of African societies. Especially in the poorest countries, mostly in Africa, a continuing divide between information rich and information poor societies can be observed.

The crucial factor is that the 'mission' of mass media is the creation of publicity and its 'commodities' are news and opinions. However, cultural values and linguistic disparities weight more in the world of communication than in the material world of commodities as the former are essential attributes for understanding messages and having the opportunity to participate. Moreover, media systems play a crucial role in developing and establishing democratic structures<sup>6</sup>. However, the top-down mentality and content-bias of the increasingly concentrated global media market does obviously not allow for democratic, inclusive, participatory activity.

While general mass media still seem to ignore a huge part of African societies, the need for community-owned media that reaches the marginalized people with relevant information, working in their cultural contexts and giving them a voice to express themselves becomes more than obvious. Nevertheless, the legal situations in many African countries are still in the process of enabling free and diverse media systems which allow for realizing such a development.

### **1.1.1 'Free information and expression' in African societies**

The right of everyone to receive information and express oneself is anchored in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

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<sup>6</sup> Open and transparent media systems are supposed to create publicness uncover the truth and as such have a 'controlling' influence on governmental instances. In a working media system people are supposed to receive a diversity of information.

*Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. (Article 19, Universal Declaration of Human Rights)*

Although most African countries are facing limitations and restrictions in fulfilling the human right to communicate as outlined by Article 19, during the past two decades many African countries have experienced remarkable political changes (Girard, 2001). These changes have entailed the liberalization and decentralization of communication policies, allowing for private media.

The liberalization process has had far more profound effects in terms of information than on technological changes. Rhetorically emphasizing this, Deane (2005) calls these changes the "other information revolution", especially characterized by rapid liberalization, particularly of radio broadcasting. According to Amienyi and Hachten (2004), the concept of private broadcasting did not exist in Africa until the early 1990s. After media systems were created by colonial rule, news media in Africa were often taken over by new one-party states or military dictatorships and brought under direct governmental control. Since 1993 a number of countries legitimized private broadcasting stations for the first time.

Specifically people living under rural conditions face specific obstacles in media access due to conditions of poverty and marginalization. Hence, the necessary access to media and the possibility to actively participate can still be exclusively realised through radio in most parts of Africa. In many rural areas, radio is the only source of information. Television only functions as a real medium of the masses in more developed countries and the big cities of Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Computer and internet are not accessible to most of the world's poor. In contrast, the low production and distribution costs of radio make it mostly the only available medium for rural areas, where the majority of the African population live. Cost efficiency of radio contributes to the producers as well as the audience. Furthermore, new ICT is especially faced as a barrier in cultures with predominance of the spoken word and face to face communication

(Buckley 1998)<sup>7</sup>. In societies with high illiteracy rates, radio, as an oral medium offers the ability to speak to the people. These facts give radio broadcasting a key function in African media systems, reaching a much larger proportion of the population.

According to the 'World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters' (AMARC), in 1985 there were less than ten independent radio stations on the entire continent. During the last two decades, due to the liberalization processes, independent stations and thus the access to information has spread throughout the continent. Today a typical population of 100,000 people in sub-Saharan Africa comprehends about 20,000 radio receivers<sup>8</sup>. This means that there is an average of one radio receiver per household. Radio has the potential to overcome many of the discussed obstacles and overcome the problem of thousands of Africans to be left out in the 'Information Age'. While radio is able to eliminate the aforementioned obstacles, language still remains a barrier (Fardon 2000). As previously stated, the diversity of languages and dialects in Africa is not captured by the mass media.

### **1.1.2 'Freedom' through Community Radio**

In this section, the special relevance of CR as the third form<sup>9</sup> of African broadcasting will be discussed. This form of radio provides the opportunity to "speak the language and with the accent of the community" (Girard 2000, Fardon 2000). CR stations serve rural areas, broadcasting information within the community and not simply transferring to the community the contents produced in the large urban centres. Consequently CR broadcasts bottom-up, in 'grassroots' fashion<sup>10</sup>. The increasing possibility to participate empowers 'formerly voiceless people' and thus contributes enormously to democratic practice. According to Dean (2005), it can be seen as the medium that "opens up new space for public debate and civic engagement.

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<sup>7</sup> Merely the expansion of mobile telephony in African countries has widened possibilities of participation for instance through phone-in-calls during radio programs (Kafewo 2006).

<sup>8</sup> This does not count for South Africa where the distribution rate is much more developed

<sup>9</sup> besides private and public media

<sup>10</sup> A grassroots movement or action is meant to be driven by the community itself

The aforementioned liberalization ‘wave’ of the 1990s has opened the airwaves to hundreds of those stations and thus contributed to the expansion of freedom of expression and information. As such it has given a voice to millions of Africans (Karikari 2004). The Freedom for African Radios conference held in Bamako in 1993 encouraged many African countries to recognize the important role of this specific form of radio and adopt its legislations in its favour (Frazer and Restrepo-Estrada 2002). This was the voice people were aiming for. The World Bank carried out a large survey in 2000 to evaluate what people living in poverty said they wanted and needed most. According to the World Bank, the priority set by the respondents was the need for a voice - a voice to participate in the decisions that affects them (Dean 2005, RNTC 2006).

The specific character of CR has potential to give this voice to the 'voiceless' and to encourage people to challenge their obstacles by informing them and helping to create awareness of their living conditions and options for change. As such, CR has development supporting potential.

This general background clarified the relevance of radio and particularly CR for rural African societies. However, the realization of free and private radio broadcasting like CR and thus the possibility of reception as well as expression have been restricted for decades in most African countries, including Ghana.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, for the specific purpose of development, a participative use of radio has been ‘restricted’ by the International Development Community during decades of domination by a modernist, anti-participative development paradigm. A changing development paradigm developing in the early 1990s, however, has paved the way towards more of a participatory way of thinking. The following chapter will shed light on the evolution of the role of communication within development thinking over time and the potential of CR in achieving development of rural societies.

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<sup>11</sup> See chapter four for detailed information about the history of the Ghanaian media system

## **1.2 Theoretical Framework**

The systematic use of communication can be a key factor for change and development. It can help individuals, communities and whole societies to become conscious and introduce change in a democratic way. Communicating serves as the basis for generating awareness, consensus building, creating participation in processes of change and development, informed decision-making processes, and for finding conflict solutions. It can help individuals to change their attitudes and their behaviour patterns, and it can introduce new ideas and practises into their lives that will improve their economic and social situation. According to Waisbord (2001), the relevance of communication began to be recognized in development thinking as early as the 1950s. Since those early years a diversity of theoretical and empirical approaches addressing this issue have emerged (Waisbord 2001). In 1980 the 'International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems' emphasised the inevitable need for development strategies to incorporate communication policies (MacBride 1980 in Servaes 1996: 29). However, communication policies in the field of development still embrace very different meanings of communication. Generally, the changes in main development paradigms over the last three decades can also be traced from areas of communication.

### **1.2.1 Development Communication**

DC has evolved in parallel to the main development approaches over time. It's 'modification' can be traced to the general development thinking from a top-down, linear paradigm to a more participative, bottom-up thinking. While the concept of Communication for Development had already appeared in the 1960s, the prevailing modernization theory served as the dominant paradigm, also for DC (Waisbord 2001). In those years its theorists saw nothing more in a communication process than a message going from sender to receiver (Lasswell 1946).<sup>12</sup> The schools of thought were dominated by behaviour change models, holding the view that problems of development are rooted in lack of knowledge and that providing people with information will be the solution to

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<sup>12</sup> Lasswell's classic formula 'Who says What through which channel to Whom with What effect?' was one of the first and most famous formulas of communication dating back to the 1950s

foster development (Servaes 1996). This thinking was led by ‘diffusion’ studies (Daniel Lerner 1958, Wilbur Schramm 1964). Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Schramm have been the main theorists of this phase, promoting development strategies with a strong “pro-media, pro-innovation, and pro-persuasion focus.” Emphasis was placed on media technology as channels and indicators of modernization and development in the current time definition (Waisborn 2001). Even more influential became the “diffusion of innovations” theory inserted by Everett Rogers (Rogers 1962/1983). He stated that innovations diffuse over time according to people’s stages, distinguishing between early adopters of innovations and those who are slower in adoption, which he assured to be the majority of development countries populations. According to this view of a transmission bias he can be traced in one line with Lerner and Schramm (Waisborn 2001).

While the modernization paradigm was the predominant paradigm in DC throughout the 1960s and 1970s the field already began to split in the late 1960s. A second approach arose within the field that challenged the information- and behaviour centred theories, stepping towards a rather participatory view of communication. The strongest critiques evolved from the dependency paradigm, led by Latin American social scientists and informed by critical and Marxist theories. Their main argument was that underdevelopment in ‘Third World countries’ is the consequence of the western world’s development and as such not merely an internal problem of the countries itself (Waisbord 2001, Servaes 1996). This growing perception also influenced the field of DC. The awareness arose that countries needed their own information channels, based on their own cultural backgrounds and demands.

In the same line of critiques another branch of thinking emerged known as participatory approaches. One crucial aspect of top-down modernization theories was that they did not consider the demands and beliefs of people themselves and did not include them into the process of project implementation. Consequently, communities would not feel a sense of ownership of programs and ‘innovations’ imposed from outside (Jacobson 2004). In contrast, participatory theorists recognized that it was exactly this lack of participation, the inclusion of local knowledge and sensitivity to cultural diversity and the contexts which caused the failure of many development processes. The crucial step forward referring for the meaning of communication was that communication was no

longer seen as mere information transmission but as a 'process of creating and stimulating understanding as the basis for development' (Waisbord 2001). The conviction arose that there is no panacea of development but that development should be endogenous to a society and it should thus originate from values and perceptions of the society, based on participatory, democratic decision-making processes (Fraser, Restrepo-Estrada 1998).

While the concept of Participation in Development emerged on the development agenda in the 1970s, there were different meanings of participation within the development community. The currently prevailing belief, adopted by UNICEF in 1990 and broadly accepted in recent development circles is that participation only succeeds by actively involving people in the processes and over the decisions influencing their lives. This crucial aspect criticised that people will only consider changes as relevant if they can make their voices heard and be able to directly participate. Otherwise, it has been argued that people will feel less ownership over the process and will be less ambitious to invest and participate in the long-term (Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada, 1998).

While early thinking and action of DC took place in the framework of the modernization approach, current DC has adopted a participatory way of thinking that led to the recent Participatory Development Approaches including PC as one crucial instrument for development. The current view on communication is a fundamental two-way, interactive and participatory one, emphasizing the process of communication such as the exchange of meanings and the relationships communication is able to create (Servaes 1996). The shift in development thinking has opened the door for a much broader role for communication than under the former paradigms and made steps to leave behind the dominance and neglect of people's backgrounds and demands.

Those participatory development approaches have also influenced changes in the way media is used in development to include people into the process of 'media-making'. In this coherence Community Media moved into the focus of development processes (Fraser, Restrepo-Estrada 1998). The current aim of DC is the removal of any constraints to pave the way for a more equal and participatory society (Huesca 2002, Servaes, Jacobson and White 1996).

Concluding, Communication for Development today can be characterized by some main reorientations that have been taking shape in development and communication thinking<sup>13</sup>:

- 1. From a positivist-instrumentalist approach, which uses mainly quantifiable indicators, toward a more normative standpoint that builds on qualitative and structuralist methods*
- 2. From a formal perspective, where development is defined in terms of universal goals that can be combined in a predictive model, toward a more substantive dimension where development involves societal change of a less predictable nature.*
- 3. The shift from a Western or ethnocentric to a contextual and polycentric understanding.*
- 4. The change from endogenism, over exogenism to globalism.*
- 5. The shift from a predominantly national framework of reference, over an international perspective to mixed and combined levels of analysis.*
- 6. From chiefly economic toward more universal and interdisciplinary approaches.*
- 7. From segmentary to more holistic, problem oriented approaches.*
- 8. From an integrationist-reformist strategy and revolutionary options to combined policies of (r)evolutionary change. (Servaes 1996: 37)*

As mentioned above, a variety of participatory approaches have emerged. As the following chapter will show, also the specific field of PDC was stamped by several schools of thoughts (Manyozo 2004).

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<sup>13</sup> This shift is not necessarily reflected in current development policies. It should rather be seen as general approaches in development thinking

### **1.2.2 Participatory Development Communication**

Participatory Communication in general is a dispersed field that lacks a single accurate definition. Gumucio Dagron (2001) emphasizes that it cannot be considered a unified model. Predominantly two major approaches of PC influenced the sector of DC since the emergence of participatory models. These were the dialogical or critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire and the ideas of access, participation and self-management articulated in the UNESCO debates of the 1970s (Servaes 1993). Both approaches involve the notions of access and participation as the core ideas of a normative theory of alternative communication. Freire, in his 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' (1968) stresses that many political and educational projects have failed because they have been designed from the implementers' 'view of reality', not considering and involving the people to whom the programs have been directed, except as mere objects of their action (Freire 1968: 84).

The idea of Development Broadcasting, and specific of CR, stems from this participatory school of thoughts, particularly the 'critical conscious' model of Paulo Freire.

#### ***The Freirean Perspective***

The current, predominant form of DC, namely Participatory Development Communication (PDC) received high contribution by the theory of Paulo Freire. The perception that DC cannot change people but that it can only support them to change themselves is the centre of today's practises of employing communication technologies and strategies as part of rural development interventions (Manyozo 2004). Freire's model of conscientization and dialogic communication has formed the core methodological framework for my research. He argues that people have to start from their own perceptions; from "the situation within which they submerged, from which they emerge, and in which they intervene" (Freire 1968: 72). Moving forward and developing, so Freire can only start from this point. Positive outcome of educational or political programs can only be generated by respecting the "particular view of the world held by the people" (Freire 1968: 80). Freire points out that the 'oppressed' have to critically

reflect on their social reality to free themselves.<sup>14</sup> Dialogue according to Freire is the tool for cultural action for freedom and its preeminent purpose is people's conscientization of their situation (Nain 2001).

The intention of his model is to prompt the individual to critically reflect on his or her own living conditions and problems. By this he premises "the right to participation and emancipation regarding social, cultural, and historical reality" as a fundamental right for everyone (Servaes 1996). Freire believed in people's ability to learn, to reflect dominating social, political and economic contradictions and consequently to be able to take actions against those oppressive elements in their lives. This is what he calls 'conscientization'.

According to Freire, in the process of 'conscientization', men begin to single out elements from their 'background awareness' and to reflect upon them (Freire 1968: 70).

Stemming from his practice and theory of dialogical education he holds the view that dialogue leads to ongoing processes of reflection and creating awareness, resulting in action. He underlines mutual, horizontal<sup>15</sup> dialogue between the people and between the 'oppressed' and other instances as the encounter in which reflection and resulting action is addressed to the 'world' that is meant to be transformed, to be developed (Freire 1968: 77).

By this Freire goes beyond his educational model and suggests a role of media in developing countries. His conscientization model "was designed to bring about new conditions by breaking through a culture of acceptance and silence and encourage active participation as a subject" (Richards 2001). By emphasizing the crucial importance of dialogue he points to core importance of communication for learning and creating awareness. For Freire, true and as such participatory education and development cannot take place without communication and true communication can only be created by dialogue (Freire 1968: 81).

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<sup>14</sup> Although oppression in the Freirean sense is not the cause of underdevelopment in the Ghanaian Upper West Region in the same sense like it is in Latin America I will use this term here.

<sup>15</sup> Dialogue on a horizontal level has to be seen in total contradiction to top-down strategies I referred to before.

Without access to information people cannot develop an awareness of their living conditions and the problems they face. Furthermore, as Servaes (1993) points out, the most developed form of participation is self-management. This implies participation in planning and production of media content. As such CR is the most efficient and emancipated tool to realize this degree of participation. Referring to the previously outlined aspects it can be seen as the most developed tool for realizing these issues in the field of mass media.

### **1.2.3 Development Radio Broadcasting**

*“For more than fifty years radio has been the most appealing tool for participatory communication and development. It is without a doubt the communication tool most widely spread throughout the world and has always been the ideal medium for change” (Gumucio-Dagron 2001: 14).*

Fraser and Estrepo-Estrada (2001: 18 et seqq) provide an all embracing description which functions CR can have and how they can contribute to the general development within a community: Working effectively and in the normative frame of PC can benefit the community by reflecting and promoting local identity, character, and culture. It can create a diversity of voices and opinions on the air, encourage open dialogue and democratic process; promote social change, promote civil society and good governance, encourage participation, sharing of information and innovation, give a voice to the voiceless, provide a social service as replacement for the telephone, contribute to diversity in broadcasting ownership.

Emerging out of the participatory approaches of DC, it can be generally distinguished between two levels of employing Radio for Development (Manyozo, 2004).<sup>16</sup> The first is what can be defined as Radio for Development (RfD) or Rural Education Broadcasting. In this case the production of radio programs is centralized

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<sup>16</sup> see also Servaes et al 1996

within public or commercial broadcasters. However, the programs production is agreed with parts of the target community. This form of RfD mainly stems from the intention of behavioural change and broadcasting of “scientifically and technical knowledge” through “culturally relevant, informative and educative content” (Manyozo 2004).

The second form of development broadcasting is the one that is especially relevant to this research. On this level, the radio programming is located in the communities themselves, with the community having partial or total control over programming and management of the station. This form characterizes CR<sup>17</sup>. The purpose of this form of radio primarily lies in the idea of participation and ownership by the community itself. The value in this case is for exchanging opinions and involving all community members instead of purely serving as transfer instrument for information (Waisbord 2001). Such radios can involve participation ranging “from total ownership to different degrees of audience involvement in programming and management” (Gumucio Dagron 2001).

CR can thus foster development in the Freirean sense of conscientization that further leads to reflection and consequent action: What is required for social change and development within the community is a collective perception of the probably diverse perceived local reality and the people's individual opinion for improving it. Such a collective perception can only be achieved through access to information and internal discussion to reflect problems, identify solutions and mobilize the adequate groups for action of change (Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada 2002; Buckley 2006). CR fulfils this function by providing an independent platform for interactive discussion which encourages open dialogue and democratic processes (Girard 2000). Through this platform “people can define who they are, what they want, and how they get it, at the same time building long-term capacity to solve problems in ways that lead to sustainable social change and development” (Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada 2002). Thus CR facilitates dialogue in the way Freire refers to for generating communication in the sense of reflection that can lead to action. He emphasised that the correct method to initiate

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<sup>17</sup> This form of radio is also known as participatory radio or rural radio (Manyozo 2004). I will apply the term Community Radio for my study.

reflection and communication lies in dialogue (Freire 1968: 54) – CR has strong potential to realise this form of beneficial dialogue. This is specifically important considering that communities are not necessarily homogenous entities. Communities can consist of diverse religious or ethical groupings, they consist of different genders and ages targeting different interests and necessities. In this process the role of radio is to respond to priorities set by the community, to facilitate, reinforce and challenge their discussion. The ability of people to hear and make themselves heard through this third form of media is a core democratic process and CR provides the forum to realize it (Girard 2000). Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2002) emphasize that CR succeeds when it grows out of the community's sense of internal cohesion and consciousness. They underline that there have been many examples of how communities have managed to bring about important change relevant to their specific conditions. While those changes may appear trivial to outsiders, in the context of prevailing poverty and considering often existing apathy of the people, they signify the potential of radio to create will and energy for change within communities.

As ambitious the idea of CRD appears, the specific character of CR can bear some limitations in its community- and non-profitability commitment. Restrictive national governmental policies of many Developing countries often form hindrances for desired development of CR stations. Furthermore, their commitment to a non-profit structure is often contradictory to a sustainable performance. This is due to the fact that the non-profit structure often restricts them to mainly work with volunteers.

Nevertheless, CR can contribute to the development of its community in several ways. Mehra Masani (1976 in Manyozo 2004: 20) shares this opinion although critically emphasizing that CR can only be “community if the demand comes from the communities” themselves.

In reference to this, it is important to consider that theory and reality might not be the same. This made it a crucial necessity to observe the stations as well as the community's opinion and view of the radio's benefit for development as well as their general views of crucial development issues. By giving strong attention to this complexity, my study laid

emphasis on the community's perceptions as well as the degree of the real participatory character of the station.

## **2 Conceptual approach**

Before introducing my research questions I will apply this separate chapter to compile the essence of the theoretical stance behind my research and draw the linkage to my empirical approach. This step aims at clarifying the complexity of relevant aspects influencing my research intentions and the linkage with my specific case study.

### **2.1 Operationalization of theoretical concepts**

Deriving from the underlying theory I depicted above, I will first, point out the applied leading concepts. I will extract each concept from the theoretical background and point out the relevance for my research intentions. This conceptual differentiation will lead to the schematization and description of my concrete research objectives. Building upon this I will introduce my research questions and applied methods in a later chapter.

The theory of 'critical conscious' of Paulo Freire I distinguished in the theoretical background is serving as the leading thought of my research. Conscientization for Freire is the crucial instance leading to development and is meant to create peoples' awareness and critically reflect on their living conditions. This creates opportunities to take changing action. CR, with its potential for information and serving as dialogical forum, can be of enormous facilitation in this process if working in the normative right way as will be defined in its concept. As can be read in chapter two, Access and Participation are the cornerstones of PC and serve as main concepts for my research.

From each defined concept certain research dimensions arose which have further been divided into several variables that reflect their specific characteristics. From those aspects I extracted certain indicating questions which served as 'cornerstones' for my evaluation. Research dimensions, variables and indicating questions deriving from the concepts have been generated in different ways, referring to my two units of analysis: station and community.

For my research the operationalization of CR served to evaluate my first sub-question, the operationalization of 'participation' predominantly served to evaluate the second sub-question and the concept of 'access' served to evaluate additional, eventually attendant circumstances of participation. The concept of 'development' considered both sides to allow for a sound evaluation of my main research question. Additionally, the instance of 'Community' will be defined in this chapter.

### ***Community Radio***

The concept of CR defines the normative character of this 'fourth' form of radio. The characterisation was used to assess the performance of Radio Progress.

CR and its functions have been defined in many ways. AMARC revealed this diversity:

*Community radio, rural radio, cooperative radio, participatory radio, free radio, alternative, popular, educational radio. If the radio station, networks and production groups that make up the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters refer to themselves by a variety of names, then their practices and profiles are even more varied. Some are musical, some militant and some mix music and militancy. They are located in isolated rural villages and in the heart of the largest cities in the world. Their signals may reach only a kilometre, cover a whole country or be carried via shortwave to other parts of the world. (AMARC 2006)*

Beside this diversity of sizes, missions and practises there are several crucial characteristics of CR that can be shown to have been of central importance for my research.

Like also stated by AMARC, the historical philosophy of CR is to function as the mouthpiece for the voiceless and oppressed people and generally as a tool for development. There is a consensus about three main aspects CRs have to fulfil: non-profit making, owned and controlled by the community and participation of the community (World Conference of Community Radio 1995). Moreover, CRB should not be about

doing something for the community but about the community doing something for itself (AMARC Africa, Panos South Africa 1998). This underlines the participatory intention that the station should be run by and in the interest of the community. Hence, the programming should reflect the community's needs and demands for development. This means broadcasting in the community, by the community, for the community and from the community. Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2002) underline this important function of CR to encourage open dialogue within the community by serving as an independent platform for interactive discussions about important decisions and relevant matters of the community within. This underlines the concept of Paulo Freire as dialogue creates awareness through reflection and can lead to changing action.

Building up on this, CR has to fulfil the following aspects concerning its institutional structure, specifically to realise the aspects of participation and access which will be presented in detail as own concepts later. It should be an open non-profit institution, serving as an independent platform for discussion, which is owned by and representative of the community in order to reflect the community's needs and demands for development.

**Table 1: Operationalization of Community Radio**

<b>Research dimensions</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Indicating Questions</b>
Reflection on community's needs and demands	Programming, agenda-setting	Who is involved in the decision-making about the program?
	Interaction	Are the voices and demands of the community frequently evaluated and is the program adapted to them?
	Response	Does the station respond to the priorities set by the community?
Independent Platform	Availability	Does the station go into the communities that are harder to reach?
	Open Platform	Does the station allow for live phone-ins and supports open discussions for all groups within the community?
Community Ownership	Funding	Is the station funded by the community, e.g. through advertisements and announcements they place?
	Management	Is the station run through volunteers from the community? Is a representative committee for decision-making existing?
Non-Profit	Financial support	How does the station generate its financial needs
	Foundation	Is the station held through a community trust or foundation
Representativeness	Staff structure	Are all groups of the community represented in the staff (gender, ethnicity, religion)
	Program content	Are the interests of all groups in society (religion, gender, ethnicity) equally reflected in the programming
	Program times	Does the program schedule consider specific day-structures of its community groups

## *Access*

The concept of access will assist to evaluate the technical and practical access of the potential listening community to the radio station.

Access characterises the technical availability or coverage of an area. However, the choice of access people have is not always entirely free. Specifically areas with predominantly rural and poor populations rarely have access to information technology and often areas are not covered by any media. Access to information can be seen as the core facilitator in the process of creating awareness in the Freirean sense. Only access to the broader reality can enable people to reflect their own living conditions and possibilities. Not only mere technical access is of importance for my research: Access can furthermore be restricted through day structures that do not match with the stations program schedule. The distance to the station and other technical facilities like telephones for personal contribution also refers to this aspect of access.

**Table 2: Operationalization of Access**

<b>Research dimensions</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Indicating Questions</b>
Media access	Media Possession	Does person or family own radio / other medium?
	Availability	Does person have access to a radio / to other media?
		Are frequencies permanent / of good quality?
	Timing	Are relevant programs / programs in own language broadcasted at accessible time?
	Station accessibility	Can station be reached personally or by phone?

## *Participation*

The degree of participation can be seen as a core aspect of CR concerning its listening community, which is also an area of concern for this body of research. In my

research it will serve to evaluate the real degree of community involvement in the station's management and performance.

According to Arnst (1996: 110), participation is a “distorted and overused term” that is not easy to define. Clearly, participation is a bottom-up approach which opposes former top-down strategies like discussed in my theoretical background. However, little agreement exists on what constitutes real participation.

In the context of my study it is important to define participation in the frame of the Freirean interpretation of ‘real participation’. Referring to the Freirean perspective it has to be emphasised that participation is not a mere attribute of ‘input’ to make people ‘feel’ somehow involved in basically remaining top-down implementation processes. In the Freirean sense, the possibility to create a collective perception and consequently find collective solutions through common reflection and discourse is the crucial aspect needed to bring about change. This aspect has direct effect on the relevance of the degree of participation: In CR stations it can vary from total ownership to several degrees of audience involvement in programming and management (Gumucio Dagron 2006). In this regard Fardon (2000) emphasized that it is the institutional structure of the station that really matters. Core questions in this context are who controls of the station, whether the station is democratically managed and if there is a mechanism that holds the station accountable to the audience it serves. Gumucio Dagron (2001) further cites participation as an issue of power and an issue of identity.

The issue of power relates on the many participatory approaches that contribute to place decision-making powers in the hands of the people. Consolidating the community’s capability to confront their own ideas about development implies that the station is managed, run, financed and maintained by the community and as such ‘owned by the community’. These issues are elaborated and covered by the concept of CR as they serve to evaluate the ‘good or bad performance’ of the station's institutional structure.

The issue of identity applies to the ability of reinforcing cultural pride and self-esteem among the community members through participation and own agenda-setting. For the identification of participation and with the intention to evaluate the community’s participation in the Freirean sense this issue plays a crucial role. It will serve to evaluate in how far the community feels for a sense of ownership of the station and that their

needs and demands for development are actively addressed. Participation in this stage of evaluation will rather focus on the considerations, feelings and impressions of the community about the station and its sense of belonging to the station as well as its consideration of relevance of the station.

**Table 3: Operationalization of Participation**

Research dimensions	Variables	Indicating Questions
Ownership	Sense of belonging	Does the community consider the station as being theirs, as being part of the community?
	Sense of integrity	Does the community feel as part of the station, feel that they can access the station et cetera?
Relevance	Reflection of needs	Does the community feel they can place their interests and needs
		Does the community feel their interests and needs are reflected in the programming
	Achievements/ Changes	Does the community feel that specifically the existence and programming of the station contribute to changes and achievements within the community's development
Platform	discussion	Does the community use the station as a platform for discussion?
	Solution finding	Does the community consider the station as beneficial for solution finding?

### ***Development***

For the context of my research, the participative communication approach for development, underscored by Servaes shows the central aspect referring to the 'definition' of development. Building on Freire's idea that communication through dialogue and as such learning from the other plays a central role in a development process, Servaes underlines that it is evident to understand what development means for

the people themselves (Nain 2001). Thus, defining development in advance seemed rather problematic in the context of my research. The basic definition had to derive from the community itself.

The crucial basis for development in the context of my research was, in the Freirean sense, the creation of open dialogue among the community to conscientize problems and situations, reflect on them and generate necessary action out of this. Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2001) emphasize that every individual within a community will have individual perceptions but development cannot take place on the basis of these. However, what is needed for development is a collective perception on the local reality and of the options for improving it. This collective perception can only be achieved through internal discussion within the community about its situation, the causes, and possible actions for improvement. For this purpose community radio provides the perfect platform.

So far, it can be stated that the concept of development in my research was based on the creation of internal dialogue and collective perception. This implies that the community's perceptions of its need in development had to be defined by themselves. However, as the research included both sides, the station and the community, development also had to be defined from the stations perspective. The preamble of Radio Progress includes several guidelines I used as 'normative parameters' to define what the station considers as development aspects for the community. The outcome of defining development will be elaborated in my empirical results.

### ***Community***

Community has been defined as those people living in the coverage area of the station. It did not only include the active listening community but rather all members in reach of the airwaves and thus all people that theoretically could listen to the station. It has been considered that community cannot be seen as one homogenous entity living together in permanent harmony but rather consists of a variety of interest groups 'divided' by aspects like religion, ethnicity, gender and age. Consequently 'the community' has been defined through all communities in the reach of the stations

broadcasting in all its diversity and possible controversies. This diversity of potential listeners considered religion, ethnicity, gender, age and level of education. Thus, 'the community' includes all people that theoretically should feel as part of the station and normatively should feel a sense of ownership.

## 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Scheme including influencing and affecting instances in the interrelation of community radio and community development

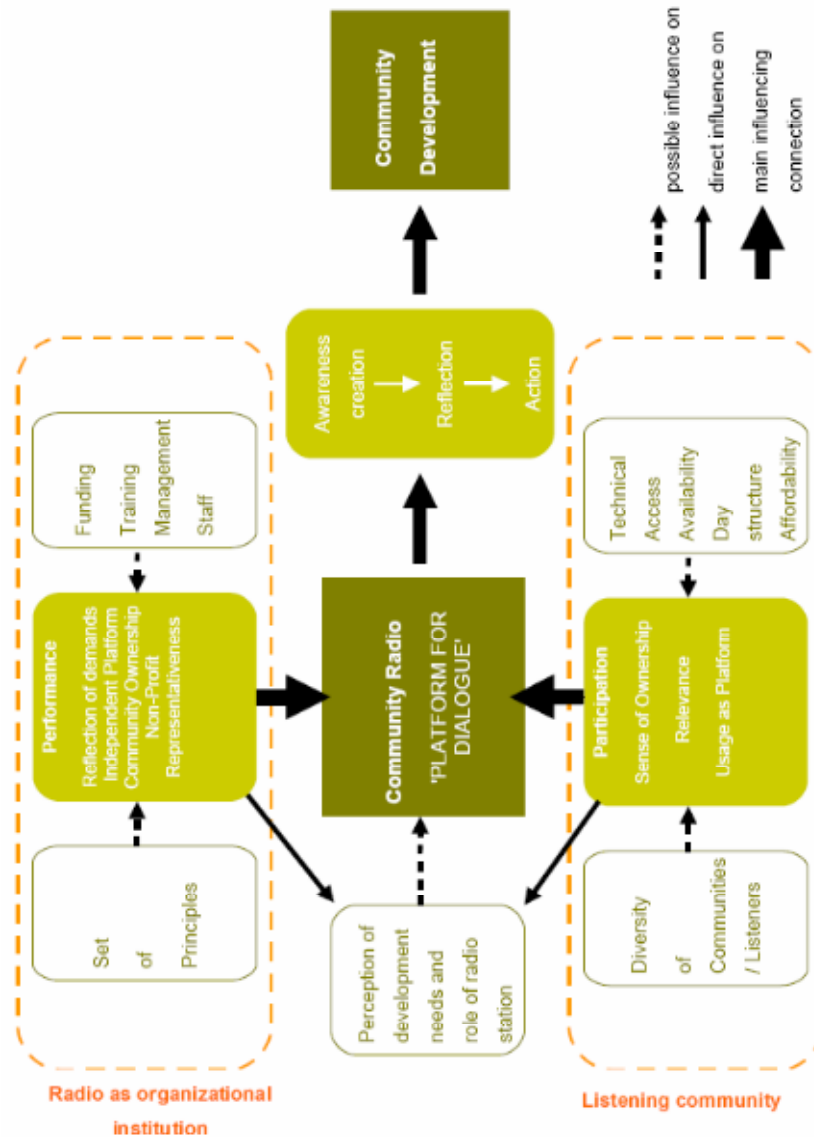


Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework that seeks to visualize the relations and influencing factors leading to a normative benefit for development through CR. The

framework is based on the theoretical background and referring to my specific case study of Radio Progress and the UWR of Ghana. It assisted in developing my research questions and my data gathering in the field.

By applying the theoretical idea of CR, the station is supposed to be run and owned by the listening community itself. Nevertheless, I reflect on the organizational character of the station and on the listening community as two interacting entities, visualized through the orange, dashed boxes. This is due to the fact that the degree of factual ownership had to be evaluated and it would have been speculative to assume station and community as being one entity in the normative optimal sense.

The big black arrows from each side of involved actor to the 'station's box' in the centre of the scheme visualize the twofold influence on possible benefit of CR itself: the performance of the station as institution and the degree of participation of the listening community. The station and its listening community thus formed my main units of analysis.

The interrelations between those two units sought to shed light on the normative idea of benefit deriving from the theory of CRD and the work of Paulo Freire I described in the second chapter. This main normative connectivity is illustrated through the big black horizontal arrow in the centre, connecting 'Community Radio'- with 'Community-Development'. The process that can arise depending on the degree of interrelation between my two units of analysis: creating awareness, reflection and consequent action is visualized in the middle of the process.

Several factors on both sides can influence this interaction as indicated through the dashed arrows of each unit. The stations set of principles is supposed to have main influence on the station's performance. Furthermore, financial matters can be a main external hindrance for the station's projected performance. Financial lacks might have negative influence on the quality and coverage of broadcasting as well as the staff structure. From the listener's perspective technical hindrances, day structures as well as the extreme diversity of listeners might have negative influence on a normative efficient way of participation. These aspects entail the potential to affect the stations efficiency of functioning as a platform for dialogue and as the mouthpiece for the people.

A similar dashed arrow visualizes the influence of potential differences in perceptions on development needs and the potential role of the station on a possible development benefit. Those perceptions on development needs and stations relevance can influence a fruitful interaction leading to development. Only a positive performance on each side and an according interaction between them can foster the dialogue Freire emphasizes as crucial for generating action that can lead to development.

Having identified each concept and clarified their relevance for my empirical approach, the next chapter will introduce my research questions and methods.

### **3 Methodology**

Building on the theoretical approach of CRD and finding out to what extent CRSs can contribute to its community's development; this research was an exploratory analysis. I chose the CRS Radio Progress in the Ghanaian Upper West Region and its listening community as a case study.

#### **3.1 Research Questions**

The formulation of m main research question has been derived from my theoretical framework and also refers to my chosen case study:

**To what extent does the Community Radio Station 'Radio Progress' in Upper West Ghana contribute to the development of its community?**

The goal of my research was to study the benefit CRSs can bring to the development of their communities. 'Development of their communities' refers to the needs and demands the people of the region define for themselves. I was dealing with the normative approach of CR serving as a platform for their listeners and functioning as a mouthpiece for their needs and desires. It has been imperative to find out if this normative performance leads to development-supporting dynamics within the communities.

In order to analyse the benefit for development in this context two entities had to be explored: the CR itself and its listening community. The two sub-questions reflect on each side of involved entities. Question one considers the stations side and question two considers the listening community. From these sub-questions a number of further questions arose that serve as guiding dimensions to evaluate the radio station and the respective listening community.

## *Sub Questions*

### **1) How does Radio Progress try to achieve development of its community?**

- Does the station address the relevant needs and meanings of development of its audience?
- Does the station provide a platform to discuss the community's perception of problems and realise self-expression of its community in order to foster solution finding for development?
- Does Radio Progress actually apply the normative principles of community radio regarding community ownership and non-profitability?
- Does the station try to realize representativeness of the community?

### **2) Does Radio Progress meet its development objectives according to its audience / the community?**

- Can the community access the station in any way and do they make use of it?
- Does the community feel a sense of ownership and make use of it?
- Does the community assess the programs as beneficial and development-effective?
- Does the community make active use of the station as a platform for discussion to analyze specific problems and identify possible solutions?

## **3.2 Units of analysis**

The research contained two units of analysis as already mentioned in the conceptual scheme above. The first unit has been the CRS Radio Progress. The unit of analysis will be the station staff as well as the head of station Doris Derry<sup>18</sup> who is also a member of the Ghanaian Community Radio Network. The second unit of analysis consisted of the village inhabitants in the coverage area of Radio Progress. The analysis contained all groups in society, considering aspects of ethnicity, religion, language, gender and age.

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<sup>18</sup> Doris Derry has been the official head of station during the time of my research. However, she has not absent during my whole time in the field. Recently she resigned from her position.

Besides evaluating my research question at an individual level of listeners and practitioners my second focus additionally tried to appraise the dynamics Radio Progress awakes at the level of the whole community. In the sense of the Freirean model of participation which emphasises the importance of community-based decision-making processes I tried to find whether Radio Progress ‘awakes’ such dynamic processes.

### **3.3 Data Gathering**

Derived from the connection between theory and research demonstrated above I will explicate the methods and techniques I applied to gather my data.

The selected methods supply a combination of primary qualitative data collected on two sides: the station and the listeners. The chosen methods allowed for evaluation in a qualitative and quantitative manner. I applied key informant interviews, semi-structured interviews with a sample of listeners and station staff, an observation of the radio station, collection of the program schedule as well as an on-air discussion with allowance for listeners to phone-in and contribute to the debate<sup>19</sup>. Furthermore, a gathering of listeners' experiences with the station announced on air was intended but due to a lack of responses, no data was generated on this. After a final check-up of the collected data I handed over a list of follow-up questions to the station coordinator as she was still not personally available. I received the answered questions through e-mail two months after I had left my research location. At that time she informed me that she has resigned from Radio Progress but that there is no new person in charge yet.

#### **3.3.1 Listeners Interviews**

##### ***3.3.1.1 The sampling***

For collecting my data on the listener's side of view, a sample of villages in several districts of the UWR was taken. The district sampling was considering the religious distribution within the region using the information given by the last population

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<sup>19</sup> all interview guidelines can be found in the appendix

census from 2000. The districts with Christian, Islamic and Traditional religious domination were chosen. This resulted in the selection of the Nawdowli district with a Christian dominated population of 58,5 percent, the Wa West district with an Islamic dominated population of 44,4 percent as well as the Jirapa district with a Traditional dominated population of 44,8 percent. In all those districts the local languages of Dagare and Wale, which only differ in dialectic, dominate the area. Considering this, Wa East was selected as an additional district with the third language the station broadcasts in called Sisala. As Sisala can be seen as a minority language in the region it was important to include the grade of satisfaction specifically from the listeners speaking this language as it is not present in the programming to the same extent as the other languages. Additionally, interviews were conducted in Wa itself, the regions capital and location of the station. Within the districts, the district capitals as well as two more randomly selected villages each were visited for conducting the interviews:

**Table 4: Village sample**

<b>Districts</b>	<b>Visited villages</b>
Jirapa	Jirapa Town, Tizza, Baazu
Wa West	Wechiau, Lassie, Vierre
Nawdowli	Nawdowli, Kaleo, Kalegra
Wa East	Yoyuome (Sisale spoken district)
Wa municipal	Wa, Bamaho (stations location)

To reach a balanced gender and age contribution within the villages a sample of six respondents each was drawn. The purpose was to interview three women and three men in each village, one young-, one mid-age- and one older person per gender. Due to weather conditions and availability this sample was not realized in every-, though in most cases. Furthermore, it was a common issue that a group of people was met on the spot so that some interviews rather resulted in focus group discussions as everyone was ambitious to contribute to the questions. In these situations, I did not want to restrict responses as those interviews often resulted in very fruitful debates.

I explored the villages together with my interpreter and did a sample concerning age and gender of my respondents by freely approaching male and female inhabitants we met in

the streets and who closely matched my sampling plans. However, as I fell ill for a long period of time, more than half of the interviews had to be conducted by another person. My local supervisor supported me in finding a research assistant, a graduate student from the regional University of Development Studies who already had own research experiences in the area. My research assistant used another strategy of approaching the respondents. This was also due to the fact that by the time he took over the rainy season had started. With the starting of the rains the village inhabitants, mostly farmers would leave their houses very early in the morning to work on their farms. It was very difficult to meet anyone in the villages during the day. Consequently, my assistant informed the village chief on arrival who would, if necessary send out someone to call people from the farms who would serve as respondents. This way of sampling was partly very time-demanding since it was polite to spend some time with the 'village chief' and conduct a guided tour through the village before the interviews could take place. Furthermore, my assistant often had to wait long times until people came from the farms for the interview. At first I had doubts about the selection by the village chiefs but as the results showed we were not exclusively confronted with better educated people or people with specific functions within the communities.

The unfortunate situation that forced me to hand over parts of my work turned out to entail an advantage for the research results. Specifically the part of the interviews that was dealing with development issues itself often seemed to encourage my respondents to inform me about their personal materialistic needs. As my assistant was Ghanaian and local to the region, people seemed not to have strong needs to tell him about purely personal, materialistic wishes and demands and instead showed their will to reflect on the broader picture of development. This matched my intention of this part of the interviews.

### ***3.3.1.2 Data analysis***

To evaluate the community's view on the station as a tool for participatory development and what meaning they give to the station according to its possible function for 'their development' and its relevance to serve as a 'platform for reflection' the listener's interviews have been structured in a specific way. This construction allowed

for a résumé about whether the normative benefit of CR really matches with the perceptions of the community and generates a potential benefit. Besides the more structured questions, the interview guideline allowed for open answers and self expression of the community members to gain insight into their broader perceptions, feelings and attitudes about the station, their livelihoods and the aspect of development. Concerning the significant characteristics of CRD, the interview guideline was separated into four parts:

In the first part, I gathered basic information about the respondents concerning religion, gender, age, ethnicity, grade of education, occupation and primary language. This provided me with information about the diversity of people listening to the station and the potential difference of satisfaction referring to people's religion, gender or age. The interviews have been separated into questions concerning the following dimensions. Access: To evaluate the access to the station through the property or access to a radio set and also through time availability and general reception. Furthermore the utilization of the station and its programs has been evaluated through this dimension.

Ownership: To evaluate to what extent the community has the feeling of belonging to the station in reality and to what extent they really use the station as such by contacting them and participating in an active way.

Platform: To evaluate the degree in which RP functions as an open platform for its community's concerns. This part of the interview sought to reflect on the aspect of open dialogue that should be created through the degree of openness and integration of the community into the CRS and as such applied to the Freirean idea of dialogue to enable people to critically reflect on their situations and through this taking action to improve on their lives.

Those aspects took up the core notions of participatory communication and as such of alternative communication in the Freirean sense, namely access and participation. They approached the overall purpose of CR which lies in the idea of participation and

ownership by the community itself for exchanging opinions and involving all community members instead of purely serving as transfer instrument for information.

Relevance: To evaluate the listeners' perspective of the station's contribution for their own lives, their development and the development of the whole region. The station's effort towards contributing to the community's development can only be of sustainable efficiency if the listeners perceive the stations existence as relevant and as such make use of the possibilities it offers for the improvement of their lives. As such this aspect was of core relevance to the research.

Additionally the community members were asked for their estimation about the community's and the region's most urgent development needs. This question intended to contribute to define the concept of development which was supposed to be characterized by the listening community itself.

### **3.3.2 Interviews station staff**

#### ***3.3.2.1 The sampling***

Approaching the station appeared to be more complicated than expected. The coordinator of the station was not available and it was not clear when she would come back throughout the whole period of my research. The person in charge during her absence did not read the research proposal and although he was willing to answer questions he was not taking an initiative to cooperate. I asked for permission to introduce myself and my research purpose to the station staff to get in contact with them and give them a feeling of involvement. Quite problematically, besides the station's accountant and the secretary, all staff members only came for their shows and would leave immediately afterwards. Due to this infrequent availability it was only possible to present the project to a few staff members. Besides this challenge it was never guaranteed that they would show up. Due to the fact that the majority works on a voluntary basis no high grade of responsibility was given. When a staff member could find any way of earning some

income or would have any other issue to deal with the person just did not appear for the program. For the programming this meant that mostly the radio remained silent for that time. By conducting interviews with the station staff it was only possible to get in contact with the people accidentally available. In total I conducted semi-structured interviews with seven staff member: the deputy of the coordinator, the secretary, four presenters and one fieldworker<sup>20</sup>.

### ***3.3.2.2 Data analysis***

To evaluate if the radio station is on track with its own set of principles and the general ideology of CRD as well as the accordance of the stations objectives for development, semi-structured interviews with the station staff provided the main source of information. This applied method aimed at providing information about the diversity and as such representativeness of its listening community. Mainly it aimed at creating a picture of the stations awareness of their responsibility and the meaning the station applies to their performance and the character of CR. I started this part of my research by conducting an intense interview with the deputy of the station coordinator. This interview gathered basic information about the organizational structure of the station, their funding situation as well as their employee and broadcasting policies. The interviews with the staff were mainly concerned with the station's staff's awareness of the concept of development and the involvement with the community. The semi-structure of the interviews gave the opportunity for the staff to provide examples and experiences about how the concept works and where they see lacks and possibilities for improvement. The data gathered through these methods allowed for direct comparison of both' sides perceptions and as such to uncover and compare the meaning RP entails for each.

### **3.3.3 On-air discussion**

The on-air discussion was aiming at the main purpose of defining the concept of development by the community. The station has been asked for cooperation through

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<sup>20</sup> This woman was belonging to the field staff and working for a program in coordination with Oxfam Novib. She was also paid by Oxfam Novib.

providing some free airtime for a studio discussion on the issue by inviting local experts. In addition listeners were encouraged to phone-in and contribute with their own opinions. To assure the general possibility of contribution the studio discussion was held in English but translated into Dagare/Wale. The plan was to also translate the show into Sisala and the station ensured to do that. Unfortunately only on the day of the show it appeared that the presenter does not speak the language like expected.

For the program three studio guests were invited: an officer from the Regional Ministry of Community Development, the director of the Regional Information Service Department and a female graduate student of the University for Development Studies, Wa campus. The guests discussed the concept of development and the meaning of development for the UWR. Furthermore, in a second step, the role Radio Progress as a CRS can take in this process was debated. After discussing these issues the phone lines were opened for the listener's contributions. The presenter allowed for the phone-ins of three listeners, all of whom were male. The intention of choosing the radio itself for this information gathering was due to the fact that it was the most efficient way to reach a large number of community members and provide the broadest opportunity to contribute. I have been aware of a possible bias through the fact that not all listeners have access to a phone to contribute. It was nevertheless the best way of reaching the most people and furthermore nowadays many listeners also in the rural villages are in possession of mobile phones. Through comparable formats in the stations programming I knew about the intense enthusiasm of listeners to phone-in and contribute to those discussions.

The on-air discussion mainly contributed to define the concept of development for the region through the local people themselves. Additionally, by discussing the topic with the studio guests the debate transformed to another level than pure materialistic thinking, concentrating on the broader concepts and ideas of progress and development. As such it became highly beneficial for my research. Following the debate, the listeners seemed to turn away from the pure materialistic thinking I was often struggling with in the interviews, and turned into a more reflective way of thinking. The discussion aimed at defining the development concept by reflecting on its concrete meaning in general, as

well as for the region in particular. This part of my research helped to evaluate the people's awareness and conscientization of their lives and possibilities to act and change. Referring to this dynamics on-air information can create, one of my studio guests accurately stated that:

*Information is a very important aspect of development. People call themselves educated because they have information ( Mr Samad, Wa 2007)*

### **3.3.4 Key information interviews**

The first interview I conducted with the deputy of the station coordinator introduced a very positive picture of the station's performance and also of its awareness of the idea and intention of CRD. As nevertheless there were some rumours in town that the performance had not always been unproblematic I decided to enrich my study with some key informant interviews.

My neighbour informed me about a woman living in our neighbourhood. He knew that she had been in a responsible position of the station in the past. I decided to get in contact with her and find out in what way she could give me any further and specifically more objective or critical information. Meeting and interviewing her turned out to be one of the most enriching parts of my research concerning the station's performance and to furthermore broaden the overall knowledge about the region and listeners.

Additionally, due to the fact that the station puts big emphasis on formal and non-formal education programs including conscientization of their listeners I furthermore decided to contact the National Commission of Community Education (NCCE). The core function of the NCCE is to create and sustain awareness of the constitutional provisions within the society. I arranged an appointment with the director of the UWR. Unfortunately, this interview turned out to be of less benefiting value. Previously, Radio Progress has had allocated airtime for the department in which it disseminated information on a variety of issues in the local languages. However, Kofi Aduma, my interview partner and current director since one year does not come from the region and

informed me that he has big struggles with the local languages. By his own information this is the reason why he now rather contacts Radio Upper West (RUW) for using and broadcasting in English. This change eliminated the usage the NCCE could make out of the community radio through reaching the majority of the region that is not able to understand English. Nevertheless he talked about plans to re-implement some programs in the local languages with Radio Progress although he mentioned funding problems as a hindrance in this context. It turned out that RUW allocated 15 minutes free airtime per week for the department. This means that the programs, as long as they are run via RUW instead of RP will only be broadcasted in English. Mr. Aduma mentioned that he is reluctant to ask RP for free airtime as he knows about the general funding situation of a community radio station. He also emphasized that the department is currently struggling with own funding problems and is not in the situation to pay for airtime and thus broadcast in the local languages. Due to this problem, a huge amount of enlightening information stays wrongfully withheld from the majority: the people for whom this sort of information would be extremely helpful and conscientizing.

### **3.3.5 Observation and further information gathering**

In addition to the applied methods described above, I gathered further information in several ways. Through spending time in the station, talking to the staff as well as listeners coming in to make announcements I could receive an impression of the stations workflow and grade of organization. I could witness how the station would deal with listeners walking in for announcing and how they were actually reacting on people from the ministries asking for free airtime because of own funding problems.

Additionally, I received a copy of the stations program schedule and discussed it with the deputy of the stations coordinator to gain a deeper understanding of the variety in programs, the consideration of all ethnic and religious groupings as well as the extent of allowance to direct participation.

Furthermore it was very easy to get in contact with the locals in town as everybody was searching the conversation with 'the white girl'. I received a lot of information and a broad picture of how people face 'their' radio station through this kind

of informal interviewing. People mostly asked what I was doing in Wa. This was an easy way to gain their first reaction about the station as I would mostly respond by asking if they know Radio Progress and then tell them what I am doing and that I am not working for the station but with the listeners. Many people felt encouraged to tell their stories and express their views about the station's performance.

## 4 Research Context

This following chapter will apply the specific characteristics of my research location and the Ghanaian media system in which the Community Radio is embedded..

### 4.1 Broadcasting in Ghana

Ghana transitioned to a constitutional democracy in 1993, after the country had been shattered by military juntas for decades. After general elections in 1992 and the beginning of the fourth Republic the country can be described as politically stable thereby enjoying a peaceful environment.<sup>21</sup> The new constitution also marked a watershed in the country's media system by creating the environment for a pluralistic media landscape (obs media 2006). Chapter twelve of the constitution sets the cornerstones for freedom and independence of the media system:

(...)

*(2) Subject to this Constitution and any other law not inconsistent with this Constitution, there shall be no censorship in Ghana.*

*(3) There shall be no impediments to the establishment of private press or media; and in particular, there shall be no law requiring any person to obtain a licence as a prerequisite to the establishment or operation of a newspaper, journal or other media for mass communication or information.*

*(4) Editors and publishers of newspapers and other institutions of the mass media shall not be subject to control or interference by Government, not shall they be penalized or harassed for their editorial opinions and views, or the content of their publications.*

*(5) All agencies of the mass media shall, at all times, be free to uphold the principles, provisions and objectives of this Constitution, and shall uphold*

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<sup>21</sup> However, there are some exceptions - especially in the northern regions tribal conflicts are frequently taking place

*the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people of Ghana..*

*(6) Any medium for the dissemination of information to the public which publishes a statement about or against any person shall be obliged to publish a rejoinder, if any, from the person in respect of whom the publication was made.*

*163 All state-owned media shall afford fair opportunities and facilities for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions.*

*164 The provisions of articles 162 and 163 of this Constitution are subject to laws that are reasonably required in the interest of national security, public order, public morality and for the purpose of protecting the reputations, rights and freedoms of other persons.*

*165 For the avoidance of doubt, the provisions of this Chapter shall not be taken to limit the enjoyment of any of the fundamental human rights and freedoms guaranteed under Chapter 5 of this Constitution.*

*166 (1) There shall be established by Act of Parliament within six months after Parliament first meets after the coming into force of this Constitution, a National Media Commission (...)*

To ensure the constituted aspects of media freedom, the constitution established a National Media Commission (NMC) as the regulatory apparatus (Republic of Ghana 1992). The NMC is independent from the government and mandated by the Constitution and the NMC Act:

*To promote freedom and independence of the media;*

*To ensure the highest journalistic standards in the mass media;*

*To “insulate” the state-owned media from government control; and,*

*To provide registration of newspapers and other publications, but without exercising control over these operations (Kafewo 2006: 8)*

The positive impact of this constitution was supported through the election of John Kufuor to become President in 2001. He furthermore repealed Ghana's 'Criminal Libel Law', a law that had been a huge obstacle for independent journalistic practise over years and had brought many journalists to jail (Kafewo 2006). The anchored provisions are extremely liberal in comparison to other African countries. These provisions, coupled with the increasing liberalization of economy and deregulation of policies, let to a flourishing communication system over the last decade. This is especially relevant for the broadcasting sector which Karikari (2001: 5) characterises as "(...) the most egalitarian of all mass media in Ghana today (...)". The repeal of the 'Criminal Libel Law' brought about an explosion in the media landscape, especially in the radio sector (Kafewo 2006). Although Ghana has a very long history of radio broadcasting that was introduced by colonial authorities in 1935, and rapidly extended throughout the country after independence in 1957, its history is one of state monopoly. Paul Ansah (1993) described this phenomenon in stating that

*Right from its inception, radio was perceived as an instrument in the hands of the government for achieving whatever objectives the government chose to define. This led to the notion that government monopoly control over radio in the public interest could be taken for granted (...) it was felt that central control was necessary if radio was to fulfil its unifying and integrative role (Ansah 1993, in obs media 2006).*

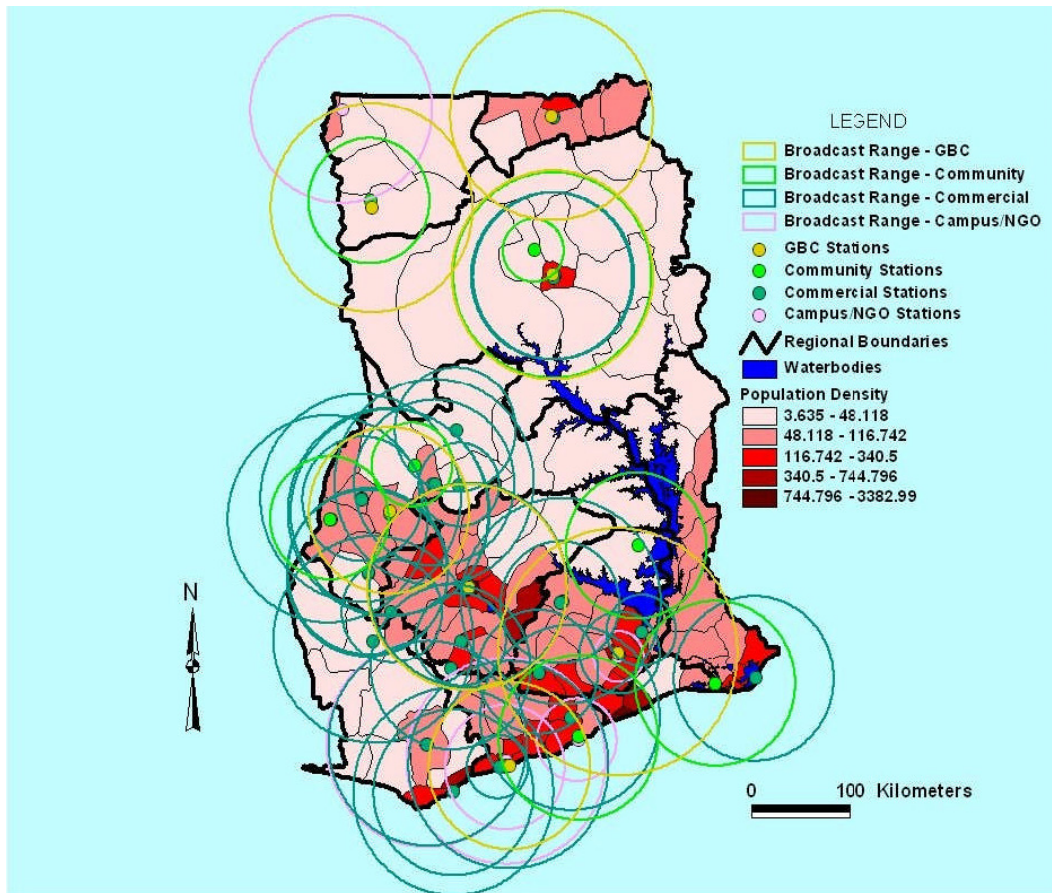
By adopting the new constitution combined with active public campaigning for deregulation by the civil society, the liberalization of the airwaves became inevitable. Forced by public pressure, the government set up a Preparatory Committee on Independent Broadcasting in 1995. This committee developed the first outline of a framework for radio liberalization in Ghana. One year later, the proliferation of the National Communications Authority legislation finally broke the dominating state monopoly and fostered broadcast pluralism in the country (obs media 2006).

However, some critiques and limitations must be pointed out. Although the Ghanaian Constitution of 1992 states that “all people should have the right to (...) information, subject to such qualifications and laws as are necessary in a democratic society” (Republic of Ghana 1992), the Right to Information Bill of 2003 was still pending before parliament in 2006. Furthermore, the former mentioned NMC, which is constitutionally organized independent from the government, fails to adequately carry out this distinction. According to the results of a large pan-African research study carried out by the BBC World Service Trust in 2005/2006 on seventeen African countries, Ghana's licensing procedures remain highly controversial. The country lacks of transparency in decision-making practises for licenses (Kafewo 2006).

According to the Ghana Country Report (2006), radio is particularly of crucial importance in the lives of Ghanaians as the society's majority relies more on electronic media. Deregulation legislation has fostered this phenomenon. Consequently, the recent radio landscape generally entails all forms of radio that creates a plural media system (public, private, community). However, the quality of plurality remains limited. Besides the mentioned critiques, eighty percent of the private stations operate as commercial stations. Furthermore, currently “there are no legislative provisions that specifically support community or alternative media, even though there are several community-based FM radio stations and even a Community Radio Network” (Kafewo 2006: 9). Also Abbey-Mensah (2006) points out that rural broadcasting is one of the most important aspects of broadcasting in Ghana and that radio remains the most popular medium, as it is comparatively cheap and can operate easily on ordinary dry cell batteries, without electricity. Furthermore, Ghana has a strong influence of oral tradition and therefore the spoken word has much power (Kwansah-Aidoo 2001). In Africa, there are estimated to be about 200 radio receivers per 1000 people, whereas there are no more than 10 television receivers for the same number, and even those are concentrated in the towns. Abbey-Mensah (2006) draws the same picture for Ghana, where there are about 219 radio receivers to 1000 people versus 13 TV receivers for the same population. So far, radio is the most useful and efficient medium available to the Ghanaian rural population.

As Whaites (2005) evaluated in her research on rural radio stations in Ghana, a significant part of the country receives rural radio signals. However, the most rural parts are the least served. Officially there are 139 licensed radio stations broadcasting in Ghana of which 96 have been on air in 2006. Most of these stations have come onto air during the last ten years; due to the extensive liberalisation process. There are currently six stations on air that are authorized to serve as CRS in Ghana. These stations have lower transmission capacity than the private and commercial stations and are limited in the types of advertisement and sponsorship. Most of the stations are run by a community board whereas some are affiliates of NGOs. Besides these stations, Ghana's broadcasting landscape is also reached by the foreign services of Radio France International, Deutsche Welle, BBC and World Service and Voice of America (VOA) (Kafewo 2006).

Figure 2: Whaites 2005. All Ghanaian Rural FM Stations Location and Broadcast Range



## 4.2 Research Location

Like the map shows the Upper West Region (UWR) receives only few intra-country signals. This indicates a crucial reduction in the possibility for access to a plurality of information. Radio Progress is one of the six authorized CRS, operating as the only real CR in one of the least served transmission-areas of the country.

My research area, the 'home' of Radio Progress, is found in the Ghanaian Upper West Region. The region borders Burkina Faso in the North and Northwest and is divided into eight districts.<sup>22</sup> Ghana is characterized by the 2004 Human Development Report as medium human development country, ranked 46 out of 95 developing countries (obs media 2006). However, the Upper East and Upper West, northernmost regions of the

<sup>22</sup> These districts include Wa municipal, Wa East, Wa West, Nawdowli, Sissala East, Sissala West, Jirapa, Lawra

country have been described by the World Bank as the poorest part of the country (Alhassan 2005). The region is one of the two least urbanized in the country (Ghana Census 2003). Drought and the lack of access to water are major problems Upper West communities are facing. Furthermore, due to a shortage of electricity supply the state cuts of the electricity every second night and day. The majority of the region's population is working in the farming sector. Consequently, the research area is marked by poverty and an extreme diverse society:

0.58 Million out of a population of 21.6 million people are living in the UWR. and 82, 5% of the region's population is characterised as rural (World Bank 2005). The UWR covers a geographical area of 18,478 square kilometres. This constitutes about 12.7 per cent of the total land area of Ghana. The population of the region is not evenly distributed among the five districts. The majority of the region's population is centred in the Wa district. With a population of 224,066 the Wa district constitutes 38.9 per cent of the region's population while remaining districts constitute about 15.0 per cent each (Ghana Census 2003).

Due to the general multi-ethnic and multi-lingual character of Ghana, the Upper West Region's population entails several ethnic groups of which the Mole Dagbon (75.7%) and Grusi (18.4%) form the predominant ones.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore the region comprises three religious groupings: Christianity (35.5%), Islam (32.2%) and Traditionalism (29.3%). Wa municipal district, where the station is located, is strongly dominated by the Islamic Church with 44,4% (Ghana Census 2003). The major languages of the region are Dagaare, Sissali and Wale (<http://www.modernghana.com> 2006).

This data clearly shows the extent to which Radio Progress must deal with a broad diversity of religious and ethnic groupings.

### **4.3 Radio Progress**

Radio Progress is a community F.M. Radio station which is based in Wa, the capital of the Ghanaian UWR. The history of Radio Progress dates back to the

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<sup>23</sup> The Wala (16.3%) of the Mole Dagbon and the Sissala (16%) of the Grusi are the major sub-groupings in the region.

liberalization of radio frequencies by the government in 1993. Due to the sincere media deficit in the UWR, an NGO known as Mass Media for Development, gained intense support from the Wa Diocese of the Catholic Church, enabling the NGO to applied for the station's license and frequency. Mass Media for Development ultimately granted its licence in 1996. The station went on air on February 17, 1997 as the first radio station in the whole UWR. The Wa Catholic Diocese allocated a studio building which contained one studio and one radio control room. It began broadcasting as a rural station administered by Catholic Church interests. During the following years it developed into a secular community station.

**Photo 1: gateway to Radio Progress**



For logistical reasons like supply of electricity, the station is based in the region's capital. Its intended principal area of coverage is the whole region. Radio Progress started extremely small, with a five watt transmitter sponsored by the Dutch Catholic Organization, BILANCE, and reached no more than a ten kilometre's radius. Today Radio Progress runs on a two kilowatt transmitter, reaching a radius of more than eighty kilometres. However, Radio Progress transmissions do not reach the northern parts of the region. Additionally, in the eastern Sissala district, the coverage is very weak to non-existent.

Radio Progress was established in order to provide vital information to promote integral development of the people. The station's preamble postulates to meet the spiritual

and moral needs of its audience and to disseminate information that promotes its audiences' cultural values.

The hallmark of Radio Progress constitutes a prerogative to inform, educate and entertain its audience. The station's preamble codifies the belief that Radio Progress must be staffed by the community. Natural talent, aptitude, mastery or local languages, knowledge of the community and the willingness to work for its development are used as prerequisite criteria for selecting volunteers and part-time workers. The station furthermore concerns itself with several guidelines namely: being open to all and especially the poor, being there for the marginalized, giving voice to the voiceless, empowering people with talents, encouraging rural communities to participate, and promoting their local culture. With these guidelines Radio Progress normatively contributes to some core aspects of development radio broadcasting through community radio.

The context shows that Radio Progress is facing several challenges. While the legal situation liberalised drastically, little direct support is given to the development of CRS. In addition to these limitations, the station is operating in an area of high poverty as well as huge variety of daily struggles faced by the community. Moreover, Radio Progress has to serve an audience of broad diversity.

This given context of the region and the stations will contribute to the following analysis of my research results.

## **5 Radio Progress and its community: a beneficial interaction?**

*(...) before the radio station came in, in fact we were living in darkness!*  
*(Mr En Dassah, Department of Community Development, 2007)*

The following chapter will present and analyse the data gathered in the distribution area of Radio Progress in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The core data analysis is divided into two main parts: first, analysing the station's performance referring to the theoretical normative expectations towards CR and, second, analysing the listener's side concerning their impressions and reflections on the main dimensions of CR. Preceding, I will draw a comparison of both sides development perception. This examination of both sides' development perception will lead to a final conclusion on the overall ability of Radio Progress, as a CRS, to contribute to its listeners' development.

The structure of my analysis derives from the defined concepts on the listeners and station found in chapter three. As I arranged my interviews according to the dimensions ascribed to each concept and the applied indicating questions deriving from each dimension, I will structure the analysis in the same way. Each sub-chapter as such focuses on one dimension and the results reflect on the indicating questions ascribed to each dimension. Therefore, by analysing the results of each particular evaluated dimension, the research will aim at a sound analysis of my sub-research questions. In an intermediate conclusion on each side's performance and perceptions I will answer my sub-research questions. The deriving results will pave the way to answer my overarching research question in the following chapter which contains the final conclusion.

### **5.1 Defining development**

Building upon the specific necessity to picture the listeners' own definition of development, I will introduce the notion of development stemming from my research.

After analysing the listener's as well as the station's perception and meaning of development I will conclude in a definition of development for the listeners and additionally come to a conclusion about a potential sound cohesion of both' sides perceptions.

### **5.1.1 The community's perception of development**

Building upon the specific necessity to picture the listeners' own definition of development, I will introduce the notion of development stemming from my research. Deriving from the referring responses, people mainly referred to development in a rather materialistic way. Fifty-four percent of my respondents referred to physical development needs as their first answer and forty-nine percent additionally emphasised those aspects as their second priority. However, analysing the listeners' first and second responses, additional high emphasis was given to the aspect of education, conscientization and empowerment.

In a materialistic manner the majority of respondents emphasised the crucial need for water access as well as electricity and an improved transportation system, including the road network. Physical needs can be seen as fundamental living-requirements and thus as essential targets for further development. Respondents intensively commented on these aspects in a way that uncovered their further development intentions. Specifically the road network is a major target for the UWR. The majority of respondents commented on this issue as it is the basis for further development steps. Respondents reported that the undeveloped road system affects the remaining absence of help coming in. Furthermore, it hinders people in travelling and trading within the region. During the rainy season, it cuts off whole areas from access to the region's capital and to any schools.

Aspects that seem completely self-evident for more civilized societies are causing daily time-efficient and health-adverse struggles for the majority of UW inhabitants. Women have to walk several kilometres per day to fetch bucket-water as many communities only have access to one borehole. The lack of dams in many villages cause high migrations streams to the south during the dry seasons. Without water supply people cannot farm during this period of the year.

The intensive demand for water and sanitation provision can be seen as result of awareness creation among the people. Through the station's programs of informal education realised the negative influences of using dirty water and living without proper sanitation facilities. The irregular supply of electricity causes interruption in the working-processes of many people and consequently a reduction in frequent income-generation.

However, people also referred to further attributes in fostering development. Several respondents mentioned the crucial relevance of unity as precondition for development. Sandra from Jirapa commented:

*Peace, unity and understanding will solve problems of the region. When there is peace there is unity and there cannot be development without that.*

Summarizing the development perception the Upper West people can be characterised in a materialistic manner that is regarded in the broader frame of consequently trickling-down development effects.

Deriving from the former interviews, information is a crucial transistor between the awareness of development needs and their achievements. During on-air discussion on defining development for the UWR, Mr Samad underlined this aspect by stating that

*Information is a very important aspect of development. People call themselves educated because they have information. So if people want to develop, information is very important (...)*

Since the analysis showed that Radio Progress 'speaks the language of the people', its relevance in fostering development is additionally based on the station's understanding of development.

### **5.1.2 Radio Progress and the notion of development**

Deriving from an introductory interview with Ivan, Radio Progress faces a clear picture towards its definition of development. He emphasised that the aspect of their

development agreement is to 'conscientize the minds of the less privileged' community members in order to offer them options for change. He stresses that this development notion is not meant to be seen as a direct frame of economic output. Radio Progress is aiming at the creation of awareness for more efficient method of income generation and the prevention of negative influences caused through inadequate sanitation and health practises. Furthermore, the station sees its role in the creation of knowledge and awareness regarding the local governance system. Conscientizing people to reflect on their situation and take action towards fostering their livelihoods by empowering themselves from their deprived situations can be seen as the main characteristics of the station's development agenda. Consequently, Radio Progress sees its function in a rather transformative way through educating and conscientizing their listeners instead of fostering direct material input. Anchored in its preamble, the broad objective of the station is the promotion of information for integrated development. Correspondingly, its educative and informative programming aims at the creation of awareness and mobilising action as basic steps towards further development processes. The station mirrors its mission in using radio for 'promoting, mobilizing and empowering the communities for development'.

From the interviews conducted with the station staff, the analysis of this function can be realised. Several presenters reported the station's ability to foster development through educating their listeners and consequently creating awareness of what they are capable to do. Dong, the youngest staff member underlined the ability to conscientize their listeners on their rights and possibilities to take initiatives for change instead of merely waiting for external help.

Requesting development needs of the region accentuated the station's awareness of physical demands. However, the station's perception of development is highly accentuated by their development function as a CRS and as therefore be placed in a rather supportive frame for the listener's development needs.

## **5.2 The performance of Radio Progress**

Radio Progress gained enormous popularity in the Upper West Region. Everyone knows the station, independent of the living distance to Wa. People are highly concerned about the station's performance. They address high relevance to their learning-profit from the station as well as their potential benefit from it as a medium for mutual communication and self-expression. Due to these facts, the station bears high responsibility to fulfil its listeners' expectations as well as their own normative progressive performance as a CRS. According to the station management, Radio Progress is concerned with its listeners and is aware of their expectations and demands:

*You know the focus of our people is the basis of our programming. That's what we mean by owned by the people [sic] for the people and by the people. It's not that they hear our programs and wonder what it is about. No, we know our people, we know what they are, we know what they believe in, we know what they like. So when we are making programs it is like we take their minds to produce. Yes we take their minds to do it. (Ivan, Wa 2007)*

The following analysis will shed light on the quality of their work. I applied the dimensions I ascribed to a successful performance in my methodology chapter. Applying these characteristics I analysed the station's performance according to the indicating questions I ascribed to each dimension.

### **5.2.1 Reflection of listeners' demands**

The agenda-setting of the station's programming as well as their interaction and response towards their listeners' interests must be applied in order to analyse the station's way of reflecting its listener's demands. A detailed conclusion compared with the listeners' program demands will take place in the final conclusion.

**Table 5: Genres extracted from weekly program schedule of Radio Progress**

Program genre	Broadcasting time per week
Religious programs (preaching etc. from different churches)	11,75h
Music	18,25h
News (local, national, international)	18,75h
Education (formal and non-formal)	7,75h
Phone-in and discussion programs	20,75h + 3,75h Newspaper Review incl. discussion
Announcements / greetings	20,5h
Youth programs	4,75h
Women programs	2,5
Other (opening, closing, etc.)	17,25
Total weekly airtime	126

The program schedule affirms that Radio Progress attaches great importance on program formats that allow for direct participation of their listeners.<sup>24</sup> The station broadcasts seven days per week up to 126 hours. It is supposed to be on air from five A.M. till eleven P.M. daily. More than 45 hours of the weekly schedule consist of phone-in and discussion programs, respectively time for community announcements and requests. A major part of phone-in programs entails a mutual learning intention by discussing specific social and individual problems on air in order to find solutions. Further high emphasize is placed on church programs with 11,75 hours of weekly broadcasting. Those programs embrace contributions from various confessions.

Radio Progress endeavours to evaluate its listeners' demands. Before the radio went on air Radio Progress conducted a survey in all districts to evaluate the community's interests and their expectations towards the station's programming. According to the coordinator, the original program setting has been based on the according outcomes. Radio Progress furthermore sends staff into the communities to collect their opinions and demands prior to implementations of new program formats. They introduce their plans and collect the listeners' responses through focus group discussions in order to adequately adopt the formats. Additionally, further evaluations are occasionally accomplished on-air. During those evaluations listeners are encouraged to express their views, advices and

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<sup>24</sup> Direct participation in this context refers to the listener's active and live involvement in the program design. This can be through live phone-ins in order to contribute to on-air debates or to voice out problems, critiques or requests for music. Also announcements count into the aspect of direct participation as people hand in their announcements and they are read out by the presenters.

critiques about particular programs live on air. The station's coordinator emphasised that they do not force any program on the listeners. However, in how far these evaluations are incorporated in adequate program adoptions is difficult to say. Furthermore, additional activities are conducted within several villages. Radio Progress is running a non-formal 'Girl Child Education' program funded and monitored by Oxfam. Together with members of this NGO the field staff of Radio Progress is frequently consulting villages in order to record programs that create awareness about the crucial necessity of formal education among parents and their female children. According to Hasanaf, who is one of the fieldworkers, this program achieved sustainable success towards improving class-enrolment of girls.

As mentioned before, the station approaches some villages in the process of developing new programs. However, like the station coordination itself admits, they only visit those villages in their closest of proximity. Preliminary villages around Wa are approached and of those are mainly ones found along the main road. Visiting more distant and marginalised villages, people complained that the station has never made an effort to collect their interests and demands. According to the station, the main problem in addressing more villages, specifically those that are harder to reach is due to transportation. Radio Progress owns a very old pickup which cannot accomplish long distances. During my time of research the car was spoiled and there was no funding to repair it. Another issue is the costs of petrol which must also be generated.

### **5.2.2 Independent platform**

*It belongs to the community but the community [members] themselves did not know that it belongs to them. We used to go and tell them. When I was there I said ' hey, that thing belongs to you, if you choose to make it rich, it will be rich, if you choose not to make it rich it will not be rich. So it belongs to you. (...) So they have to feed it with the right information or the education of their colleagues. (Madam Bajohr, Wa 2007)*

Radio Progress has to be available for the communities to serve as an independent platform for their listeners. This means they have to be open and accessible for their listeners to personally address the station with their concerns and to enable their direct contribution through appropriate programs.

Like the program schedule of the station shows, around twenty-five hours of the weekly broadcasts allow for phone-ins and on-air discussions. Doris Derry reported of on average one hundred phone-ins per according program. This kind of programming captures the largest part of the station's airtime. They cover a broad range of contribution-possibilities. Discussion programs with experts or politicians allow listeners to phone-in and contribute live, even in a critical way.

**Photo 2: On-air discussion with studio guests**



The 'Newspaper Review' is a highly appreciated program which reflects the daily newspapers and discusses with listeners and experts on live air. The listeners' interviews and information from the station coordination show that the highest appreciation, however, is reached by those programs that specifically focus on personal and social issues of the villages and listeners themselves. These programs fully construct themselves through the listeners' phone-ins and reactions. Since those programs have been intensively mentioned in the interviews it is worth to introduce them. I did not visit any village without witnessing the people's excitement and enthusiasm about these programs. As the reception is very weak in some villages it could even be witnessed how people would hang their radios and mobile phones into the trees around their houses for the

broadcasting times of these programs. They gathered to listen, reflect and elect one of them to phone-in for their contribution. Several respondents reported of ways they invented to receive airwaves like constructing appliances to fix their radios. Furthermore, people reported impressive stories about direct learning effects from those programs. I was surprised over some of the very private topics of their contributions. One woman told me about her husband's harassments towards her. She talked about her belief that he beats her less frequently through the station's educative programs on this issue.

The program reaching the highest contribution is the 'Friday Morning Toaster'. Already in my very first days in Wa I became familiar with this program. When asking for Radio Progress people frequently expressed their high appreciation of the 'Friday Morning Toaster'. This format is a phone-in program concerned with the solution-finding of personal problems. People call in to report family- or relationship issues while other people contribute with direct advices. Consequently, fruitful discussions arise live on-air about how to solve the problem enriched by phone-ins of other concerned people reporting and comparing their related stories and appropriate solutions. A further example of high appreciation is called 'Your Concern'. According to presenter Rafiq, one of the presenters, Radio Progress refers to this program as 'real democracy, as the real freedom of speech'. Dwellers call to voice out problems and demands like sanitary issues of their villages. The aim of the program is to publicise those requirements for NGOs and other providers in order to create respective awareness and offer adequate help. The same format informs the villages about NGOs operating on certain issues in the region. By this process Radio Progress manages to connect villages with NGOs and the government through communicating 'supplies and demands'. Rafiq illustrated the communities' and stations' joint action for accomplishing street lights in Wa. He reported how people phone in with these kinds of concerns and call upon the station to address the responsible ministries. According to him, in urgent cases the presenters immediately react on the listeners' phone-ins by calling ministers live on-air to challenge their comments on the current topic. He closed the interview with the words 'This is real democracy'.

A number of programs are even entirely generated and broadcasted by community groups themselves. Their content is completely maintained by the listeners and the station's presenters solely monitor the formats. For instance people from the Islamic

community asked the station for airtime. Radio Progress trained them in broadcasting techniques and currently they record their own program once a week using the station's utilities. Radio Progress assists by allocating a presenter. A program of the disabled Wa community goes even further as these people produce and even present their own program once a week. Additionally, the station customises the studio for local musicians to record and broadcast their projects. Radio Progress frequently invites local and national politicians to the station in order to inform directly about current policy issues and give an account on current processes live on-air. Benemen, one of the presenters, reported about invitations of specific politicians in reaction to listener's demands and questions concerning certain governmental issues. He reported of inviting the vice president and informing the community in advance through announcements so that they could prepare questions and critics for their live phone-ins.

An additional aspect to be analysed is the way people can directly contact the station with their demands and grievances. This can be through making use of the station for announcements and as such for communication with relatives and other communities as well as physically approaching the station's office. It can truly be said that Radio Progress is open for their listeners to come in. For example, upon approaching the station, people step into a room with several sofas.

**Photo 3: Foyer of Radio Progress**



Usually the secretary or the accountant is working in this room. People are passing by to take a seat or have a coffee. On several occasions in which I was joined staff and some

visitors, discussions about issues concerning the area or local politics arose. People entered the station and joined so that fruitful and controversial debates were taking place directly in the station.

Nevertheless, the lack of possibility for all listeners to contribute and access the station in that way has to be considered. Radio Progress has to be aware of the financial effort to approach the station for those living in more distant locations as well as the possibility to phone-in regarding the financial aspect and the matter of partly non-existing mobile-reception. Analysing these aspects the necessity of Radio Progress to visit those communities becomes even clearer. Concerning the possibility for the more distant villages specifically, access to the station personally and their limited possibility to phone-in it is crucial to particularly visit those villages to 'collect' and broadcast their concerns and demands.<sup>25</sup> The current situation shows a bias in the chance of all people to make use of the 'independent platform' the station offers. People living closer to Wa have less financial problems to reach the station personally. Additionally, those villages that are closer to the capital receive mobile phone reception. Regarding these aspects people in the more distant and rural areas are already disadvantaged by their own possibilities to make use of the platform. In addition, they are disadvantaged by the fact that Radio Progress predominantly visits those villages that already have easier access to the station. Only nineteen out of sixty-one respondents have witnessed the station staff visiting their villages to directly evaluate their needs and demands or recording their grievances.

### **5.2.3 Ownership, non-profit organisation**

The station is financed through advertisements, announcements and program sponsorship. Businessmen from the area are the main sponsors beside several infrequent contributions of corporate bodies from outside Wa. On an irregular basis advertisements from companies are run in order to support the station. Ivan reported of one Ghanaian pharmaceutical concern that broadcasts its advertisements through the station. He

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<sup>25</sup> Although the usage of cell phones is rapidly increasing in the Upper West, the usage is limited through the financial aspects as well as the limited or non-existing reception in the very rural areas.

furthermore reported that financial support through NGOs operating in the area is very minimal. According to Doris Derry, approximately ten percent of the station's funding is generated through announcements, whereas approximately eighty percent of the funding is generated through programs of NGOs, churches and other charity organisations and five percent is generated through donations. Reflecting this information unfortunately I received contradictory data concerning the funding structure. Nevertheless, it demonstrates that the station is not acting in a profit-generating way but is rather concerned with maintaining itself. Specifically the announcements generate a frequent source of income for the station. However, Radio Progress, according to Ivan, regards its announcement platform as their community commitment. Consequently, they make exceptions in charging announcements. Specifically if people face challenges like having lost their animals or a child, the station sometimes announces those issues free of charge. Additionally, the announcement prices vary between several instances of the community. Social announcements, placed as preliminary by the community members, are cheaper than those placed by business people or political instances.

**Table 6: Announcement prices per single announcement (one-time broadcast)**

Type of announcement	Price in Cedi
Social Announcements + 15% VAT	20.000.00
Department and NGOs + 15% VAT	40.000.00
Commercials + 15% VAT	45.000.00
Political + 15% VAT	50.000.00
Life Presenter Mention + 15% VAT	45.000.00
Jingle Play	35.000.00

According to Madam Bajohr, Radio Progress was established by the Catholic Church but is not managed nor directly controlled by it, although the bishop is member of the management board. The station generates its own funding through which it pays its permanent staff and tries to maintain the technical equipment. The station's management board is composed of 'people recognized and recommended by the community as members from the community with integrity' (Derry 2007). Derry claims that they are of high educational standing and actively involved in regional services which are not necessarily concerned with CR. Furthermore, their origin has to be the Upper West

Region. The current management board consists of the Catholic bishop of Wa diocese, a female development worker, an economist who is working in Accra, the planning officer from the regional coordinating council, the town and country planning director, a communications tutor from the University of Development Studies as well as a retired pharmacist who used to work for the Church. The board is the highest decision making body of the station and as such the highest instance in all decision making processes. The board is informed by the management team which consists of the heads of each station-department as well as the executive producer and the station manager who forms the top of the stations bureaucracy.<sup>26</sup> The management team has occasional meetings in order to take decision and implement policies that are proposed by the board. Decisions or suggestions taken by the management team themselves are transferred to the board for final agreement.

#### **5.2.4 Representativeness**

*The station believes that the community radio must be staffed by the community. Natural talent, aptitude, mastery of local languages, knowledge of community and the willingness to work for its development are criteria for selecting volunteers and part-time workers (Preamble Radio Progress 2007).*

According to Ivan, Radio Progress is aware of its normative function as a CRS. He emphasizes that the stations programming aims at reflecting the interests, beliefs and traditions of its listeners. The station makes an effort to be representative of its community. Its staff covers a strong representativeness of age as well as gender, religion and district origin. The age structure comprises staff between eighteen and sixty years. Concerning gender, five out of nine permanent staff members are female. Furthermore half of the part-time positions are occupied by women. In addition, the station's

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<sup>26</sup> At the time of my research the station had no manager and the station's executive producer Doris Derry was additionally responsible for this position. However, during the whole research period she has never been in town and after I left the region I was informed that she has resigned from her position which was not reoccupied yet. Concluding, the station currently seems to be without manager and executive producer.

management holds a permanent seat for a female member. The team consists of Christian as well as Muslim employees and the station's coordination emphasizes the importance to work with representatives from all districts in order to prestigiously promote all languages and cultures. The station broadcasts in three languages, Dagabe, Sisale and English. However, only very few programs are broadcasted in all the languages. The main block of formats is run in Dagare whereas programs in Sisale are only run two evenings per week. Ivan reported infrequent programs from the ministry which are mostly concerned with educational or health issues and financed through the ministry. In those cases programs are run in all local languages.

The analysis of the program content mirrors the reflection of a broad variety of interest groups. Although the station was founded by the Catholic Church the programming considers a wide range of religions represented in the region. Besides the Catholic and the Protestant Church, also the Islamic Community, the Pentecostal Church as well as the Traditionalists have their services and further programs. In addition to the religious coverage Radio Progress encounters specific programs for women and the youth and gives airtime to the disabled community of the region. Considering that a huge percentage of people in the UWR are farmers Radio Progress representatively emphasizes specific farming education programs. Another aspect is their support in sustaining the region's cultural traditions. They run specific story telling programs wherefore they go into the communities and record the traditional stories told by the elderly people. They run cultural programs that explain dying cultural aspects and their significance to the youth, enriched with local music. Another program targets the improvements of local languages for the youth. Through proverbs, stories, music and poetry in Dagare young people are encouraged to enrich their local language skills they are losing through English education.

According to Ivan, the station makes 'basic efforts' to broadcast specific programs at an adequate daytime. Obviously those efforts do not seem to be efficient enough as lacks in this part of performance have been emphasised by the listeners, I will come back to in the next chapter. However, it can be drawn from the interviews with the station's coordination that Radio Progress is aware of the fact that they are not serious enough in realising it.

During the farming season families leave their houses early in the morning to work on their farms only to return back in the late afternoon. Unfortunately, educative programs, particularly those concerning farming practises, are broadcasted during the mornings. Although many respondents reported that they even take their radios to the farm, they usually cannot sit down and leave their work to listen to Radio Progress. In the evenings, when they come home though, they take some rest and gather with their families to listen to the station. Consequently, by shifting some of the programs to the evening time a much bigger benefit could be achieved.

### **5.2.5 Influencing aspects**

The specific character of CR can bear several hindrances in a more progressive performance. Due to its commitment to the specific non-profit characteristic the station might face restrictions set by their own principles.

*Radio Progress was established to provide vital information to help speed up the integral development of the people (Preamble Radio Progress, Wa 2007).*

Even though the analysis demonstrates the stations normative demand towards an overall positive performance several internal and external factors restrain an optimal performance.

Radio Progress is confronted with two main challenges: financial sustainability and the demanded transmission extension. In terms of financial sustainability, as the station is based in a rural and less developed area, advertisement and sponsorship are limited to only small businesses and entrepreneurs. Consequently, the station is faced by challenges in procurement of sufficient funding. According to Derry, it is absolutely necessary to appeal to organizations to support the station in diverse ways to enable it continue to play its complimentary role in the development efforts of the Upper West Region. Facing the actual funding practises, however, little action has been undertaken towards acquiring more income in this way.

Due to its non-profit character and the resulting funding problems the station faces challenges to train its staff in a professional way. The majority of the team consists of volunteers who are not paid or professionally trained. Derry describes their preparation as 'training on the job' meaning that they learn from their colleagues. Of the permanent employees only one person has been professionally trained in journalism and communication whereas three have been specifically trained on the job and through workshop trainings in the station. Six employees are professionally educated in accounting, secretarial work, field work and technical services. Hence, the station does not have a specific training program or preparation for their new employees.

Further problems evolve from the described challenges in generating financial support. As the majority of the station staff work as unpaid volunteers they lack motivation. Other priorities have been witnessed: Problems concerning reliability occur in cases where volunteers have the opportunity to generate an income on days they are supposed to present. It can occur that they may not attend work, resulting in Radio Progress 'remaining silent'. Several further cases of volunteers' not attending work have been witnessed during the research phase. For instance, one employee left the station at a time she was supposed to broadcast, in order to report problems with her husband to the police.

Several further hindrances for a qualitative and complete performance exist. The station owns a generator which is supposed to bridge the temporary electricity gaps. However, the generator is old and often out of order. As the funding situation does not allow for any improving investment the station often remains silent. Additionally, some villages are excluded of access to the airwaves as the station's financial situation does not allow for a transmitter that covers the whole Upper West Region. Although the transmission reaches major parts of the area, in the very northern parts as well as in the eastern Sissala district the coverage is very weak to non-existing. Additionally, in the Jirapa district listeners reported of reception problems since the second existing Community Radio in the area, the in Nandom based Radio Freed.<sup>27</sup> Apart from those limitations, however, other reports arrived from as far as Burkina Faso telling that

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<sup>27</sup> Radio Freed was set up by several emigrated Ghanaians and is strongly funded from abroad. As such I do not equalise it with the Community Radio Commitment Radio Progress follows.

sometimes they can receive signals of the station and make use of it specifically referring to announcements from relatives in Ghana. Furthermore, hindrances in accessing the villages occur out of financial problems concerning the station's transportation facilities. Additionally the airwaves of Radio Progress are not covering the whole region – a further consequence of funding-limitations. Consequently, even more problematic than addressing the rural communities personally, not even all communities can benefit as they lack technical reception of the station's airwaves.

### **5.2.6 Intermediate resume**

Deriving from the former analysis of the findings for each set dimension I will result in a conclusion applied to my sub-research questions concerning the station's performance.

Concluding on the ability of the station's reflection of its listeners' needs and development-meanings, Radio Progress shows a clear focus on direct community-involvement through phone-in and discussion programs as well as own programs of several groups in the community. Hence the listening community is encouraged to directly introduce their needs and interests. In this regard the station clearly steps back and is 'handing over the airwaves' to their listeners. Efforts towards evaluating the listeners' needs and demands furthermore aim at addressing the listeners' perspectives. However, those evaluations are undertaken rather infrequently. This lack in consistent and equal evaluation might imply a deficit in the station's reflection on their listener's needs and interests. However, the general program-development takes part on basic precedent evaluations as well as offering listeners a platform to directly and publicly criticise and advice the stations performance. According to Mrs. Bajor, however, the situation has already improved during the last years as in the late 1990s. When she was in charge of the station, no fieldwork was done at all. Furthermore, interviews in the station mirrored their awareness of their inconsequent performance in this domain. Consequently, the aspect of reflection is predominantly realised through the station's emphasis on direct community-participation and the enabling of own programs.

The high relevance Radio Progress addresses the participation-enabling programs and those directly produced and broadcasted by the community. Moreover, this supports their positive performance in offering an independent platform for their listener's self-expression and problem-solving. Generally the station has shown its openness for everyone. Furthermore, the analysis showed the general accessibility for their listeners supporting as well as critical contributions. Overall, the station offers a broad range of contribution-possibilities. The analysis of the listener's requirements towards the program schedule as well as the intensity in which the listener's make use of it will shed more light on the appropriateness of their programs. However, their mediating function between the communities and other instances underline their ability to serve as a platform. Their participative programs and openness for their listeners to place their announcements and meet in the station emphasises their function as mediator for the communities' direct mutual communication. However, regarding reception and direct-participation possibilities for the more rural communities, the station should foster more inclusion. Since many people cannot get frequent clear reception of the programming and have no phone-reception for direct contribution in their rural villages they are generally unable to access the station. Radio Progress should consider to focus more on visiting those marginalised villages for recording their issues and informing them. These limitations again are connected with financial deficits deriving from their commitment to Community Radio Broadcasting. The stations' awareness of this restrictive situation is for instance mirrored in their efforts to help in problematic situations through free announcements.

Within their realms of possibilities, Radio Progress offers a platform for their communities. Specifically the high emphasis on phone-in programs fosters discussions and allows for problem-reflection that can further lead to problem-solving activities. The station is furthermore keen to encourage dialogue between the communities and development organisations as well as governmental instances. Radio Progress puts itself into a mediating position in order to foster developmental progress.

Regarding the stations' funding and staff structure a commitment towards the normative principles of Community Radio can be confirmed. Although the detailed funding structure of Radio Progress remained obscure a non-profit generating situation

could be observed. The station receives very few advertisements to broadcast. Referring to the information of Doris Derry an important funding aspect derives from organisations that broadcast educative programs through their station. As these programs aim at a development-beneficial purpose for the listeners they are clearly not profit-oriented in a financial sense. The advantageous announcement prices for the listeners additionally emphasise the non-profit principles of Community Radio Broadcasting. Referring to the aspect of ownership the station pays high priority to its community commitment. The board and staff exclusively include members originating from the Upper West Region. A limiting aspect, however, could be seen due to the highly hierarchical decision-making structure. As final decisions on all aspects are undertaken by the board it can be questioned as to how far the listener's can in fact exert any influence.

To further comment on the aspect of ownership the listener's perception will be of crucial relevance and thus be evaluated in the following section.

Like the analysis showed a representative staff structure concerning gender, age, religion and origin could be witnessed. However, the organisational structure of the station seems somewhat dubious. The representativeness of the community's diversity in the staff structure is predominantly positive. As illustrated Radio Progress has a clear organisational hierarchy. However, first, the decision-making processes of this hierarchy seem rather in-transparent for the masses and the implementation of innovations seems to be rather complicated. Also the broad variety of interest groups and openness to the whole community fosters the positive performance of community-representativeness. A less intensive consideration towards Sisale programs has been analysed. However, the analysis of the listener's perceptions will uncover the eventual difficulty of this aspect. Overall the station's strong efforts and awareness towards a positive performance as a Community Radio can be emphasised. The station's performance clearly fosters development-beneficial characteristics. Although several aspects of weak performance or structure have been encountered, those aspects are mostly interlinked with observed problems directly deriving from the station's commitment to a non-profit, community-owned structure.

The following analysis of the listener's perception will highlight the weight of these weaknesses according to a development-beneficial performance.

### **5.3 The listeners' perception of Radio Progress**

To analyse the listeners' point of view the semi-structured interviews conducted in the villages, enriched with the impressions gained through general observations, served as main source of information. Since the interviews entailed close and open questions I was able to analyse a part of my data in a way which allows for quantitative comparable outputs on several aspects. Since my sample certainly does not allow for any generalization the appliance comparable tables primarily serve for a clearer illustration of several evaluated aspects.

Although I decided to analyse part of my data in a rather quantitative manner it was important to conduct the interviews in a qualitative way. The indepth information I gathered by applying this method contributed to perceive a broader picture of the current situation and thus to answer my research questions in a more analytic manner. Second, since quantitative interviews run the risk of losing aspects of information that are not captured by questionnaires (Diekmann 2002).

The listeners' interviews have been separated into five main dimensions deriving from the conceptual approach of my research. The questions I applied for each dimension in chapter two and which I used for my interviews served as variables for creating my codebook. I examined the answers of all interviews I conducted. By examining the answers I extracted the overarching responses in order to create my codebook.

Equally for the listener's side, my data analysis will reflect on the dimensions I applied as crucial participatory aspects of Community Radio, namely ownership, relevance (general / development related) and platform. It will take part under specific consideration of the influencing dimensions: access, concerning media possession, availability, timing and station accessibility as well as the diversity of the listening community to allow for a concluding answer of my sub-research questions.

### 5.3.1 Access to information

Considering the limitation of media access and diversity in the Upper West Region, the general and technical access to Radio Progress constitutes a crucial precondition for benefit and contribution. Radio is the most prevalent medium.

**Table 7: Indicating aspects of access**

	Do you have an own radio?	Do you have access to any other media?	Are you literate?	Do you speak English?
Yes	43 / 17 (in family)	13	26	14 / 15 (a bit)
No	0	41	33	31
No answer	1	7	2	1
Total	61	61	61	61

Whereas forty-three of my respondents personally owned a radio, a further seventeen listeners at least had a radio in the house, owned by their family or husbands. The crucial relevance of radio even rises considering that forty-one of my respondents had no access to any other medium. Since the general relevance of radio has already been emphasised the media distribution and further conditions for access in the Upper West Region draw a confirmative picture.

Thirty-three out of sixty-one respondents are illiterate whereas twenty-six respondents stated that they were literate. However, since the majority of literate respondents have solely attended primary school their level of literacy was rather limited. Oral media serves as their only source of information. More than half of the respondents do not speak English, a further fifteen people claimed to only have very basic English language knowledge.

Consequently, even the partial accessibility of other media like TV is additional limited due to the fact of understanding, as most programs are run in English.

### 5.3.2 Ownership

*When we tune into Radio Progress we hear our voices (Joseph, Wa town)*

Analyzing the listener's 'emotional' and active involvement with 'their' radio the interviews generated a clear picture. The station has to offer an according frame as crucial precondition to enable the listening community to 'feed' their station. Since the analysis of the station's performance has shown that Radio Progress draws high attention to participation-enabling program formats it depends on the community's engagement and usage of it.

Sixty out of sixty-one respondents have the feeling that Radio Progress is part of their community.

**Table 8: Community belonging**

Would you say that RP is part of your community?	
Yes	60
No	0
No answer	1
Total	61

The educative aspects enriched with its usage as communication facilitator are the dominant aspects creating this feeling. Furthermore, the direct development effect for the region and consequently for themselves has been emphasized in this context. Seitu from Yayuombe points out that 'Radio Progress is far away but its voice is here and part of our community and it educates us'. Ibrahim from Wale states that the mere possibility to use the station for all their needs and communication whenever they want makes it their own property, makes it an integrative part of their community. Radio Progress is the mediator for their mutual communication – it is their radio, announcing their concerns.

People seem to be aware of their opportunity to make use of the station in that way. Alicia from Wa West had a clear picture about the interaction between station and communities:

*(...) so it depends on the individual. If you sit down and say no, this station is not part of the community, it will not be part. But if you feel that it is part than you get to present your cases to them, then they will talk about it. So it is part but it will not be if you don't interact with them.*

Since distances can be far, transportation is limited and expensive and phone reception is lacking or too expensive, thus not many people have the possibility to directly access the station through travelling there or calling-in. Nevertheless, as illustrated in the output below, the majority of respondents with the possibility to directly access Radio Progress claimed to make use of it.

**Table 9: Access possibility and usage**

	Do you have the possibility to go to the station and talk to the staff?	If yes, do you make use of it?
Yes	25	15
No	33	6
No answer	3	4
Total	61	25

Many respondents without a direct possibility to contact the station emphasized to know people from their village going there or reported of family members and friends visiting the station or calling-in for their contribution. Therefore it was worth to observe how people approach the station personally. According to Doris Derry, around five to twenty announcements per day come in. Not only people from Wa are handing in their announcements personally. During my time in the station I could witness whole families

coming from as far as Jirapa to make funeral announcements<sup>28</sup>. Furthermore, people attended the station just for a visit and drink a coffee or to report current issues.

Since the mere financial or spatial opportunity hinders most people in directly addressing the station it was worth to analyze their mere 'consuming usage' of the station.

**Table 10: Listening frequency**

	Do you listen frequently to Radio Progress	If yes, how often do you listen to RP?	
Yes	51	Daily	43
No	8	Weekly	5
No answer	2	Sometimes	3
Total	61		51

Forty-three respondents listen to Radio Progress daily. Moreover their statements intensively stressed the station as their 'daily companion'. Farmers reported of taking their wireless radios to the farms in order to listen during their breaks. Market women reported about storing their radios in the market stalls in order to have steady access to the programming. The picture below shows a market woman who wrote the telephone number of Radio Progress on the door of her market stall in order to be always prepared to phone-in.

**Photo 4: Market woman in Wa**



<sup>28</sup> Funerals play a crucial social role in the lives of Upper West people. A funeral is celebrated over several days and involves a very wide range of family members, friends and further acquaintances. Upper West people are travelling far distances and very often to attend funerals. The communication of a funeral as such is crucial and was highly time- and cost intensive before the radio came in. Nowadays people use the station to voice out funerals and invitations.

People even declared to adjust their day rhythm according to their favourite programs. Those respondents reporting that they do not listen frequently still listened at least at a weekly basis. They dominantly reported their high contribution but lack of time in order to listen on a daily basis.

### 5.3.3 General and development related relevance

Fifty-five respondents claimed Radio Progress to be their favourite available radio station.

**Table 11: Favourite radio**

Is Radio Progress your favourite station or do you prefer Radio Upper West?		Why is RP your favourite station?	
Radio Progress	51	Programs	19
Radio Upper West	4	Language	14
No favourite	2	Community background	7
Other	1	Education	6
No answer	4	Announcements	3
		No answer	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>

As such they put high emphasis on it and it is their main, if not single source of information. Specifically the local languages Radio Progress broadcasts creates engagement with the station. People feel involved because they actively participate in the programming through announcements and phone-ins. Respondents underlined their appreciation of voicing out their needs, grievances and delights on air. Many people, like Sirbuo from Lassie underlined their high appreciation of the station speaking their language. Furthermore the admiration of the amount of programs relevant to their specific context and needs was stressed out intensively. David from Baazu pointed out that Radio Progress is 'their source of information, which helps them a lot'.

Fifty-seven respondents emphasised the station's programming as useful and interesting for themselves.

**Table 12: Program appreciation**

Do you consider the programs of RP as useful and interesting for yourself?	
Yes	57
No	0
No answer	4
Total	61

Several aspects contributed to the high appreciation of the station's program structure:

**Table 13: Favourite Programs**

What programs of Radio Progress do you like to listen to?	1 <sup>st</sup> response	2 <sup>nd</sup> response
religious programs	24	9
educative programs	17	15
phone-in / discussion programs	11	5
entertaining programs	3	1
informative programs / news	1	1
Other	1	0
No answer	4	30
Total	61	61

Specifically the educational and integrative program structure generates this high appreciation of Radio Progress. The respondents highly appreciate religious and educative programs. Nikyogloyunga from Wa East favours Radio Progress, stating:

*(...) before we were blind and through Radio Progress we can now see. Radio Progress opened our eyes through educating us.*

The favour of religious programming in this context goes far beyond pure service reception. Those programs are highly concerned with moral education and the communication of unity and togetherness. The listeners intensively reported of the great relevance these programs have for their personal development as well as their improvement of living together in a religiously diverse society. Referring to the already emphasised diversity of the Upper West society the aspect of unity and togetherness

should not be underestimated. Additionally, people strongly refer to this aspect concerning their family life. Aspects of respect specifically between married couples have been on top of the 'benefit-agenda'. Specifically women expressed their high appreciation of decreasing threat posed by their husbands. Male respondents expressed their learning effect in respecting their wives by taking advices from the station's programming and transferring it into their behaviour. Both genders reported about the positive effect of related programs on their mutual way of behaviour.

Concerning the educative programs a majority of respondents predominantly appreciate non-formal education, assisting to improve their personal and community living conditions.

Analysing the specific relevance for the listener's direct development, respondents also particularly emphasised the programs' positive impact on the creation of unity and togetherness as well as improving their livelihoods through non-formal education programs.

**Table 14: Efficiency for development**

In what way(s) is the station useful for your development?	
foster moral life > brings unity, togetherness, peace	19
educates about hygiene, health, sanitation > reduces diseases etc.	11
facilitates communication	9
creates awareness of situation and options for change	7
creates happiness through entertainment	5
creates mutual learning and development effect	3
educates on how to make a living (farming, getting loans, etc.)	2
makes organizations etc. aware of their situation > brings external help	1
no answer	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>

Reports about good improvement of health and income conditions through programs on sanitation, hygiene and health have been outstanding. People intensively reported about changes in their housekeeping habits. Most women reported that Radio Progress has told

them to keep their houses and surroundings clean and that they pay high attention to this aspect now. What sounds rather trivial plays a crucial role in order to prevent diseases in rural areas. For instance moist spots around the huts attract mosquitoes and consequently raise malaria infection. Uncut bushes and high grasses attract snakes and scorpions and increase the risk of injury.

People reported about the creation of awareness that made them change their behaviour for a better living. Emanuel from Nawdowli stated that:

*(...) before we were lazy and roaming and only sitting together and talk till the evening without working. And now we are all awake and most of us became farmers.*

Another respondent strengthened this rising awareness by stating that Radio Progress has educated them on the necessity to fight for their right to gain development themselves instead of sitting and passively waiting for help coming in. Mutual communication was a further highly emphasised aspect of the station's contribution to development. Specifically regarding the high relevance of funerals in the Upper West society as well as the limitation in technical communication access, the opportunity to make announcements through Radio Progress is of core benefit for the whole region. Gyebuo, a pito brewer from Lassie reported that before the station came in they had to send someone pedalling from village to village, over far distances to inform relatives about funerals. These informants, as she mentioned happened to be attacked or even killed. Now, through the station, they can announce the funerals and consequently save time and avoid additional grievance.

Requesting directly for development improving benefits proved essential in evaluating the listeners' opinions about relevant program adaptations supporting an according change:

**Table 15: Broadcast demands**

Are there any aspects you wish RP would broadcast?	
Satisfied	15
content okay, program time should increase	10
Other	7
increase program quantity	6
more educative programs	6
go more into villages to record	2
improve reception	2
announcement feedback	2
change broadcasting time	1
increase local dialect broadcasting	1
change time and extend farming programs	1
more national/international news	1
No answer	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>

Fifteen respondents claimed to be completely satisfied with the stations performance in this context. However, critics mainly arose towards the quantity instead of the program contents. Many people demanded an increase in broadcasting time specifically for discussion programs concerning social and private issues.

Further evaluating the specific development impact for the UWR, forty-five respondents reported of other organisations like NGOs or development-concerned church organisations approaching their villages. Most of these organisations provide physical help through study material or the construction of schools and hospitals. Being asked which development contribution they consider as more beneficial increases the relevance and appreciation of Radio Progress.

**Table 16: Efficiency of Radio Progress and other development organizations**

		Would you say what they do is more efficient?					Total
		No answer	Yes	No	Both the same	Organization through station	
Are there any organizations etc. that come to your village and help to improve the community's situation?	No answer	9	0	0	0	0	9
	Yes	8	6	10	9	12	45
	No	5	0	1	0	0	6
	Don't know	1	0	0	0	0	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>61</b>

Eleven out of forty-five respondents have been convinced that the development contribution of Radio Progress is more efficient whereas nine respondents equalised both sides performance. More relevant, however, is the awareness of twelve respondents that reported of the complement interaction of both sides. Listeners emphasised the crucial effect the station has on generally generating awareness and consequential help of other organisations. People massively report of the station's relevance as contact medium between organisations and Upper West communities. Helen from Baazu underlines that it is the station who 'brings' development organisations as without the broadcasting organisations would not be aware of their existence. Rose a pito brewer from Lassie underlines this statement by pointing at the complementing action of Radio Progress and development organisations:

*The ones who give you the material (...) But some of us would just pick the loan, go and spend the money. But the station also gives us advise as to help to go into business, how to use your money to create more.*

### 5.3.4 Platform

Referring to Freire, creating dialogue is the crucial aspect for development. Several questions I addressed to the listeners served to evaluate the stations according potential and performance.

**Table 17: Indicators for offering community-platform**

	Are local needs of your community discussed through the radio?	Do you take part in these discussions on air?	solution finding potential	learning effect
Yes	50	15	56	48
No	5	2	0	1
No answer	3	10	3	12
Other	3	34 (discussion within community)	2	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>

Forty respondents confirmed that local problems of their community are discussed through the station. The station offers an interactive platform for debating their concerns. Fifty out of sixty-one respondents felt the direct consideration of their specific village concerns through the station. This refers to the direct reflection of community demands and needs through on-the-spot recording in the villages or discussions and reports about specific villages in the station, partly by community members or key persons like the assemblyman.

Upon asking if they take part in those discussions through phoning-in fifteen respondents confirmed their direct contribution. Additionally, the answer of more than half of the respondents stressed a further positive effect: respondents reflected on this question in a broader sense than only the direct addressing of their village. They intensively stressed out the mutual learning effect deriving from broadcasted issues of other villages. Raman from Wa town stated:

*(...) we are all individuals but we always have similar cases. So when we look at the number of people who support and contribute, if you have a problem than you see which help it is. That means that the radio is helping us.*

Other respondents confirmed this effect by stating that they 'pick up' similar problems and solutions from other villages to solve their own village problems.

Thirty-two out of the sixty-one respondents declared not to have the option or motivation to phone-in but to make intensive use of the received information within their families or communities. People reported that they would inform absent family members about the information received through Radio Progress. Further intensive reporting tended towards family-internal gatherings in the evening. In those gatherings topics they have heard through the radio are discussed and plans for taking own action or reporting in further village gatherings created. People reported about meeting friends to create potential plans for own action, deriving from other village's examples. Other respondents even referred to frequent village-meetings, inspired by broadcasted examples of other

villages, to collect ideas and examples for development and reflect potential approaches for similar implementations within their communities.

An overwhelming majority confirmed the station's ability to contribute to the solution-finding of personal-, family- or village demands. In addition, the satisfaction of Sisala-speaking people should be mentioned. As a majority in the Upper West society the interviews did not generate any specific complains referring to the less consideration of programs in broadcasted in their language.

By a further evaluation of direct learning effects through the programming, forty-eight people responded of which forty-eight gave a positive answer. Asking for the aspects they learn through broadcasted cases of other communities or the direct educative programming a broad variety of positive effects has been reported. Specifically the moral benefit deriving from according programs was emphasised. People again reported of high appreciation for programs and positive learning effects of programs concerning unity and tolerance. Furthermore they reported of high benefit for their personal development through awareness creation of possibilities for taking action in improving their living conditions. Specifically aspects concerning hygiene and housekeeping have been accentuated in this context.

Asking for any desirable program changes in this context people confirmed their utter satisfaction of the program content.

**Table 18: Desired program extensions**

Are there any aspects you wish Radio Progress would broadcast?	
no changes	21
Program time	14
Quantity	11
Other	4
Reception	1
No answer	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>

The dominating request of change concerns the broadcasting time of specific programs. As emanated from the interviews the program schedule seems to lack some consideration of its listeners' day structure. Although several programs, especially the announcements are broadcasted on several times of the day, specifically the time of

educative programs seem not to be in the listener's interest. As I have been conducting my interviews during the beginning of the rainy- and as such the farming season, the farmers were specifically complaining about broadcasting times. Since the day structure of many Upper West people is predetermined by farming activity, specifically educative farming programs are required to be broadcasted in the evenings. The same requirements have been stated for high appreciated discussion programs

### **5.3.5 Intermediate resume**

Having analysed my findings referring to the methodological dimensions I will draw a conclusion of the related sub-research questions.

The analysis emphasised the high relevance and accessibility of radio in the deprived Upper West communities. Referring to the interviews at least every household owns a radio. As such Radio Progress has a high reception rate among those villages that are reached by their airwaves.

The station's analysis shows that Radio Progress offers a general openness in accessing them directly or through calling-in to its listeners. The aspects of education and the high level of illiteracy paired with problems in technical access to other media makes Radio Progress the only source of information for the majority of Upper West people. Through the station's high emphasis on local languages the huge majority of illiterate people can access the station and react on the programming.

Concerning the aspect of ownership, the listeners are highly involved in the performance and participation of 'their radio'. Everyone referring to his or her technical or financial possibility seems to get most benefit out of the station thereby also 'feeding' the station through own contributions. Consequently, the analysis clarified the intensive use the listener's make of the station in a passive as well as an active way. According to the interviews, a clear feeling of 'owning' the station, of the stations belonging to them and their lives exists – Radio Progress belongs to the Upper West people. The data shows that they make use of the radio in an intensive and inclusive way. They adopted the station as their communication-tool, it serves as their source of information from outside as well as among the villages and they themselves value it for their own education. It seems like the

problem of access is the only aspect that hinders people in feeding the station with input and gaining output for themselves out of the programming. However, the intensive reports on how they use the programs for their development and on how they spread information they gain from the programming among their village members and within their families draws a clear picture. They carry the voice of the station and of their community members heard through the station into their villages and families and build upon it. This usage pattern proofs their feeling and reception of the station to be part of them.

The interviews showed the major favour of Radio Progress compared to other accessible radio stations in the UWR favourite. The respondents have the feeling that Radio Progress is the medium where they can address their concerns and which reflects their demands. The intensive use people make of it and their perception of demand-reflection shows they obviously gain benefit from the station. Moreover, the reflection of the respondents on undertaken changes and self-development through the programming even strengthens the efficiency of the stations' programming. People changed their living-habits towards a development-beneficial behaviour through information and education they receive through Radio Progress and they reported with enthusiasm about their 'changing lives'. Development-beneficial in this context entails more than the awareness of their situation but rather real action people took out of this conscientization – action in so many aspects. According to the respondents, the communities changed towards a healthier life, towards activities they can gain a living out in a financial way and towards a life of mutual understanding, respect and common action for further development. People highly appreciate the positive impact Radio Progress can offer in mediating between the villages and diverse development organizations. The major response that Radio Progress 'brings' the organizations to the villages and that this would have not been taken place without the platform of the station clearly underlines the development-benefit Radio Progress generates. These results clarify the respondents' satisfaction with the station's performance towards the creation of development impact.

Specifically regarding the stations function as open platform, the core aspect for CRD, a highly positive picture can be drawn from the interviews and observations. On-air debates are carried into the families and houses of the communities and spread into

internal discussions and reflections on the topics and furthermore lead to the creation of action-plans for development and their realisation. The listeners benefit from the programming on several levels and further learn from each other. The intensive use they make of those programs and the intensive expression of their high appreciation keeps no question open and underlines the results already deriving from the station's analysis. With high interest people gather to hear about other people's social and private problems. Respondents reported of their enthusiasm to help those people, people of their region but not even of personal awareness. Debates and problem-reflection indeed take place through the radio. Villages are ambitious to spread their own development-success through the airwaves to inform and enable other villages to undertake development-action and consequently benefit in the same way. Even by not directly responding or contributing on air people use what they heard and learn to improve their own lives and furthermore conscientize people around them in order to enable equal benefit. It can be drawn from my research results that a mutual dynamic of receiving information, reflecting them and making use out of them derives from the 'service' the station offers their community – an open accessible platform for their own needs and interests.

The consideration of specific village concerns goes beyond the enjoyment of listening to community members on air or hearing their village name mentioned through the radio. Villages benefit through mutual learning effects. The station broadcasts exemplary development projects implemented and accomplished by villages themselves. Since other villages get informed about it through Radio Progress, they create awareness of their possibilities and options for change, reflect on them within their families and communities and take action. Since this creation of awareness and reflection takes part on family as well as community levels, development benefit can be confirmed on several levels. However, it has to be emphasised, like shown in section 5.3, that it is not the station's task to directly solve the listeners' physical grievances but to conscientize them on certain issues that will encourage them to take action. The analysis emphasised a predominantly positive performance of Radio Progress, enriched by the enthusiastic and active perception and appreciation from the listener's side.

Although the analysis drew a positive picture we are still talking about one of the most deprived region of Ghana with comparably low development standards.

The intermediate conclusions I applied deriving from the analysis of my dimensions in the former chapter will allow for a final answer of my overwhelming research question. In the final step of my thesis I will compare the findings of perceptions, performance and interaction to allow conclusions regarding the station's potential to foster dialogue in the Freirean sense and the potential to function as a tool to foster the community's development. In this process I will connect the findings to the normative theoretical approach of Community Radio Development to allow for an answer about the conformity of theory and practice.

## 6 Conclusion

Since a shift in development thinking over the last decades recognised the relevance of program implementations which are endogenous to the perceptions and backgrounds of the persons concerned, this work aimed at understanding the degree to which mutual communication can contribute to change and development. More specifically, this research was conducted in order to evaluate to what extent CR as communication facilitator can contribute to the development of its listening community.

The shift from a top-down towards a rather participatory approach moved the relevance of Communication for Development high on the agenda of development thinking. This process changed the meaning of communication from a mere information transmitter towards a crucial tool for the creation and stimulation of awareness as basis for change. Since the need for own information channels, based on the peoples' cultural backgrounds and demands became recognised in the field of PDC, CR builds a crucial tool in this process.

My theoretical framework builds upon Paulo Freire's theory of critical conscious with which he highly contributed to the field of PDC. Since Freire emphasises that conscientization in the sense of problem reflection and consequent action ideally has to be undertaken by the people themselves, applying the case study of Radio Progress and its specific UW community was relevant to evaluate such context-specific dynamics by gaining an in-depth insight into 'the people's' needs and their according solution-finding processes and action.

To answer the research question I referred to my theoretical framework and conducted a three-month fieldwork in the UWR of Ghana. Besides analysing the performance of Radio Progress I visited several villages and thus the station's audience in all districts of the region.

In the following section I will comment on the intermediate conclusions of my findings concerning the station's performance and the related listeners' perceptions, I explicitly presented in the former chapter. Since there I presented a detailed analysis,

referring to each defined concept of my research and concluding in answers to my sub-questions, this chapter will present an overarching conclusion. Thus, I will take the underlying Freirean theory to illustrate how the analysed findings contribute to each step of his applied development process.

## **6.1 Empirical results**

This section will comment on the main research findings of the station's performance and the perception of its listeners about a potential development impact. It will include the both sides' understanding of development. I will base the conclusion of my findings on the Freirean idea of Participatory Communication for Development.

Beforehand it is necessary to mention that this conclusion is based on Radio Progress and its specific listening community in the Ghanaian Upper West Region. Consequently, the findings can not necessarily be generalized to other regions and countries. To generalise the findings comparable research in other areas or countries would be necessary. Nonetheless, this research will offer an approach on how to evaluate the impact of Community Radio Development. Therefore the results can serve as an exemplary picture of Community Radio performance for participatory development. Building up on the detailed analysis of all applied dimensions in the former chapter, this final conclusion will reflect on the analysed findings in a way that reveals a potential development in the Freirean sense, namely awareness-creation, reflection and resulting action.

### **6.1.1 Performing beneficial? – How Radio Progress tries to contribute to its listeners' development**

Paolo Freire emphasised the high relevance of conscientization and dialogue for the deprived and marginalised in order to create awareness of their situation, reflect upon it and take consequent action to improve their living situations. Information access constitutes the crucial precondition for any awareness-creation. Only if people get informed about the reality in their country and other parts of the world, will they be able

to face the broader picture and, more important, to rank their own situation. This first step of conscientization is completely based on access to information.

Today, as illustrated in chapter one, a rapidly growing global media system possesses global information and news every day. However, the concentration-process of the global media industry does not allow for information access and a consequent awareness creation that could lead to changes in many developing parts of the world, like in the Ghanaian Upper West.

Since the commercial media market is characterised by this exclusive structure, the 'basic tool' for conscientization and creation of dialogue in the Freirean sense can only be realised through adequate and as such inclusive forms of media, like Community Radio. Considering the deprived situation intensified by unequal donor policies within Ghana, an additional disadvantage has been evaluated. Therefore, my research area can be described as 'two-folded deprived' and burdened with a double-sided hindrance towards development progress. First, being left out of the global information stream constitutes a hindrance in awareness-creation. Second, this lack of information- and expression source creates a barrier to donor access and furthermore keeps potential donors uninformed about their needs as no 'outgoing' information streams exist. Consequently, the establishment of Radio Progress in 1997 can be clearly seen as a first step towards the enabling of information access and the theoretical possibility of Upper West communities to express their needs and grievances – the basic step towards potential development achievements. Therefore, the mere existence of the station can generally be considered as a first development achievement.

Compared to the station's preamble and hence self-set principles, Radio Progress adopted adequate cornerstones towards a potential fulfilment of CRB for Development, like outlined in chapter two. Beyond a mere theoretical approach of those targets, the research assessed the stations practical efforts towards its commitment of facilitating their community's development.

Providing that the station principally broadcasts style in the major local languages, it fosters inclusive action and as such stands out from mainstream, exclusive broadcasting strategies. A further successful fulfilment of community commitment and as

such precondition for potential development achievement refers to the station's reflection of its audience's diversity in religious and cultural aspects.

Three beneficial characteristics of the station's performance over its content's ability to support its listening community in achieving development derives from the analysed dimensions in the former chapter. These aspects are direct education, offering a platform and acting as a mediator between the listeners and external donors as well as governmental instances. The station is concerned with all three functions: The analysis of its performance identified the intense regard of formal as well as non-formal education programs. Those programs play a crucial role in the creation-process of awareness and as such conscientization of deprived living situations and enlightenment on how to improve these situations as well as the advantages of it. I also include the broadcasting genre of news in this context as it additionally aims at the creation of awareness. By broadcasting national and international news and, moreover, discussing selected news-topics on air, the station informs its community about external circumstances and changes and enables the listeners to rank their situation in a broader picture. Consequently, the station contributes to its listeners' ability to compare, conscientize, and consequently reflect on their situation.

The creation of an open platform for dialogue is realised through the station's intense focus on programs with a direct participatory function – their discussion and phone-in formats. It emphasises the station's efforts to directly empower their listeners to 'feed the station' with their concerns and as such to 'take over the stick' and take the lead of what passes through the transmitter. The openness to the audience is mainly generated through this key aspect which steps beyond a mere enabling of participation but rather really steps towards the idea of ownership. The ownership aspect can be confirmed for the program structure which clearly offers a platform.

Additionally, the analysis pointed out the station's efforts to act as a mediator between its listeners and external donors. Hence, the station makes a further effort in achieving development for its listening community by passing the communities' development needs to governmental and non-governmental instances and by informing the listeners about potential development aid and projects of active development bodies. The analysis clarifies the sound function of Radio Progress as mediator between their

programs, other organisations, the regional governance and the community as well as its function as generator for development.

Considering this three-folded performance, Radio Progress' attempts towards achieving development can be intensely reflected in the theoretical approach of Paulo Freire: Education and news-information conscientization through the creation of awareness. Following up on this, the listeners perceive the chance to reflect and discuss their situation by making use of the offered platform for, consequently, finding ways for development-improving action and standing up for their own development.

The station's performance also uncovered several limitations: Listeners are not involved in decision making procedures which are reserved to the station's board. However, many programs are sustained through direct participation or direct implemented by groups of the community. Furthermore, a weakness concerning consequent evaluation has been uncovered. Moreover, the analysis showed the station's awareness of this absence. Additionally, the station seems to have a clear problem concerning a stable coordination as well as motivation of staff. Nevertheless, the station keeps running and is appreciated and intensively used by its listeners. Overall, lacks towards a consequent and all-embracing evaluation as well as a more professional trained staff structure, like clarified in the intermediate conclusions, is predominantly based on the station's consequent commitment to CRB and as such its non-profitable structure. The non-profit character of Radio Progress causes funding problems which limit the ability to approach the villages and conduct evaluations in a more intense way as well allowing for more paid employment.

Reflecting on these findings of my analysis, Radio Progress seems to have some struggles. Nevertheless, the problems Radio Progress is facing seem to be typical challenges encountering the specific character of CR. The analyzed efforts towards achieving development for its listening community, compared to the listeners' perceptions of the station's performance and their own needs will point out the interfaces between both actors.

### **6.1.2 The listening community – does Radio Progress contribute to our development?**

By its intensive usage of the station the community shows its high demand and appreciation of information. Specifically due to the language aspect, a high rate of general access and high appreciation of the programming is achieved. The community lives with the rhythm of the radio's programming and in the engagement of the program design by filling the airtime with their concerns and demands. As the analysis showed, they use it as their communication base as well as their tool for information education. Apparently, they trust in what they learn and receive through the airwaves and as such also from their 'neighbour communities'. Furthermore, they are highly engaged in carrying on the information and messages they receive through the station. By making extensive use of the platform the station offers, they furthermore 'extend this platform' by carrying the information into their communities and houses.

This detailed analysis of program appreciation and the evaluated intensive usage underlined their expressed conviction that Radio Progress reflects their demands. The analysis furthermore uncovered that the station serves them with intense and apparently highly appreciated moral support through religious programming for all their religious and cultural diversity.

The examination of listeners' perceptions showed that they appreciate and intensely embrace the station's efforts towards achieving their development, namely education, offering a platform and mediating between them and external development institutions.

The research furthermore identified the community's growing awareness of the station's possible function in generating those materialistic development concerns they prioritise. Moreover, it showed the growing awareness of the necessity for own action and possible self-development generated through the station's educating messages. The listeners confirmed behavioural changes, changes from a passive expectation for external donors to 'develop them' towards an active, conscientized behaviour of 'searching' for possibilities to develop themselves and own action to generate development aid. It additionally strengthened the positive effect of mutual debate and reflection on their situations and potential action for improvement. They take action not only out of what

they learn through the educative programs of the station but furthermore out of what they learn from each other. Consequently, the station unites its audience for common reflection and thus creates the effect of developmental action.

The listeners' intensively positive perception on 'their' radio station, evaluated through my research, might seem extreme at first glance. However, it has to be considered that Radio Progress was the first station in the UWR and is the only accessible information and expression channel for the majority of the UW society as they are based on information in their local languages and information input which is relevant for their circumstances.

### **6.1.3 Accordance in development perceptions**

The notion and meaning of development was analysed at the station's and the listener's perception. The results showed both sides' awareness of the same needs. Moreover, it uncovered the constitutive as well as complementing function the station can capture in the process of achieving those development demands set by the community: complementing in the sense of acquiring material help through their broadcasting formats.

## **6.2 Radio Progress – our voice and development contributor?**

The analysis clarified the intensive use the listeners' make of the station in a passive as well as active way. The focuses the station sets to achieve development-benefit for its listeners are apparently concordant with the listeners' dominant appreciations of the station's existence and performance. From this point of view the station's problems in organisation seem not to hinder the station's positive performance towards achieving development for its listening community. Therefore, the station can clearly be seen as pathfinder and awareness-creator and facilitator in generating development demanded by the communities.

Radio Progress is conscientizing through education, fostering reflection and dialogue through its open platform and generating consequent action through additionally mediating through its listeners and other development institutions. Concluding, Radio

Progress, in collective engagement with its listeners, is giving a voice, making a change, empowering people to take action for their own change and fosters a vitally progressing developing civil society.

Certainly, Radio Progress fulfils other development attempts than offering direct materialistic aid like development organisations. However, Radio Progress sets the fundament for relevant steps of development within the region and of its communities in the Freirean sense. Radio Progress can be seen as the only instance within the whole region which realises one crucial human right: the right of information and expression. Radio Progress gives a voice and creates dialogue which leads to development beneficial action – it contributes to the development of its audience in the Ghanaian Upper West Region.

We can build upon what Bertold Brecht already discovered in the early 1930s: what a wonderful apparatus broadcasting can be for development if it gives a voice to its listeners, creates mutual dialogue and understanding as well as awakens awareness within its listening communities and among external donors.

## **Recommendations**

As an outcome of this study there are several recommendations to make for the station, the listeners as well as in general.

Some recommendations can be made to Radio Progress and its community. The station seems to provide the Upper West people with what they needed – a voice to make themselves heard and to communicate with each other. Since the research showed that most limitations are due to the restraints in financial stability some stronger effort to receive funding would be advisable. Without undermining the non-profit character, Radio Progress could put more emphasise on some fundraising activities. More financial flexibility could solve most of the limitations the station is facing. Furthermore, the station board should pay more attention to a stable coordination of the station. The formerly absent and recently not existing coordination might bear negative impact on the staff motivation. Moreover, this rather unorganised coordination possibly restricts a consequent performance and a stringent development of the programming as well as potential improvement strategies.

Some advice can be addressed to the listening communities. The research showed how vital the listeners handle information and educative input they receive through the station and as such also from other villages. By internal clustering of information and output through internal reflection they could even intensify the mutual learning effect the programming offers. Communities could form a committee to which people can address their grievances, demands and ideas on a frequent basis and which could present these collected information to the station. Such an organised information collection and transfer could overcome a crucial obstacle to participate for many people - the restriction to call or visit the station on their own.

Some recommendations can be made in general although some comparative research in other regions would be helpful. Community Radio, without doubt, can be seen as an efficient and supportive medium for rural societies. Although Community Radio

faces challenges due to its specific structure, the overarching positive output of this case study showed that it can nevertheless be of high benefit for the people. With more support to this form of radio from governmental as well as donor-side, those stations bear high potential in development processes. External support in training staff of Community stations could be a compensating factor for the stations' financial limitations in employing professional staff and train their volunteers. As such this input could benefit to the quality of those stations. Donor organisations should be aware of the mediating possibilities Community Radio entails and make intensive use of it.

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## Appendix

### Questions to the Community

Name

Age

Primary language?

English?

Religion?

Education? (Literate, Illiterate)

Occupation (or current main daily activity)?

Access

Do you have an own radio?

Do you have access to any other medium than radio (TV, newspaper, internet)?

Do you know Radio Progress?

Do you listen frequently to Radio Progress?

How often do you listen to Radio Progress?

Are your favorite / most relevant programs broadcasted at an adequate daytime for you?

Ownership

Can you go to the station and talk to the staff whenever you want? Do you do this?

Do you think / have the feeling that Radio Progress considers your needs and interests?

Do you feel like part of the radio?

Would you say the radio is part of your community / belongs to the community?

Why do you have this feeling?

Relevance

Do you have the possibility to inform the station about your interests through going there, calling them et cetera? Do you make use of this?

Is it your favorite radio or do you prefer Radio Upper West? Why?

What programs of Radio Progress do you like to listen to?

Do you consider the programs of RP as useful and interesting for yourself?

Does Radio Progress have programs that are especially interesting or relevant for you (as a woman, etc.)

Does Radio Progress ever come to your village to ask for your interests and needs?

In what way(s) is the station useful for the development of 1) you 2) your family 3) your village?

Are there any aspects you wish Radio Progress would broadcast? (Aspects that you would consider as important for your development)

Are there any other organizations etc. that come to your village and help to improve the community's situation?

Would you say what they do is more effective?

#### Platform

Are local problems and needs of your community discussed through the radio?

Do you take part in these discussions on air?

Does Radio Progress address local problems or needs in their programming?

Do you think the station can help to find solutions for your villages / for your private demands? Could you give any example?

Would you say Radio Progress has helped yourself in any private situation?

Have you learned relevant things through the radios programming?

Would you prefer any changes in the radios programming? Any advices?

What would you say your village / region needs most for more development?

## **Questions to radio staff**

Name

Religion

Where from

Status in Radio Station (volunteer, employee, ...)

Since how long do you work for the station?

What do you think is the most important aspect of development for the listening community / the region?

What do you think are the most important aspects Radio Progress can do for its listeners' development?

Do you think the listening community identifies itself with the station and its programming?

There is no difference between Radio Upper West and your station in reaching and meeting the demands of the listening public. Is this assertion true or not?

What do you think are the most important aspects that distinguish the programming of Radio Progress from other stations like Radio Upper West?

Do you think Radio Progress has the potential to contribute to the development of the region and its listeners?

How do you think the programming of Radio Progress contributes to the development? (Can you give any examples of your families or communities life?)

If you are asked to suggest a change in one of your programs, what would you have to say? (Any suggestion that can lead to improvement in your programs)

## **Questions to station coordinator and other responsible persons**

Name

Religion

Status in Radio Station (volunteer, employee, ...)

Function in Station

Since how long do you work for the station?

Which districts of the Upper West Region are reached by the radios airwaves?

Who is involved in the decision making of the stations programming?

Does the station have a representative decision-making committee or something comparable?

How is the station funded?

How is the structure of station staff (gender, religion, age, volunteering, ...)?

How do you select your staff?

#### Programming

Is the program adapted to the communities interests? How?

Does the station respond to the communities interests?

Are the interests of all groups in the society (religion, gender, ethnicity) equally reflected in the programming?

Does the station consider different day structures of their listening community in their programming?

#### Organizational structure

Is the programming representative of the community? How does Radio Progress realize that?

Are the voices and demands of the community frequently evaluated?

Does the station go into the villages that are harder to reach?

Does the station allow for live phone-ins and support open discussions for all groups within the listening community?

What kind of development programs does the station broadcast?

Does the station have specific development programs for different villages / communities considering their specific circumstances?

How does the station define development?

#### Representativeness

Is the station hold through a community trust or a foundation?

Are all groups of the community represented in the staff (gender, ethnicity, religion)?

Follow up questions to station:

How many people are working at the station?

Structure of staff concerning

Age, Gender religion, Home district, Employed / volunteers

How many professional trained?

How are the others 'prepared' for working at the station?

About how many announcements per day / week?

About how many phone many phone-ins per phone-in program?

How is the funding structure of the station?

% out of announcements

% out of programs by NGOs, churches or other organizations

% out of donations

Other sources > which

What people are members of the board?

Who is the station manager?

What are the biggest challenges for the station?

What are the biggest hindrances for further development of the station?

Are there any current plans of further development for the station / programming?

Who is responsible for the selection of the staff?

