



MDDA PRESENTS IMPACT STUDY IN PARLIAMENT

The MDDA presented the recently completed Study into the Impact of the MDDA to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Communications in February 2018. The wide-ranging Impact Study was commissioned in 2016 with the brief to reflect and evaluate the extent to which the MDDA is responding to its mandate of community media development, and to describe the impact of MDDA funded projects in terms of how they have made a difference in the communities they serve.

The study concluded that the MDDA has been able to carry out different aspects of its mandate to a greater or lesser degree and that political parties, government and stakeholder groups saw the need to build a thriving community and small commercial sector. Through its grant funding, the agency has channelled resources to the community and small commercial media sector and, in this way, contributed towards the expansion of ownership and control as well as access of media to historically disadvantaged communities. This is evidenced in the burgeoning of both community and small commercial media, which is being published or broadcast in all indigenous languages.

The study further noted that, as much as there has been progress, limitations – in terms of the broader media landscape and the agency itself - had impacted the sector negatively, citing a restrictive MDDA budget, and laws and regulations inhibiting sufficient allocation of MDDA funds to training and capacity building, identified as a core need. Issues with project sustainability centred around funding criteria and the impasse with government and the commercial sector on advertising support for projects. Internally, organisational instability was a limitation, while the media landscape presented its own unique challenges, due to the recession and technology disruptions within the media industry, resulting in media concentration becoming an increasing threat. Despite the challenges, the study noted that media projects presented successes and opportunities against all odds.

“The findings of the Impact Study will provide key input into the MDDA’s strategic planning processes, ensuring that it can continue to play a vital role in providing media access to all, in a rapidly changing media landscape. In addition, the Impact Study will be valuable in the upcoming review of the MDDA Act,” said Acting Chairperson of the MDDA Board, Musa Sishange.



Board member Dr Nombeko Mbava, Acting CEO William Baloyi and Acting Board Chairperson, Musa Sishange, presenting the Impact Study in Parliament



REDUCING HIV/TB STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

The MDDA, in partnership with the Soul City Institute for Social Justice, ran a Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Training Programme for Community Media, with 31 print and broadcast projects attending the workshops held in three provinces of South Africa. Community media attending hailed from KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and the Free State and were selected from areas where HIV and TB are heavily concentrated.

The training course encouraged community media to contribute to decreasing the rate of HIV and TB prevalence in South Africa, by stimulating dialogue and promoting awareness around HIV and TB stigma related issues, as well as by alerting the community to its responsibility to reduce the occurrence of such stigma. Reducing the rate of self-reported HIV and TB stigma by 50% is one of five priority goals of the South African National Strategic Plan on HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and TB, while reducing stigma and discrimination to ensure access to services is a related goal. This objective is best served when the rights of those living with HIV, STIs and/or TB are respected, protected and promoted.

Attending the two day workshop in Bloemfontein, Free State was Michael Menyatso of Phetoho News, who said: “The training made me realize that it has to start with us, and not by pretending but by loving and living what we are writing in our newspapers. It is possible that this mountainous problem can be eliminated and we congratulate Soul City, together with the MDDA, for responding to these widespread challenges facing our communities.”

“Community media is an important social platform in promoting awareness through sharing of information around the stigma associated with HIV and TB,” says Acting MDDA CEO, William Baloyi. “The MDDA, in collaboration with its partners, is committed to capacitating our community media sector to report and raise awareness on such issues, and in this way to contribute to fostering communities in which the human rights of all are respected and preserved, as enshrined in our Constitution.

The workshops were led by Soul City Training Facilitators, Hannah Mabika and Richard Buhali.



MONITORING & EVALUATION

A critical component in ensuring the success of the MDDA's project funding is the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the Agency's community media beneficiaries to ensure that they comply fully with the grant-in-aid agreement. The intelligence gathered through M&E plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the MDDA's strategic direction is responsive and relevant. Most importantly, it is through M&E that the Agency can measure the impact the funded community media projects have on the communities they serve, and, overall, the impact on the MDDA mandate as stipulated in the Act.

Heading the team is Thembelihle (Thembi) Sibeko, Programme Manager for the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit within the Projects Directorate.

Thembi's extensive qualifications, including a B.Luris Degree and certificates in Project Management and M&E, are reinforced by more than 15 years' experience within the Public Sector in M&E, strategy, policy development and research management. Her roles at the MDDA, which she joined in June 2008 and which includes 15 months as Acting CEO of the Agency, and at the National Development Agency, have given her an in depth understanding of the development environment.

For Thembi, the community media sector is one of South Africa's most critical democratic instruments and she is proud that her role has enabled her to utilize her extensive experience and academic background to, amongst others, develop the framework and strategic direction for the M&E unit, contribute to the development of the funding model for the Agency, develop survey and M&E tools, and impart skills to team members. In the course of her work she has formed strong, working partnerships with a variety of stakeholders from government and senior Cabinet Ministers, through to industry and community bodies.

Outside work, Thembi is committed to her family and spiritual wellbeing and her role as a Board Member of a charity organisation reflects her passion to add value to those in need whenever possible.

Currently studying for a Masters in Public and Development Management, Thembi plans, over the next 5 years, to complete her studies, while also seeking a position at executive level and participating in different organisations at Board level.

For M&E Co-ordinator, Gugulethu (Gugu) Pamella Bonnet, the interaction she has with the different projects funded by the MDDA is very fulfilling. Gugu joined the MDDA in 2014 after interning at the community radio station, ICORA FM, while also holding down a part time job at Woolworths.

Currently studying for a post graduate degree in M&E, Gugu's interests outside work are focused on her family but she tries to participate in Parkrun every weekend - a 5 km run, and also volunteers her time in helping others to live better lives. Looking to the future, she would like to join the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.

With a Bachelor of Dramatic Arts Honours (Theatre Studies and Film Studies) from the University of Durban Westville



MDDA Monitoring & Evaluation Team (l to r): Nompumelelo Maduna, Thembelihle Sibeko and Gugulethu Bonnet.

(UKZN-Westville), supported by qualifications in Project Management, M&E Co-ordinator, Nompumelelo Maduna (Mpume) has extensive exposure in the public sector and the established media organizations. The latter involved both working within a media production house and project managing media involvement, the focus of which was the use of the media to promote nation building and social cohesion.

Joining the MDDA in 2010 gave Mpume the opportunity to supplement her background in the mainstream broadcast industry (in particular the SABC) with exposure to Community Media, as well as the opportunity to further her communications experience. While at the MDDA, Mpume's horizons have stretched beyond South Africa as she has been involved in supporting the development agenda, participating in the National Adjudication Committee (NAC) of the SADC Media Awards, run annually by the Southern African Development Community (SADC).



The SADC Media Awards adjudication committee met at the MDDA to adjudicate entries for this year's Awards, planned to take place in October 2018.

Ngqushwa 99.5 FM -

Beacon of Hope for the community of NGQUSHWA

MDDA beneficiary, Ngqushwa FM has become a beacon of hope for the little town of Ngqushwa in Perdie and its surrounding areas in the Eastern Cape. The station has only been on air since May 2017 and has recently received its first AMPS reading, boasting 23 000 listeners already. The main languages of broadcast are isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English and it is licensed to broadcast in Ngqushwa, Grahamstown, Alexandria, Seymour, Fort Beaufort, Port Alfred, Alicedale, Alice and Port Elizabeth, amongst other places.

Station Manager Lutho Mbeve and his partner, Sphiwe Boqwana, head of news, are already putting this milestone number of listeners to good use by convincing businesses around Perdie to support the community's mouthpiece. The station has eight fulltime presenters and is living the dream of being a true community radio station, with the different age groups and population sections of Ngqushwa and Perdie fully represented across the programmes that are broadcast 24/7.

The young people in Perdie rose to the call when Mr Mbeve and his team sent out a promo to the community for learners from Grade 10 to 12, who are interested in learning more about radio presenting, to attend training during the school holidays and on weekends. Ngqushwa FM now has 14 students within the community of Perdie actively participating in the station programming. "We are in constant conversation with their families and teachers to make sure that the slot they have on the community radio station doesn't disrupt their schoolwork," says Mr Mbeve. "Our focus is on nurturing, growing and developing our communities."

This is not the only contribution Ngqushwa FM has made towards ensuring that the community of Perdie is fully focused on education. At the start of the school year, the station, which is registered under the Moponi entity, donated school uniforms and shoes to those in need within the community of Perdie.

Mr Mbeve dreams of having 70 presenters on board, made up of 20 students and the other 50 from the community of Perdie. The feedback has been good so far - even the prayer ladies of Perdie have their own church service slot called Ezamabandla, on Thursdays from 12-3pm.

When the station went on air, one of the Ngqushwa FM listeners, Mxolisi Gayi said, "We hope that the station will act as the voice for our community to put our issues forward to those in government." The station has more than delivered on this hope as it recently embarked on key community awareness programmes, such as the Outside Broadcast roadshow it did in partnership with the Water and Sanitation Department in Perdie.

Mr Mbeve is certainly achieving the ambitions he had as a media student at Walter Sisulu University and is taking the whole community of Perdie along with him by allowing them to be hands on. The team's good work has not gone unnoticed. Ngqushwa FM has received eight nominations from the Eastern Cape Music Awards, spread across eight programs and four presenters.

Ngqushwa FM attributes most of its successes to the station's partnership with the MDDA. "We are very grateful to the MDDA for answering our call for funding - every cent was put to good use. We'd also like to thank the community of Perdie and Ngqushwa for working with us, since this is their community radio station."

To stay sustainable, Ngqushwa FM aims to budget well, save the gains they plan to earn from the businesses within the community of Perdie and surrounding areas and always try to share some of these with the community they are part of.



Sphiwe Boqwana, Head of News.



Giving back to the community: Ngqushwa FM, donates school uniforms to learners.



Station Manager Lutho Mbeve with his team and visitors from the MDDA.



Eastern Cape Women's Magazine - a powerful mouthpiece for rural women

This year (2018) sees the Eastern Cape Women's Magazine celebrating eight years of its beneficiary partnership with the MDDA. the bilingual (Xhosa and English) small commercial provincial magazine's mission is to profile and document work done by women in the rural villages of the Eastern Cape in their different initiatives. The story telling has covered rural women across the length and breadth of the Eastern Cape Province for more than 10 years.



The work showcased by the Eastern Cape Women's Magazine includes traditional beadwork, traditional dancing, small scale farming as well as social issues within these rural communities. The magazine also promotes pride in the isiXhosa language and culture, and sometimes acts as a mediator between local communities and the local government. In fact, it has become the biggest marketing tool for projects such as Icandilanga Women's Project and Imveliyethu Women's Project, amongst others within the OR Tambo District Municipality.

The founder and editor of the Eastern Cape Women's Magazine, Ms Pamela Timakwe, is a former community media journalist who was born and raised in the deep rural village of former Transkei, eXhweni. Ms Tinakwe was introduced to community media in her younger years as a Media Studies student at Rhodes University under the Sol Plaatje Media Institute.

She found herself delving deeper into Community media when she joined Agenda Feminist Media as an intern, to work with community media on a national level. She ended up providing weekly information on gender issues, written in four languages, isiXhosa, English, SeSotho and isiZulu, to 38 community radio stations, including Ukhozi FM.

When Pamela joined Unitra Community Radio 97.0 as a community radio presenter, she was warned that her feminist ideas may not fly, but, nevertheless, she was given a show: Izwi Lamakhosikazi (voice of women).

"For the next seven years, my show provided information, education, development and entertainment news to rural communities with special sensitivity towards marginalized groups. The platform to talk to these hard-working women, learning about

the difficulties they faced, but still coming out triumphant, made me even prouder of myself as a product of a rural upbringing," says Pamela.

Creating the Eastern Cape Women's Magazine was the next logical step, and the voices that Pamela had spent time with on air were transferred to print. The magazine was first funded by the MDDA in 2010 for an amount of R1 314 600.00. The grant support went towards printing, office rental and distribution, amongst others.

During Women's month (August 2017), the Eastern Cape Women's Magazine held its first rural women's summit at Matshongwe location in Mthatha, Eastern Cape. The summit was attended by more than 200 women's projects, which had all been featured within the magazine. Such was the success, the magazine decided to make this an annual event and will be holding the second summit on the 27 April 2018.

As a leader, Ms Tinakwe believes in continuous education and has attended courses in media through the National Electronic Media Institute of S.A.(NEMISA), Institute of Advanced Journalism, as well as short courses in different institutions. She has also been recognised for her writing and rural empowerment by the Association of Independent Publishers (AIP) and the SABC.

Says Ms Tinakwe:

"Believe in what you're doing and continuously work on it. Focus and associate yourself with people who speak the same language.

Educate yourself about what you are involved in and find people who are more powerful than you to mentor you.