

**COMMUNITY RADIOS FOR SUSTAINABLE DOMESTIC TOURISM IN AFRICA: A  
REFLECTION ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNITY RADIOS IN  
PROMOTING DOMESTIC TOURISM IN TANZANIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper aimed at underscoring the significance of community radio stations as an avenue for promoting domestic tourism in Africa, specifically in Tanzania. The paper attempts to reflect on the importance of incorporating community radios in the promotion of sustainable domestic tourism in the developing countries. The paper also points out some of the challenges facing tourism industries in the developing countries. It also presents and discusses diverse case studies on the significance of community radios in promoting domestic tourism. The paper also highlights the state and nature of domestic tourism in Tanzania. The reviewed case studies and literature reveals that community radio stations have significant contribution in promoting domestic tourism in the country. This is due to the fact that the community radio stations are basically people centered stations which allow community members to fully participate and contribute to such radio stations, thus, the utilization of such community radio stations is paramount for the promotion of domestic tourism in the country.*

**KEYWORDS:** the significance, community radio, promoting, sustainable domestic tourism

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### ***Domestic Tourism***

The word tourism has been defined in diverse perspectives by different scholars. According to Demunter and Dimitrakopoulou (2011), the word tourism means the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for a specific period of time for leisure, business and other purposes. On the other hand, the word domestic tourism is the situation whereby people or residents of a given country travelling to and staying in places only within their country but outside their usually environment (Demunter and Dimitrakopoulou, 2011). In general perspectives, the concept of tourism appear to have been considered as an international phenomenon whereby it involves people travelling outside their own countries for leisure, business, holidays, or simply to enjoy a mild climate for a week or so.

Unlike in developing nations, domestic tourism has been one of the sources of income in the developed countries. For example, in 2011, residents from the Netherlands, Slovenia, Belgium and Luxembourg were reported to have spent their leisure time within their own countries. Likewise, it was recorded that more than three out of four holiday trips made by residents from these countries were within their home countries. Moreover, in 2010, residents of the European Union

have been reported to have made more than one billion holiday trips, amongst those trips, over 800 million were domestic trips (77 %) and almost 250 million were outbound trips (23 %). In addition to the trips made, it is estimated that in the same period, households in the European Union spent an estimated 192 billion euro during domestic holiday trips, as compared to 181 billion euro on outbound holiday trips.

### ***Domestic Tourism in Tanzania***

According to Tanzania Tourism Sector Report (2008), Tanzania's tourism sector is amongst the fastest growing sectors in the country and is considered to be amongst the sources of foreign exchange in the country. It is reported that during that period (in 2008) the earnings from tourism sector was about 1,288.7 million USD compared to 770,376 in 2007. This confirms that the tourism sector brings much foreign exchange in the country. According to Luhanga (2014), the tourism sector directly accounts for about 16% of the GDP and nearly 25% of total export earnings in Tanzania. The sector also plays a major role in enhancement of national and international peace and understanding.

Apart from earning foreign exchange, the tourism sector in Tanzania is also considered to be amongst the job creator sector after the agricultural sector. It is reported by the World Travel Tourism Council (2009) that the sector had created about 19, 000 jobs by 2008. This is a remarkable contribution of the tourism industry in the country because it enables the young skilled generation in Tanzania get employment in the tourism industry, thus, it is still very vital for the government to promote the habit of making domestic tourism among Tanzanians in order to create more jobs.

Moreover, apart from bringing much foreign exchange in the country, the tourism sector has also been experiencing some dropdown on the number of international tourists whereby between January and June 2009, the number of international arrivals dropped by 16.5 percent to 303,819, compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. In order to cover the loss caused by the dropdown of international tourists, it is only the promotion of domestic tourism in the country would help the country to continue generating incomes from the domestic tourists. In other words, there is a great need for the African countries to equally consider the contributions of both international tourism and domestic tourism as the major sources of income in the country and for sustainable development of the tourism sector in the country.

According to Michael (2009), the number of domestic tourists in Tanzania is very low and dominated by foreign tourists. One of the major reasons which has led to the low number of domestic tourists in Tanzania is due to lack of enough knowledge and because many residents see tourism attractions as solely for foreign visitors. This is quite different from countries like Namibia which is said to have done well in domestic tourism whereby the number is domestic tourists and its contribution to the economic growth of the country is somehow visible (Moseley, Sturgis, & Wheeler, 2007). Thus, it is paramount then for all stakeholders in the tourism sector to play part in encouraging Tanzanian residents and local communities to be part of the domestic tourism in the country. Moreover, it is imperative to note that involvement and participation of these

communities in the domestic tourism is central to the sustainable development of the tourism industry in the country. As such, the use of community radio would be an appropriate channel to make this participatory model work properly.

As an effort to strengthen the tourism sector in the country, Tanzania has somehow tried to put some emphasis on domestic tourism though there is still a low response amongst residents in the country. Among other efforts put forward by the Tanzanian government to boost domestic tourism in the country is through the recognition of the contribution of domestic tourism in the economic growth in the country, as such, both public and private sectors have somehow increased efforts to promote domestic tourism.

Among the few efforts done by the Tanzania government to promote domestic tourism in the country include the use of advertisements through the media. In addition to the media advertisements, the government also designed and uses local fairs such as “Karibu Travel Fair”, “Nane Nane” and “Saba Saba”. Generally, these fairs bring together various entrepreneurs, government, and nongovernment institutions sectors that bring and display their products or services to the general public. This allows such fairs to promote their services to the general public, thus, tourism sector in Tanzania also uses such fairs to promote their services including the significance of domestic tourism.

Moreover, as a way of encouraging residents to visit the national parks, museums’ and other attraction areas, the government of Tanzania has made sure that the entrance fees have remained low to the local Tanzanians compared to the international tourists. Currently, adults pay about 1,500 Tanzanian Shillings (less than one US Dollar) whereas children pay 500 Tanzanian Shillings to visit the parks, while for museums and antiquities the entrance fees for adults and children are 500 Tanzanian Shillings (adults) and 200 (children), respectively. This is an accredited initiative done by the Tanzanian government and is commendable to be adapted by other developing countries which need to promote domestic tourism in their countries.

There are so many advantages of encouraging domestic tourism in the country. This is because domestic tourism could aid in stimulating the economy and has the potential to create jobs for Tanzanians to help alleviate the high level of unemployment, which is currently climbing up. According to Mariki, Hassan, Maganga, Modest, & Salehe (2011), the tourism industry in Tanzania to become successful, domestic and international tourism should complement each other though it sounds like domestic tourism in Tanzania is very low. This is because domestic tourism in Tanzania is negligible with local residents mainly visiting friends and relatives (Musonda, 2000) despite that some can afford the park fees and may have time to travel around.

In summary, the state of domestic tourism in Tanzania appears not to be given much consideration by the government. Likewise, the promotion of the tourism attractions seem to target international tourists than domestic tourists, also the use of media and their contents seem to be directed to the international tourists than local citizens. Thus, in order for Tanzania to have a strong tourism sector, there is a need to consider and accept the contribution to domestic tourism in the economic growth of the country and to consider the use of diverse media by including community radio

stations in advertising and promoting domestic tourism in the country.

### ***An overview of Community Radios***

Currently there is no consensus on the definition of community radio. According to the *Guide for the Civil Society* (2015), a community radio has been defined as a radio for the people in a community. It is a radio of the people because it is a two-way process that is considered to empower people in the community to have opportunities to identify various problems around them and also create solutions to those problems. It enables the most vulnerable to participate in decisions for positive change in their lives. Moreover, community radio allows people to collaborate in producing programs on the radio which focuses on their local concerns and priorities. Moreover, a vibrant community radio is expected to help the remotest communities to participate not only into the national and global economies, but also to the development of knowledge-based economies. It is known to sharpen and improve governance by empowering people to hold both local and governments leaders accountable.

One of the common components of community radio stations is that they are people centered radio stations whereby they are established to serve a specific community or area. Gray (2002) argues that vibrant community radios are normally established and operated by community members themselves. They are sometimes established by Non-Governmental Organizations, while others are started as developmental projects, and some are started by community radio activists and supporters for community discussion and participation in their communities. Based on their nature, community radio stations serve a very significant role in providing various information in the areas they operate.

According to AMARC Africa (1998), vibrant community radios in an ideal world allow members of a community to gain access to information, education and entertainment just like what the mainstream media does. Moreover, vibrant community radios which are well utilized by the communities can serve as a platform for debate, exchange of ideas and reactions to plans and projects in a given community. Apart from being used as platforms for debates, community radios are also able to accommodate people's ideas and satisfy their spiritual and psychological wellbeing much better than any other form of broadcasting such as main stream media (AMARC Africa, 1998).

White (2013) observes that until 1985, there were fewer than 10 community radio stations in all of Africa but in 1990s Africa was shaken by rapid and profound political and social change whereby until 1998 they were hundreds of independent radio stations and community radio stations on the continent. It should be noted that amongst the first African countries to establish a community radio per se was Kenya where Homa Bay community radio station was established in May, 1982.

One of the aspects which differentiate community radios from other mainstream radio station or commercial radio stations is the issue of community participation (White, 2013). Community radios have a sense of belonging whereby all members of a given community have a feel of ownership. Amongst the key requirement of community participation in community radios ensures that members of the community are involved in the running of the station. Thus, community

members may be fully or partially involved in the board members or trustees, policy-making, management, selection and provision of programming, and production of programs on the stations.

### ***Community Radio in Tanzania***

Tanzania just like other developing countries in the world has got a few number of community radio stations across the country. However, based on the various definitions of what a community radio is, Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA, 2018) has categorized community radios into two: (i) *community radio commercial* and (ii) *community radio non-commercial*.

### ***Community Radio Commercial***

The community radio commercial in Tanzania are those radio stations which have some features of community radios but in nature they are commercially oriented. Most of their programs appear not to target the needs of their listeners or communities. Their major concentration is to maximize profit and not to serve the people in their localities, in other words, they are less to people participation like the purely community radios. Most of the community radio commercial in Tanzania are established at district level and thus they serve very few people in the country. Thus, there is a need for the government and or any other stakeholders in the country to invest more in community radios in order to allow majority of community members in other district participate to the developmental goals of the country through the various programs aired by community radios.

### ***Community Radio Non-commercial***

Apart from the presence of about 20 community radio stations in the country, Tanzania also has about 14 (11%) community radio stations which appear to purely accommodate characteristics of a community radio per se.

The difference between these two categories of community radios is that community radio commercial are those community radios which do engage in some advertisements and other strategies to make profit whereas the latter only focuses at serving the community with less attention on maximizing profit. However, there are other categories of radio stations listed by Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) as commercial radios 53 (41%), non-commercial radios 40 (31%), and 2 public radio stations (2%) and commercial radio stations.

Having pointed out the power and influence of the community radio stations amongst community members and surrounding communities, it is imperative to state that the current community radio stations available in Tanzania seem not to be representative for them to have any significant contributions in promoting domestic tourism initiatives in the country. Likewise, the available community radio stations in the country appear to miss some components to qualify them in the vibrant community radio stations as explained in the previous sections.

It is thus ironical that Tanzania with about a population of 55 million and 150 districts to rely on only 15 percent of community radio-commercial and 11 percent community radio-noncommercial is neither health for the developmental issues nor the millennium goals. This is because of the

expected vacuum of the flow of information from the community radio stations which have been reported to be more close and participatory to the majority of community members compared to the commercial radio station available (41%) in the country which mostly focus at maximizing profits.

The current state of radio stations in Tanzania appears to be dominated by the commercial radio stations (41%), followed by the noncommercial radio stations (31%), community radio-commercial (15%), community radio-noncommercial (11%), and public radio stations (2%). Based on the main characteristics and prime focus of commercial radio stations of making profit, it is likely that these radio stations have very little or no contributions in achieving the sustainable development goals.

Likewise, the nature and majority of the noncommercial radio stations (31%) in the country are religious radio stations which are mostly bombarded with religious programs and content. This also is an indicator that there is very little contribution of radio stations in Tanzania towards the achievement of the millennium goals and other social problems or opportunities. Surprisingly, there are only two public radio stations in the country which represents about 2% of all radio stations available in Tanzania. Therefore, in this regard the focus and interest of this paper is to highlight the need for the Tanzanian government and other media stakeholders on the need for expanding or establishing more community radio stations and if possible public radio stations across the country in order to allow diverse community members across the country use the community radio stations for their developmental, political, economic, and or social issues.

### **The Roles of Community Radios**

Community radio stations play diverse roles and functions in our communities. Apart from the traditional roles of the media in community (educating, entertainment, warning, criticizing, just a few to mention), community radios perfectly serve as the means to promote democracy, sustainable development, and peace in communities they operate in (Gustafsson, 2013). This is due to the fact that they (community radio) allow community members to share diverse information surrounding their communities. For example, citizens and non-citizens can develop their political understanding and work to take their problems to the attention of the bigger public. The establishment and existence of community radio stations have been very vital in the communities they operate because members in those communities have a greater chance to increase the partisan and social power, knowledge, and experience of those who participate (Sourou, 2013). According to Sourou (2013), community radios have a significance role to play especially in the rural areas. This is because they have power to reach out to people in rural settings, people who may not meet or converge in any other places. This is a very vital role played by the community radios bearing in minds that much of the population of Africa is rural, and this has been pointed out as a challenge for developmental projects.

Furthermore, community radios act as voice of the voiceless by allowing community members to participate and use the radio stations to give out their views on issues affecting their communities. For example, they may discuss on how they can manage their natural resources, raw materials, community affairs and many other issues. Moreover, community radios are tools for social justice because they effectively respond to a real need to be informed, which is a fundamental right of all



members in such communities (Sarr, 2014).

Likewise, community radios have the power and influence to the listeners and participants in focusing on local issues especially those which affects their communities; they can as well mobilize listeners and participants to fully engage in their community developmental issues (Sourou, 2013). In addition, community radios have a greater chance to empower marginalized groups by giving skills in political communication, helping them develop support networks, and programming for their basics needs or priorities in the community.

Moreover, community radios play significant roles in providing civic education during election periods to the prospective voters. According to Gustafsson (2013), the community radios fully engage in civic education. Gustafsson gives an example of the 2013 general election in Kenya where community radios played a major role. During the election period the community radio stations in Kenya informed citizens about their civic rights and responsibilities and provided them with the knowledge and information necessary for them to make an informed and sober decision making during the voting process.

Apart from provision of civic education, community radios do also engage in peace building during election periods. Since most of the elections in African countries have been characterized by conflicts and instability, community radios have been fully engaged in airing out peace messages, and sometimes they do invite and give airtime to any peace building agent on institution as a mechanism to restore peace and tranquility during the entire election process. In Kenya for example, during the 2013 general election, most of the community radios invited religious leaders and NGO representatives as an initiative to preach for a peaceful election in the country.

In the same line, community radios play a remarkable role in preventing or minimizing hate speeches during election periods especially in countries where ethnicity is a major problem. Hate speeches are so dangerous and illegal in any democratic countries as they can cause destruction in society. A visible example resulting from hate speeches based on ethnicity was in Rwanda whereby because of hate speeches anchored by the media, thousands of civilians lost their lives in the 1994 genocide. As a result, many community radio stations have devoted themselves in fighting hateful speeches during elections. For example in Kenya, during the 2013 general election, all media, including community radio stations were compelled and sensitized by the government about the use of hate speech. This move played an accredited and credible role throughout the election because the country witnessed a peaceful election compared to the 2007 election.

In a nutshell, the community radio stations are so powerful and essential communication tools to be recommended amongst community members. This is due to the fact that community radios operate and reach majority of the community members who mostly need and depend on such community radios to get informed of all matters affecting or likely to affect their communities. For example, through community radios, citizens are able to get diverse information about the performance of their leaders, developmental issues, participation in social or economic activities and many other opportunities surrounding their communities.

**Community Radios and the Promotion of Domestic Tourism**

Community radios have very significant contributions in promoting domestic tourism in Tanzania and elsewhere if they are well managed and utilized by the respective countries. Apart from their habitual roles of informing or educating citizens, community radios can also be used as catalyst in creating awareness and sensitizing local citizens on the importance of domestic tourism in a country. Moreover, community radios can be used as channels in advertising all attractive areas and other tourism sites where local individuals, families, colleagues, workmates, and other groups can go for recreations, leisure, picnics, and other adventure trips or outreach. In Asian countries, it is reported (Kumar, 2014) that community radios through advertisements of all key attractive areas has played an incredible contribution in boosting and awakening the citizens to participate in the domestic tourism, thus, it is a high time for Tanzania to fully utilize community radios in advertising and promoting domestic tourism in the country.

Another factor why community radios are so essential to be incorporated in the promotion of domestic tourism in Tanzania is due to the fact that community radios serve as mediators between tourism sector and society as Kumar (2014) confirms. According to Kumar (2014), modern day tourism is highly dependent on media reportage especially community radios because of their ability to act as mediators between the citizens and the tourism industry at large, it is thus paramount for Tanzanian government to invest more on community radios by establishing more community radios as well as utilizing the few community radios available in the country.

Furthermore, the use of community radios in promoting domestic tourism is also recommended by Okaka (2007). According to Okaka, the use of community radios in promoting domestic tourism is one of the best approaches for whoever wants to strengthen the industrial sector. Community radios not only help in creating awareness on the significance of domestic tourism but also help in disseminating well planned programmes designed to change the attitudes and perceptions of individuals towards domestic tourism (Okaka, 2007). The commendation made by Okaka if they are taken seriously and implemented by the African countries, they would lead into a positive change and improvement in the domestic tourism sector in the respective countries, Tanzania being one of those countries.

Likewise, since community radios are people's centered radio stations and operate on a participatory model, they are advantaged to influence as many people as possible to participate in the domestic tourism in the country if well utilized. Thus, with such an advantage, community radios should be used to raise awareness and shift public opinions about the concept of domestic tourism whereby it appears that majority of local people in Tanzania consider the concept of tourism as meant for international tourists alone.

Moreover, in order to make best use of community radios in promoting domestic tourism as Godahewa (2011) notes, citizens and all tourism stakeholders should be reminded that the development of tourism in a country is not only limited to increasing the number of hotels, restaurants, and other stuff, rather it has far more to do with encouraging and motivating individuals to create a culture of visiting the attractive or tourism places found within their countries. The community radios, in particular, can work closely with the governments and the



tourism sector in promoting domestic tourism in the country.

Furthermore, Kanyi (2014) says that in order to promote domestic tourism in a country one has to get rid of publicity through the local media more especially the community radios. Kanyi explains that publicity is the movement of diverse information and messages with the effects of increasing public awareness of a subject; thus, if such publicity is incorporated in the community radios in Tanzania it can cause positive results on the side of promoting domestic tourism in the country. The idea of Kanyi is justifiable in the sense that such publicity if well formulated and designed, it can reach direct the local residents who are usually users of community radios in areas where they are found.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has attempted to highlight the significance of community radio stations in promoting sustainable domestic tourism in Africa with reference to Tanzania domestic tourism industry. The paper highlights the importance of community radio stations as means of communication in the promotion of domestic tourism. It also points out the challenges facing community radio stations in African and how they affect the promotion of domestic tourism industry in Africa. The paper also reflects and highlights the disparities between the promotions of domestic tourism against international tourism. It points out that majority of the African countries have paid much attention in promoting international tourism compared to the domestic tourism. With this paper, it is considered that domestic tourism in African will be given equal attention as given to the international tourism because they can both help in the growth of their economies. It is also expected that this paper will have impact to the African countries especially in the aspect of integrating community radios in the promotion of domestic tourism which appears to have been neglected by most of the African countries.

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