Community Radio
Delivering Social Benefit

Researched and compiled by
Seán Ó Siochrú and Paul Butler, Nexus Research Cooperative
April 2020

BAI Foreword

It is almost 25 years since the first regulatory policy on community radio was published by the independent Irish broadcasting regulator, the IRTC.

Since then the media and regulatory landscape has been transformed and a further significant evolution is currently underway. Proposals for new legislation that will extend regulation to the online environment have been published and significant revisions to the Broadcasting Act 2009 are being proposed as part of this process. Against this backdrop the BAI launched its Community Media Action Plan in March 2019. The Action Plan has its roots in recommendations which emerged from an independent report on the community media sector prepared by Niamh Farren in January 2019.

Significant progress has been made over the past year in implementing the nine specific actions included in the Action Plan. Key amongst these was the development of an evaluation methodology that would specifically address the statutory requirement for community media to deliver a social benefit for the community served. This required the development of a definitional framework for the concept of social benefit and establishment of suitable viable methodologies to assess the extent to which the different elements of this framework had been delivered at a station and sectoral level. This was a conceptual and practical challenge and the BAI was delighted to work with Sean O Siochru and Nexus on this project.

Sean's unique national and international community media and development experience were critical in delivering a handbook which practitioners and other stakeholders can use to determine the value being created by community media operators at all levels within the community served. This holistic focus on value created for the community as individuals or collectively is critical to understanding and developing community media.

In addition to the handbook, the Nexus project produced a specific report on the application of the Social Benefit Framework to the community radio sector nationally using a methodology where stories collected from stations are assessed against a Theory of Change Framework. This was recognised by stakeholders as a significant outcome from the project and in this context, the BAI is delighted to support the publication of this abridged version of that report. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Community Foundation for Ireland in this element of the project.

While the COVID 19 crisis has impacted on the delivery of a range of activities the BAI is confident that the majority of the non-recurring actions under the 2019 Plan are now substantially complete. In this context the BAI has added an additional action for 2020 which reflects a commitment in the Broadcasting Services Strategy 2018 i.e. to review of the Community Radio Policy. As outlined above this Policy is over 20 years old and was developed at a point when community media did not encompass television or online services. Therefore, this review will examine the overall policy framework for community media in the context of the current national and international landscape. The Social Benefit Framework will be factored into this analysis and any emerging conclusions. The BAI looks forward to engaging positively with the community media sector on this review and for the emerging report and recommendations.

Michael O'Keeffe
BAI Chief Executive
June 2020

CRAOL Foreword

As Chairperson of Craol - Community Radio Ireland, I welcome the launch of the Community Media Research Report– Community Radio Delivering Social Benefit.

This report is the product of more than two years of research, looking in depth at the Community Radio Sector and how it delivers Social Benefit to communities. That Social Benefit can be derived through a number of ways, including volunteering, programming, training, engagement, participation, listening or broadcasting, among others.

Community Radio stations come in all shapes and sizes with varying levels of resources. One thing they have in common is that those resources are always limited and always stretched. These stations provide Social Benefits to their communities that have become a vital part of the fabric of the communities they serve. The challenges facing us were multiple: "how do we measure and report the work we carry out? how do we demonstrate to funders and others that this work is important, valued, necessary and central to supporting those very communities we serve"?

This guide aims to support the Community Radio sector to capture and describe that valuable and often under recognised work; work our member stations are engaged in every day. It arms us with the tools to gather and document the stories that best demonstrate the essence and ethos of Community Radio. It is only through demonstrating the Social Benefit that our sector delivers that we can capture the true value of Community Radio/Media.

CRAOL would like to thank Seán Ó Siochrú and Paul Butler of Nexus Research Cooperative, Ciaran Kissane and Liam Boyle of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, Jack Byrne, members of the CRAOL Committee and all the Community Radio stations for taking part in the pilot and/or contributing to the research. This report is the product of all of their efforts.

Declan Gibbons
Chair, CRAOL – Community Radio Ireland.

Nexus Foreword

Nexus is extremely grateful to all those who gave their time and insights into the research for this report, and for their direct contributions and detailed comments.

All Community Media Research Project Steering Group members, comprising Declan Gibbons, Jack Byrne, Mary Lennon, and Jeff Murphy from CRAOL, and Ciarán Kissane and Liam Boyle from BAI, engaged actively with the process, guiding it in the right direction. Special gratitude is due to Jack Byrne and Ciarán Kissane for very extensive comments, Mary Lennon for logistical support, and Declan Gibbons for chairing the process. Tom Hartnett, David Condon and Ann Power of Tipp Mid-West FM, and Mick Hanly and Megan Forrest of Dublin City FM, contributed hugely to the successful completion of the surveys and Case Studies. Ciarán Murray and Dorothee Holtkamp from NEAR FM and Barry Finnegan from Griffith College contributed extensively in the exploration of collaboration between the two, which is ongoing. Bernie Kearney and Gerry Jago were enthusiastic participants, although ROS FM could not in the end be included as a full pilot. Similarly, although Claremorris FM could not in the end proceed as a pilot, the insights of Allan Tiernan and Marcella Kreiser were most welcome. The author is also especially grateful to all those interviewed for the Stories, with candour and sometimes fascinating insight into the work of the community stations.

Seán Ó Siochru
April 17th 2020

Contents

1

What's so Special about Community Radio?

1. What's so Special about Community Radio?

What really differentiates community media from their local commercial counterparts is that they see themselves, from their foundation, as part of the community.

They do not just serve the community, or reflect the interests of the community, they engage directly with the community and the community engages directly with them – they are inseparable. It is not just about capturing the attention of listeners, it is about listening to the community, being part of the community by engaging in activities, amplifying the voices of diverse groups in the community, opening a space for volunteers to take part directly and indeed to manage and run the station. Most of all it is about contributing to the overall social benefit of the community, as part of and engaging with the wider local empowerment and development infrastructure.

The Annex to this document comprises a set of nine diverse stories that describe, concretely, how the community and community stations interacting, in ways that benefit individuals and groups locally, and ultimately the community as a whole. These are extracts from a more comprehensive set of stories (29) published in a Report entitled "Introducing a Social Benefits Approach to Community Radio, A Compendium of Stories." This was also produced by Nexus as part of an overall project funded by the BAI to develop a Framework and Methodology for assessing the social benefits provided by community radio. This culminated in the report referenced above and a toolkit for community media activists called "Assessing the Benefit of Community Radio, A Toolkit for Community Radio". Both reports are available in the BAI and CRAOL websites.

What do we mean by benefits? If it is not just about producing programmes people want to hear (and it is that too) then what other kinds of benefit can be generated? This is a crucial question, as it goes directly to those features that differentiate community radio and community media in general.

Before the Stories proper, we thus present a **Social Benefit Framework** to help understand the kinds of benefits that, in principle, are generated by community radio. It goes through the distinct types, six in all, that have been identified by looking through the literature and research and talking to community radio stations and their organisation, CRAOL. As well as identifying the types, the Framework gives a summary indication of how a station actually achieved this benefit.[1]

For instance, the first type of benefit described is "*individuals are growing in confidence and creativity and/or reinforcing a sense of belonging, directly from engaging with the Station*". How does this happen concretely?

---

1   For a more comprehensive discussion of the Framework please see the toolkit document referenced above "Assessing the Benefit of Community Radio, A Toolkit for Community Radio". https://www.bai.ie/en/?attachment_id=134923

It might be that the Station is offering community organisations placements for various disadvantaged clients they work with – and who get a lot from it personally - and the Stories cover several examples of this. Or it may be that volunteers – a staple of all community stations – find a welcoming place to do useful and interesting work and make new friends. Many stations also offer formal training to groups such as refugees, and the evidence here is that it can generate a strong sense of belonging, Not least, however, isolated and marginalised people, such as older people living alone, can feel they are part of a wider community through listening to their special programmes, and indeed often through contacting and interacting with the programme makers.

The Framework thus describes types of benefits and examples of ways that specific community station actions – many of them unique to community radio - can contribute to each type. It is intended to be of practical use, and the next section **Putting the Framework to Work** gives a flavour of what it can do, but as part of the wider methodology developed in another part of this project. This briefly illustrates the main components of that methodology and where the stories fit in.

After this, a more elaborate **Theory of Change map** is presented. This takes a further step, to look the wider logic and operations of a community station, and of the environment within which it is embedded, intersecting to enable the Station to bring about change. It is called a Theory of Change because it first looks at the overall objectives of a community station, and then, bearing in mind the challenges that it faces, it tries to map out the logical linkages and preconditions of how to get from the here and now, to the final objective sought i.e. to map out a theory of the how change can happen. In this case the final objective is to maximise the benefits that can be brought to the community by the Station, by means of the same six areas identified in the Framework.

The Theory of Change map is an exercise for those who like to engage in visual mapping and speculate about how change happens – the example given here is at a very early stage, and based on initial research. But it can be greatly refined, and ultimately it may enable a station, or the entire sector, to understand the dynamics of how it works, and hence to improve the outcomes it achieves.

However, the real star of this report is **the Stories from the Community Radio Sector.**

In researching and documenting these Stories, part of a wider process of developing a methodology to be able to measure social benefit of community radio the researcher was struck by two things when visiting radio stations: First how the station's staff and volunteers would recount, often in passing, arresting anecdotes about people who have been in touch to thank them, and stories about how the Station engaged with all kinds of the amazing things going on in the community. And second, when pressed for detail, how little of this was actually documented. It turned out that the many Stations more or less take for granted the beneficial work they do – it is why they are involved in the first place - but-are so busy managing day to day operations, and often simply surviving, that these stories are seldom written down. When asked directly of the benefits they bring to different individuals, groups and organisations in the community, they often seem a little bit taken aback and mention just a few examples.

But when pressed further, they begin to reflect on the different groups they engage with, and what they have done with them over the years; the individuals who drop in the stations apparently just for a chat; the often hundreds of volunteers that have passed through their doors and still stay in touch, some even going on to jobs in media; and the phone calls, cards, and chance encounters they have with people who regard the station's voice as that of a close friend, part of their life, and indeed sometimes even their closest friend. Many of the stories are collected directly from many of those interacting with the stations, offering authentic and verified experience of what it means it means to them.

Each story offers an often modest but rich and clear insight of how the Station engages with the community, in practical ways, that might benefit just one person, or the entire community; and usually somewhere in between. Each Story is preceded by a Table that summarises the types of benefits to which it contributes, as judged by the researcher, so that the reader can bear this in mind as they read it, and see what it means in practice. Each also begins with a very short summary.

The Stories presented here cover nowhere near the full breadth of possibilities of how community stations interact with people and community. Hundred more Stories are out there, and indeed many were recounted at a moving, and to this researcher, eye-opening, session at the CRAOL Féile in late 2019. Community radio practitioners told their own personal stories over several hours, more or less spontaneously, to a captivated audience that let the meeting run over an hour over time.

Nevertheless, what is presented here is a start, and hopefully the Stories will multiply over time.

2

Social Benefit and Community Media: A Framework

2. Social Benefit and Community Media: A Framework

The Social Benefit Framework summarises the types of benefits that a community media can offer its community.

At the top is a definition of what 'social benefits' are from the perspective of community media.

Down the left column are **six types of social benefit.** These have been drawn from the literature and refined with the CRAOL and BAI Steering Committee that oversaw this research, and with Stations themselves at the Féile in October 2019 and individually with others.

The second column suggests concrete activities that contribute to each type of benefit. Hence they can also be seen **as indicators that these benefits are being achieved.**

Table 1: Framework for Assessing the Social Benefit of Community media:

Definition of Social Benefit from Community Media:
"Benefits to individuals or collective actors in the community that enhance their lives socially, culturally or economically, or in terms of development, empowerment and/or well-being, that otherwise would not have come about."

Social Benefits	Indicators of Social Benefits of each Type
1. Individuals, especially minorities and those marginalised, are growing in confidence and creativity and/ or reinforcing a sense of belonging, directly from engaging with the Station	SB1 is being achieved through… **1.1. placements** from community organisation working with marginalised/ disadvantaged people **1.2. station volunteers** making programmes and in administration and support **1.3. training** of marginalised/ disadvantages individuals; and taking in interns from external entities **1.4. isolated or marginalised individuals** listening to radio programmes addressing their interests

2. Individuals are <u>enhancing their employment prospects</u>, through gaining skills and confidence reinforcing community identify	SB 2 is being achieved through…
	2.1. **media training** that enhances vocational prospects.
	2.2. **volunteer** opportunities that enhance employment prospects through personal development and skills acquisition
	2.3. **staff** experience and training that enhance their vocational prospects.
3. Community members are <u>informed and aware</u> of what is happening around their community	SB3 is achieved through the use by community members of information broadcast by the Station, in the form of…
	3.1. regular bulletins of **everyday information** such as traffic, weather events etc.
	3.2. specific **social bulletins** such as death notices, social events, etc.
	3.3. transactional information services such as Job Search or Marketplace delivered free or at low-cost
4. <u>Community members are responding more effectively</u> to issues–local to global– because they have access to diverse viewpoints and to more and better information	SB 4 is achieved through the station:
	4.1. **producing/broadcasting content** and format that addresses local to global, with diverse views presented in a balanced and constructive format, in studio and outside broadcasting
	4.2. **providing facilities and resources** for volunteers to do the same, covering issues of local interest and concern
	4.3. **referencing local advocacy groups** when reporting on news items
	4.4. **actively engaging in the community** through projects, advocacy and interactions on issues or local interest and concern

5. Collective actors (CBOs, NGOs etc.) are facilitated, and reinforced in their capacity to achieve their goals	SB5 is achieved through the Station… **5.1.** providing **airtime** to local CBOs to discuss and present their work, issues and requests to the public **5.2.** facilitating **CBOs to produce** dedicated regular slots or entire programmes, including training and facilities **5.3.** **actively collaborating**, beyond broadcasting, with collective actors for advocacy and joint work on issues relating to social benefit.
6. The community sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced through interaction and collective action.	SB6 is achieved through the Station… **6.1.** bringing **diverse community groups in interactive programmes** to discuss local issues, including to deal with conflicts and tensions **6.2.** helping to **mobilise community members** around issues of concern locally, for collective action, advocacy, etc. in an inclusive manner

3

Putting the
Framework to Work

3. Putting the Framework to Work

What the Stories as a whole tell us.

The Social Benefit Framework is not designed for academic purposes, but will help stations to identify the benefits they generate and to demonstrate them to others.

The Annex contains 9 separate stories from individual stations, each unique and each describing not just one, but usually several, of the benefits outlined above. A further 20 stories that were collected and documented are available in the Report "Introducing a Social Benefits Approach to Community Radio, A Compendium of Stories."[2] **What can they tell us as a whole?** In the Table below, the 29 Stories collected from around the country as part of the overall research project are grouped for each type of social benefit delivered as assessed through the framework. Two sets of figures are shown.

The top one identifies the total number of stories that illustrate that benefit is given collected as part of the research project. The second set of figures identifies the story/stories in the Annex to this document that has generated that particular benefit for its community. Thus *"Stories 1,5,7"* allows you to look up each story in the Annex and read it in detail.

Below that, in bold, is a number to give an idea, through the stories, of the size or significance of the benefit generated. It does so as follows: Each Individual story is scored for the contribution it makes to each type of benefit, from an X (small) to XXX (large). The number is bold is the sum of all the Xs given to each benefit, from all the stories collected as part of this project. It is not precise, but offers a rough indication of the extent to which the stations, based on the stories, contribute to this specific type of social benefit.

2   Introducing a Social Benefits Approach to Community Radio, A Compendium of Stories
    https://www.bai.ie/en/?attachment_id=134918

Types of Social Benefit	8 Stations 29 Stories
1. Individuals in the community, especially minorities and those marginalised, are growing in confidence and creativity, and/or reinforcing a sense of belonging.	23 stories 1 & 2 & 4 **Total Xs = 48**
2. People's employment prospects are enhanced, through gaining skills and improved confidence	8 stories 2 & 5 & 8 **Total Xs = 13**
3. Individuals are informed and aware of what is happening around their community:	16 stories 1 & 5 **Total Xs = 31**
4. Individuals are responding more effectively to issues–local to global–because they have access to more and better information and to diverse viewpoints	10 stories 3 & 4 **Total Xs = 17**
5. Collective actors are facilitated, and reinforced in their capacity, to achieve their goals	15 stories 3 & 4 & 5 **Total Xs = 31**
6. The community sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced.	13 stories 1 & 3 & 4 & 7 & 8 & 9 **Total Xs = 22**

Apart from directing us to the relevant stories, this table suggest a few things.

The first thing to notice is that, an individual station can offer communities *the full range of benefits* and does not stop at one or two. Thus to understand what a community station means to a community, a whole set of different aspects much be examined.

Second, and a review of the stories confirms this, a single Story is often the result of a *combination of several activities by the station*, and also almost always *delivers several benefits often to different groups and individuals*. Thus, the relationship between a station and a community is complex, and requires more detailed exploration to understand.

Third, different stations can generate different types and levels of benefits. For instance Dublin City FM, based on the nine stories collected for the overall research project, generates most impact by informing individuals about what is happening around the community (benefit type 3), while still generating significant benefits in other areas. Tipp Mid-West FM scores highest on reinforcing community organisations to achieve their goals (benefit type 5).

In some ways this makes intuitive sense since Dublin City FM serves a huge population and hence information provision (including their vital traffic information service) is what reaches so many of them; while Tipp Mid-West FM serves a small community in which the local community organisation are significant service providers. (Although this is based on a small number of stories, the difference is borne out in the pilot surveys undertaken in the two stations.)

Fourth, looking at all 29 stories, the largest number, 23 of them, benefit individuals in the community, especially minorities and those marginalised, enhancing confidence and creativity and reinforcing a sense of belonging (benefit type 1). This also scores by far the highest in terms of the overall impact, with 48 Xs marked in. Other really significant things that community radio does are: (benefit type 5) reinforcing community groups and voluntary organisation to achieve their goals (16 stories and 31 Xs); and (benefit type 3) providing information about local activities and events around the community (16 stories and 29 Xs).

Of course, the type of story collected was not intended to be numerically representative of all types, but only to make sure that all major activities are covered. But this research project also designed other means to collect information, a few of which are mentioned below.

Combining Stories with other Tools

The Community Radio Social Benefit Framework and the Stories are just part of a wider Toolkit for Community Radio.[3] This Toolkit is designed to enable stations, with expert assistance if needed, to explore and understand in depth what their communities think about them and to systematically document the results. Among the key research tools described, which were piloted in Dublin CityFM and Tipp Mid- West FM, are online-surveys, used to reach out to three key groups:
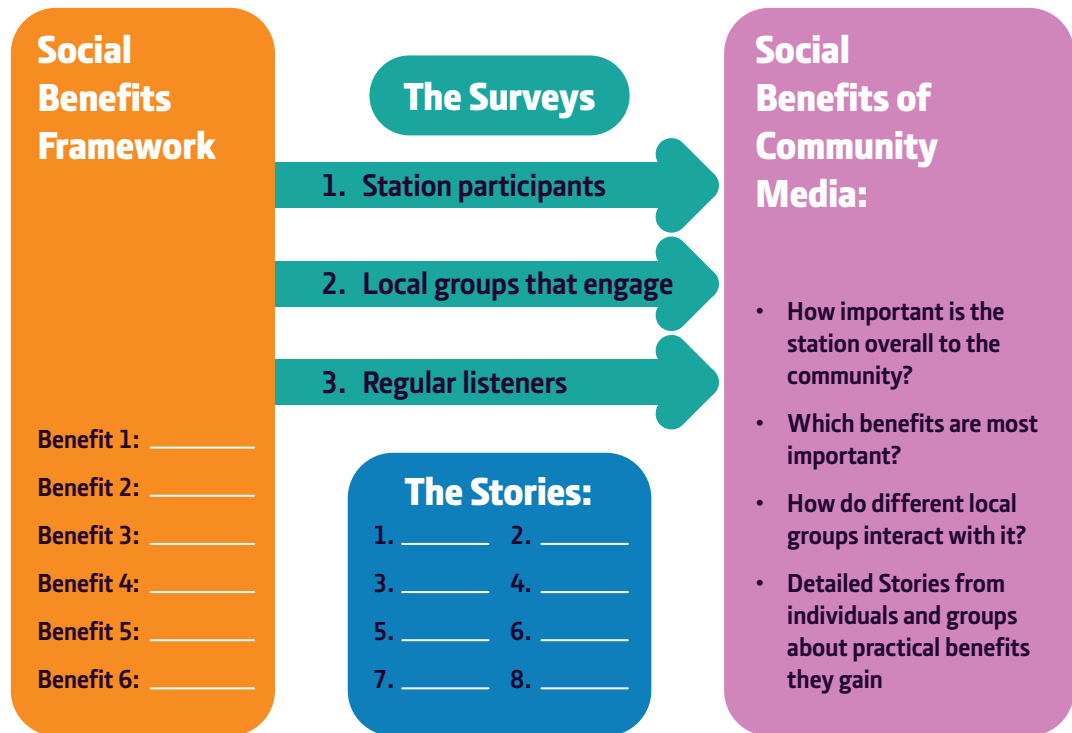
1. Station participants i.e. everyone directly involved in the station for instance volunteers, staff, Committee members and interns;

2. Local community and voluntary groups that engage with the stations in all kinds of small and larger ways;

3. Regular listeners to the station, familiar with the programmes and what they mean to them.

These groups and individuals are spread throughout the community, and represent different dimensions of the community and its full diversity. A survey of their views, based on the Social Benefit Framework, offers deep insights, into what the station means for individuals and the community more widely. The surveys capture which of the benefits generated by the station they believe to be more important to the community as a whole, and to themselves. Combining the Stories with these views (and the Stories come directly from members of these groups) puts flesh on the bones or the survey results, describing the ways the station affects real lives, how the station integrates with the wider dynamics of community development, and supports the community to organise itself and make life better for everyone living in it.

---

3   Assessing the Social Benefit of Community Media: A Toolkit for Community Radio. April 2020. Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. Available from BAI. https://www.bai.ie/en/?attachment_id=134923

The diagram below illustrates how these tools, all drawing on the same framework, can combine to build a rounded picture of what the station brings to the community, based on several sources of evidence, enabling comparison and aggregation of views and results.

Figure 1: Overview of Evaluation Tools

Social Benefits Framework

Benefit 1: _____
Benefit 2: _____
Benefit 3: _____
Benefit 4: _____
Benefit 5: _____
Benefit 6: _____

The Surveys

1. Station participants
2. Local groups that engage
3. Regular listeners

The Stories:

1. _____   2. _____
3. _____   4. _____
5. _____   6. _____
7. _____   8. _____

Social Benefits of Community Media:

- How important is the station overall to the community?
- Which benefits are most important?
- How do different local groups interact with it?
- Detailed Stories from individuals and groups about practical benefits they gain

The station itself can participate in implementing some of these, and indeed their input is essential in for instance compiling lists of organisations and individuals to be included in the survey and in selecting appropriate Stories. As time goes on, some might decide to compile their own stories, keeping an ongoing record of how they work with their communities to generate benefits – something that is too often taken for granted but is actually very valuable for stations to be able to show. The Toolkit also points to other areas in which stations can gather information, or compile existing information, from their everyday activities, that can further deepen an understanding of the social benefits they generate.

4

A "Theory of Change" for Community Radio

4. A "Theory of Change" for Community Radio

Some people relate better to visual presentation, and a Theory of Change capitalises on that. It creates a visual map of how community radio can deliver social benefits.

The Theory of Change map overleaf is only a draft, but with more research could be turned into a true-to-life picture of how community radio integrates within its community. It offers a starting point to map out visually how community media work; the 'avenues of change' that they initiate and support, and how their internal processes and external factors influences these.

The way to read a Theory of Change map is to focus first on the bottom (blue boxes): an (incomplete) set of challenges that community media face in try to reach their goals. Now attention should be switched to the box at the top. This shows the ultimate objective i.e. that *social benefits are being maximised to the community* (taken from the Framework above) to which these can be seen as initial blockages. A *Theory of Change* then looks to preconditions of this desired long-term outcome, and works its way back down to the bottom, in a (reverse) set of causal linkages.

The different types of social benefits are inserted (the orange boxes) as a first set of preconditions to achieving the goal.

The next step is to identify the preconditions to achieving these social benefits. This is where speculation begins, and a full Theory of Change process would bring people together – initially those involved in the stations – to explore these issues for themselves.

Thus the boxes in the Theory of Change map represent "states of affair", that may at the same time be *preconditions* (to higher objectives), and *outcomes sought or outputs to be achieved*. Specifically they do not represent actions or interventions. The arrows are causative, logical, links leading from a precondition to an outcome, and many of these can be influenced by the station to achieve or reinforce the outcome/output. Thus many of the arrows represent specific (in teal) station actions.
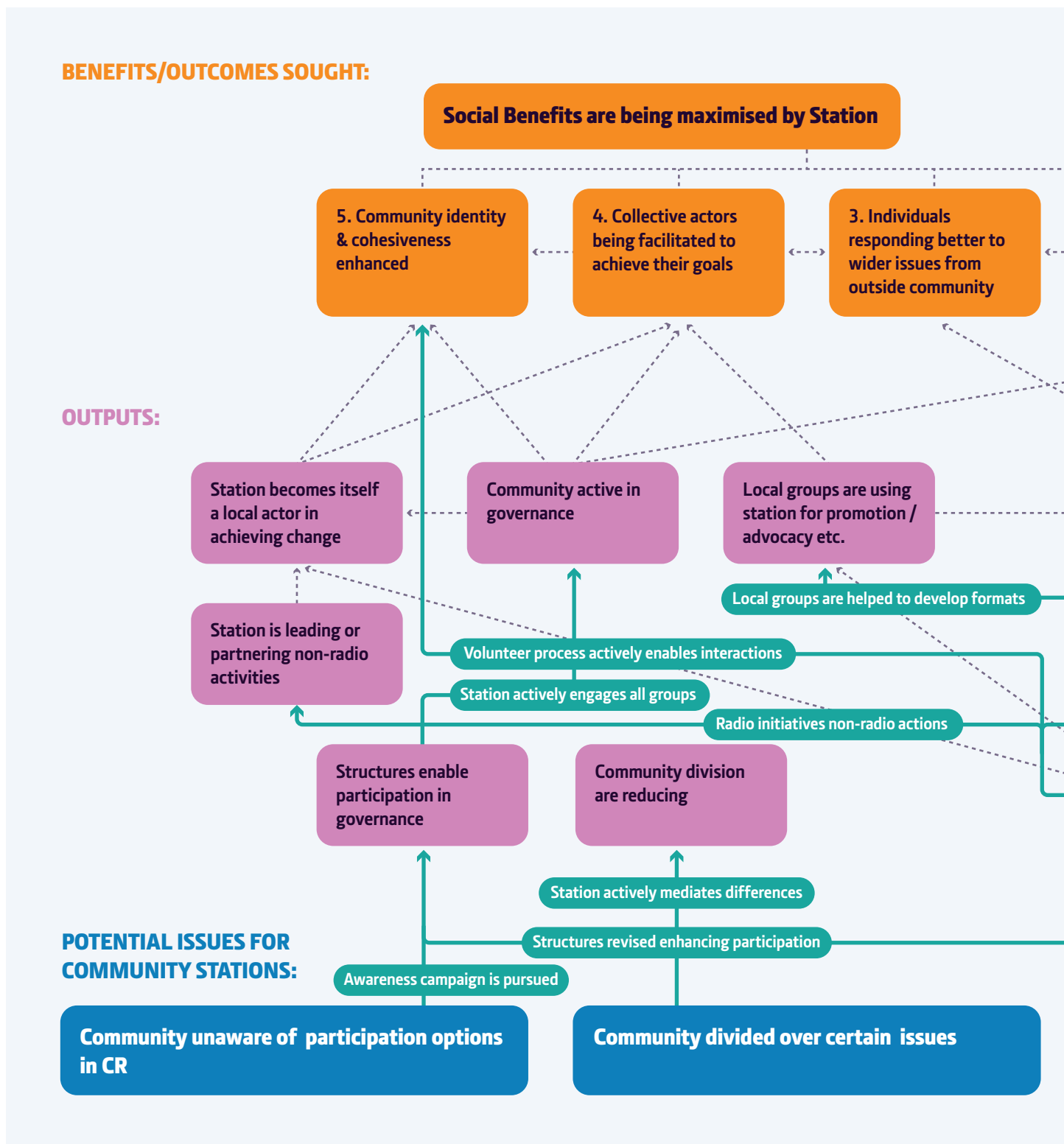
For example, Outcome 6 on *enhancing job prospects* has preconditions that people have completed training courses to gain the skills, or that volunteers are programme producers (both purple boxes).

The Station can make this happen (teal arrows) through providing training, maybe enabling some to become producers; by actively recruiting volunteers directly into programme production (especially from marginalised groups); and so forth; and a precondition to this might be that the station has an active programme to target marginalised groups.

Or Specific Objective 5, *that community identify and cohesiveness are enhanced*, might have preconditions that community members are involved in the governance of the station which thus them together (which is turn might presuppose that the Station actively promotes it policy of community participation); that the station is bringing together large numbers of volunteers from all around the community; or that the Station actively engaging in reducing community tensions (for instance through mediating disputes); and the Station itself has become an active CBO in areas other than media for instance by provide a hub for the community to meet.

These examples just illustrate the use of this tool. In practice, a station gets stakeholders together to create its own maybe Theory of Change map, enabling a shared understanding of how it generates social benefits.

Figure 2: Draft Theory of Change of Community Media and Social Benefits

BENEFITS/OUTCOMES SOUGHT:

Social Benefits are being maximised by Station

5. Community identity & cohesiveness enhanced

4. Collective actors being facilitated to achieve their goals

3. Individuals responding better to wider issues from outside community

OUTPUTS:

Station becomes itself a local actor in achieving change

Community active in governance

Local groups are using station for promotion / advocacy etc.

Local groups are helped to develop formats

Station is leading or partnering non-radio activities

Volunteer process actively enables interactions

Station actively engages all groups

Radio initiatives non-radio actions

Structures enable participation in governance

Community division are reducing

Station actively mediates differences

Structures revised enhancing participation

POTENTIAL ISSUES FOR COMMUNITY STATIONS:

Awareness campaign is pursued

Community unaware of participation options in CR

Community divided over certain issues

Assumptions
1. Funding is available to provide training

2. Individuals making better decisions in daily activities

1. Local people, esp. marginalised, are growing in confidence & creativity

6. Vocational skills / media job prospects are enhanced

Training follow up with practice

Global issues are seen in local context and vv

Community producing /presenting programmes

Trainees offered own programme

Training courses completed and skills gained

Support for volunteers to progress

Training priority for active CBOs

Station provides training

Locals are volunteering in station activities

Training available and targets marginalised

Active policy and actions seeking volunteers from disadvantaged

Targeted programmes to involve marginalised

Structures inhibit participation

Disadvantaged groups have no voice locally

Annex: Stories from the Community Radio Sector

Annex: Stories from the Community Radio Sector

The Stories are organised into different groups.

Firstly, the two Community Stations that were involved in the main *Social Benefits Assessment Methodology* pilots, Tipp Mid-West FM and Dublin City FM, each has two stories presented, all completed[4] by the authors/editors of this report but based on direct interviews with those involved and on documentation.

The other five Stories were drafted or submitted by Stations around the country in preparation for the workshop at the CRAOL Féile in October 2019 or as a direct input into this report. These were edited by the authors/editors, sometimes lightly, to conform more closely to the template.

Prefacing each Story is a table. This indicates which social benefits emerge most clearly from each story, with a short summary indicating why. These were also completed by the authors/ editors of the compilation.

It need hardly be added that the authors/editors are extremely grateful to all those who contributed through interviews and written pieces, and are hugely inspired by the wealth of creativity, talent and commitment to their communities demonstrated by their stories and experiences.

---

4   The one exception is Tipp Mid-West FM story entitled "A Hell of Snow Storm, which was drafted by the Station itself and edited by the authors/editors of this report.

1. "A Hell of a Snow Storm" (Tipp Mid West FM)

	Types of Social Benefit generated by this story
XX	**1.** Individuals in the community, especially minorities and those marginalised, are growing in confidence and creativity, and/or reinforcing a sense of belonging. *For those who were isolated and physically cut-off during the worst of the storm and its aftermath being able to tune in to Tipp Mid-West fm reinforced their sense of being part of shared community experience.*
	2. People's employment prospects are enhanced, through gaining skills and improved confidence
XXX	**3.** Individuals are informed and aware of what is happening around their community: *A key Tipp Mid-West audience comprises older people living in isolated rural areas. During the 2018 Storm Emma, with road impassable and no other of local information, a staff member and volunteer bravely maintained broadcasting, offering vital updates, acting as a link to local services and comfort and company for those most isolated.*
	4. Individuals are responding more effectively to issues–local to global–because they have access to more and better information and to diverse viewpoints
	5. Collective actors are facilitated, and reinforced in their capacity, to achieve their goals
XX	**6.** The community sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced. *The Station's efforts brought together their listeners, especially those most isolated, to enable the community feel that they were facing the dangers of Storm Emma together, as a community.*

Summary

In March 2018, the worst snowstorm in 36 years wreaked havoc in Ireland, as Storm Emma (known as "The Beast from the East") provided a sudden and devastating weather event which effectively locked the country down for a week, or more, in some areas. While Tipperary was not the worst affected, tensions among our community were high, and many places became impassable and many of our listeners barricade at home. This story tells how Tipp Mid-West Radio (hereafter referred to as TMWR), aided a sense of belonging, and cohesiveness in our community during this period.

1. Context

Tipp Mid-West Radio (TMWR) is located in Tipperary Town and caters for the towns of Tipperary and Cashel, and its hinterland. Our community includes many small urban environments, but is mainly a rural community with strong links to farming, rural Irish moral values and a sense of tradition. Our listenership comprises a mixed age group and a mixture of socio-economic backgrounds.

However, our key audience comprises those aged 50+, largely from rural Tipperary. We differ from urban community radio stations, in that the people who we may refer to as "marginalised", would mainly be the older members of our community, who frequently use TMWR as a lifeline to stay in touch with news and events in our area, and who contact us for a friendly chat. Many of these people are isolated and live in areas where communication with human beings may be a seldom experienced event. For various reasons, a large proportion of our listenership experience immense loneliness, and depend on TMWR for company, friendship, connectivity, news and entertainment.

Many of these people do not have access to public transport, and many more are not capable of gaining access to the physical community through ill-health, lack of economic means, rural isolation, and/or a lack of reliable friends/relatives and neighbours. These would be the on the more extreme side of our demographic.

At the same time, the general population in our community also rely on us for the same basic requirements, which they are simply unable to access in print media, or on national radio and television.

2.   Issue/Problem Addressed

The issue of rural isolation and the physical and mental toll it takes on those affected, cannot be overestimated. We experience daily phone calls highlighting the plight of loneliness and isolation of some members of our community. Our catchment area is one of socio-economic decline; one of the worst affected parts of Ireland in economic terms; with no major boost during the "Celtic Tiger" era, and seeing major economic decline during the recession, which is still heavily impacting our community.

During the run-up period to Storm Emma, we experienced a marked increase in communication from the public who depended on us to keep them up to date on issues such as possible road closures, weather reports, school/business closures, community event cancellations, water supply updates and medical/GP/hospital/pharmacy concerns. The issues really came to prominence when we realised that the entire country would be put on Red Alert by Met Éireann, and roads could be impassable for a period of time. Our service then became an area of major concern, as we had to negotiate the need to broadcast as normal, versus the health risk to our staff and volunteer presenters who would be obliged to travel in these atrocious and dangerous conditions. Tensions began to rise among our listenership, especially those who depended on us most, about whether they would be cut off from contact with TMWR in the event that we had shut down.

3.   Relevant Community Radio Activity

The management of TMWR decided to suspend live broadcasting at 8 pm (instead of the normal 12 midnight) on the night before the worst snow was anticipated. The overnight service was engaged, so that our listeners would have some form of service. The following morning, roads were in a terrible state and driving conditions were hazardous. All staff were instructed to stay at home.

However, a staff member and one volunteer braved the elements and arrived into the station for 9 am that day, in spite of near-total shutdown in the community. These two TMWR presenters went live at 9 am, and enabled live broadcasting on their own, until 6 pm that evening, taking turns presenting shows, playing music and entertaining the public. They also provided vital information about the situation on the ground at a local level.

The day was one of immense pressure as huge numbers of people contacted the station from all areas looking for information, providing local updates from their particular area, and offering a general picture of events during the storm as they occurred. This included liaising with the County Councils, ESB, Irish Water, members of community groups and local schools, medical centres, doctors, emergency services and pharmacies to ensure the pubic remained informed about what was actually happening. We also provided regular updates of road conditions all day, as well as an updated list of businesses which were open and closed as the day passed.

This was invaluable to our listenership, who contacted us by the dozen, many of the most vulnerable in tears, as they expressed their immense gratitude for TMWR allowing them to hear a friendly voice and providing vital information on a local level, which they simply could not access elsewhere, during a time of great distress and fear. Many were physically isolated at home for up to 3 or 4 days.

The schedule was more or less fully maintained by willing volunteers literally risking their lives to keep the show on the road over the days that followed. And we know, without doubt, that this action on the part of TMWR was an invaluable, worthy, compassionate and beneficial activity for our community – both in individual terms and in collective community terms – for the listeners and for the businesses, community organisations, national organisations and services in Tipperary.

4.   Outputs & Outcomes of the Activity

It is extremely difficult to estimate the social scientific and/or quantitative social benefit of this story, and much evidence can be classed as anecdotal. This is a story of human interaction on a very personal and emotional level. It highlights how the actions of a small group of people, with a common focus in mind, provided a marked social benefit to our community by providing a touchstone into an environment which was very uncertain and frightening, at least for a significant number of people who are deemed most vulnerable ion our society. Without their actions, the people of our community would not have been in the loop about the nature of the event unfolding, and would not have been aware of the different issues affecting the outside world on their doorstep.

Perhaps most importantly to our "marginalised", we availed of an opportunity to ensure that the lifeline that connects the largely unconnected or our community was not severed in the face of some very difficult and frightening circumstances. The knock-on effect, we have been reliably informed by the dozens of grateful people who communicated with us in the days of this event, was one of community cohesiveness and belonging. These people felt part of something larger, even on a local level. Their fingers were touched to the pulse of life outside their block-in doors – something that can never be found in the larger national media framework.

5.   Potential for sustainability of the benefits

Tipp Mid-West FM is committed to maintaining its high level of service, and to respond to all emergencies facing the community.

6.   Concluding Comment

The unique relationship between the community and Tipp Mid-West FM means that during this emergency situation, many of the most marginalised looked to the station for the support they needed; and the staff and volunteers, motivated by the needs of the community, responded beyond what could reasonably be expected in the context of a commercial enterprise.

Source: Tipp Mid-West FM

2. A Range of Activities with the Moorehaven Centre. (Tipp Mid West FM)

	Types of Social Benefit generated by this story
X	**1.** Individuals in the community, especially minorities and those marginalised, are growing in confidence and creativity, and/or reinforcing a sense of belonging. *The Centre's clients (adults with mild to moderate intellectual disability) are given placements in the Station, about 50 annual for 3 hours a week for six weeks; and these are highly valued by the job coaches and the clients gain significantly.*
	2. People's employment prospects are enhanced, through gaining skills and improved confidence
X	**3.** Individuals are informed and aware of what is happening around their community *The station broadcasts their events at which the public participants and attends.*
	4. Individuals are responding more effectively to issues–local to global–because they have access to more and better information and to diverse viewpoints
XXX	**5.** Collective actors are facilitated, and reinforced in their capacity, to achieve their goals *Support is provided to four main aspects: it publicises services and encourages clients to contact them; it is key to fundraising events; it offers work placements for some clients; and it enabled them to recruit relief staff at no cost.*
X	**6.** The community sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced

Summary

Moorehaven Centre provides a range of supports to adults with mild to moderate intellectual disability. The Centre Manager rates Tipp Mid West's contribution overall to its capacity to achieve its goals as "very significant", across four main dimensions. It promotes the Centre with the public, publicising the services available and encouraging clients to come forward; it is critical to the success of their fundraising events in several ways; it provide highly valued placements for many clients; and it enables them to recruit relief personnel , especially, for the Centre at no cost.

1.   Context and issue addressed

Moorehaven Centre in Tipperary offers a range of supports to adults with mild to moderate intellectual disability, including day, residential and respite services; and also offers services in Thurles one day a week. It currently serves about 115 clients and employs 50 full time equivalent staff. Most of their approximately €3 million annual income comes from a Section 39 HSE grant, but the 13% raised by the Centre is vital to service delivery and development.

Moorehaven's core values are about community inclusion and active citizenship within the community, in line with the HSE's New Direction model. Thus, sensitising the community about the Centre and its ethos, and enabling clients to integrate within the normal life of the community, are central goals. Despite over three decades of service, not everyone in Tipperary would be aware of the work and ethos of the Centre, and getting their message out is also critical to reaching out the families and clients in need. Fundraising is a constant challenge with regular and occasional events at the centre of the strategy.

2.   The Station activity, outputs and costs

Tipp Mid West works with the Moorehaven Centre in several areas.

- The Centre runs an annual Christmas Fayre on a Saturday around the 8th December, for both fundraising purposes and as an Open Door day for schools and community to come in the Centre, which is close to Tipperary town centre. The Fayre sells arts and crafts, produced in the Centre and includes musical bands and choirs from the local schools in transition year musical productions. It raises about €15,500 annually, though its community promotional value is perhaps the most important outcome.

  Tipp Mid West has long been an integral and indispensible part of the Fayre. Several weeks before the event, tailored Fayre promotional advertisements are recorded by Centre clients, and broadcast several times a day. A week before the event, the "Morning Call" presenter, Joe Price, produces a 20 minute feature with contributions from Centre clients, and runs a raffle. And a core feature of the event itself is an hour-long live Outside Broadcast, from 2:00pm to 3:00 pm, from the event itself, featuring a mix of items that might include the town Brass Band. The Station's promotion is also instrumental in recruiting volunteers to help organise the event.

  Tipp Mid West promotes another major fundraiser, the annual Golf Classic and coffee morning in the Golf Clubhouse, that raises about €7,500, the raffle component of which is heavily advertised by the Station. Every five years or so the JP McManus Pro-Am pre-qualifier also raises up to €20,000, and is promoted by the Station.

  Worth noting also is a documentary programme completed a few years ago for the Centre's 30th anniversary, looking at its history and growth over the decades, and the broadcast generated significant interest and response from the public.

- A second key service is the provision of client placements in the community. Annually a number of clients expressing an interest – in 2019 it was eight - are placed for a few hours a week for six weeks in the Station premises by the Centre's two Job Coaches. They may operate the phone or undertake other duties, and are welcomed and supported as part of the Station team. The Job Coaches highly value these placements, for the positive and motivating environment, the team spirit, and the social and other skills developed. About 50 of the 115 clients secure placements every year in different places, but the Coaches find they must spend little time at the Station supporting the clients as compared to many other placements. In future, it is hoped that roles can be found for some in programme production. The Manager reports that the clients themselves also gain a lot from their Station placement, and rates the overall experience as very positive, and fully in tune with the Centre's ethos.

- Moorehaven is establishing a panel of Relief Personnel, to fill in for staff in the short term and on short notice. They are vetted and require Gárda clearance, but their initial recruitment is facilitated through Tipp Mid-West's Community Diary service. Many are older people with time on their hands. The Station has enabled them to build the Panel, and at no cost. For staff positions they use other means to recruit (Active-Link, the National local newspaper, or Limerick Leader) but most are quite costly. The Manager comments that Tipp FM, the local commercial station, would charge a fee for advertising and is anyhow based in Clonmel which is more distant from the Centre – but the Centre anyhow finds that the service from Tipp Mid West fulfils their needs.

  The Manager also values the Station's Community Diary for enabling them to sell equipment and other items that they wish to dispose of from time to time.

3.   Benefit Generated

The Manager rates the contribution that Tipp Mid West makes to enabling the Centre to achieve its goals as "very significant".

The general promotion of, and raising awareness about, Moorehaven among the local population, a horizontal feature across all the above actions, he rates very highly, noting that despite a long history in the town, their recently renewed community and person-centred ethos is not as widely understood and appreciated as he would wish. It also means that potential clients and their families become aware of the services and are more likely to avail of them.

The Station's support for the Fayre especially, but also other fund-raising activities, is an integral part of these efforts, and would be far less successful without it.

The client placement, which account for an appreciable proportion of all placement, are highly valued by the Job Coaches, and according to the Manager, greatly appreciated by and beneficial to the clients who readily integrate within the Station team and environment.

4.   Sustaining and replicating benefits

Tipp Mid West invest significant time in supporting the Moorehaven Centre, through its normal programming, the Outside Broadcast, and accommodating the Centre's clients on placements. While the additional expense is not great, this level of support to the Centre must rely on the Station being able to continue to receive its existing level of support from public and other sources, to fundraise, and to attract and train volunteers.

5.   Concluding Comment

This is an example of Tipp Mid West, as part of the community support infrastructure, working with another component of that infrastructure, the Moorehaven Centre, to reach outwards into that community and deepen in linkages: through raising awareness of Moorehaven's ethos and activity, encouraging responses from potential client, recruiting relief personnel, helping to raise funding, and enabling clients to spend time in a positive workplace experience. This last is indicative of the relationship: Because the community development approach is an integral part of the Station, including its workplace, Moorehaven Centre client placements fit in naturally and hence are highly valued.

Sources: Derry McMahon, Manager, Moorehaven field Centre, Tipperary Town.

3.   Inner City Helping Homeless. (Dublin City FM)

		Types of Social Benefit generated by this story
	1.	Individuals in the community, especially minorities and those marginalised, are growing in confidence and creativity, and/or reinforcing a sense of belonging
	2.	People's employment prospects are enhanced, through gaining skills and improved confidence
XX	**3.**	Individuals are informed and aware of what is happening around their community *The Station disseminates information about events and activities of ICHH. The station makes a proactive effort to ensure that the voice of ICHH and the homeless community that it supports are heard through its reporting channels.*
XX	**4.**	Individuals are responding more effectively to issues–local to global–because they have access to more and better information and to diverse viewpoints *Through its ongoing promotion of key messages and campaigns, community members are encouraged to volunteer as well as support specific appeals.*
XX	**5.**	Collective actors are facilitated, and reinforced in their capacity, to achieve their goals *The Station facilitates ICHH across in its campaign and awareness raising work, reinforcing its ability to carry out activities and achieve goals.*
	6.	The community sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced

Summary

Through the development of an informal media partnership, both Inner City Helping Homeless and Dublin City FM have been able to ensure that an authentic voice for people living in homeless situations is consistently heard. This alliance has allowed that ICHH can continue to present its analysis and ongoing focus on the key issues that are affecting many of Dublin City FM's listeners as well as the wider community. Appeals for new volunteers and donations are supported and considered an important means of maintaining the focus on the key issue of homelessness in Ireland.

1.   Context and social issue addressed

Inner City Helping Homeless (ICCH) was founded in November 2013 as a result of the increased number of people sleeping rough around Dublin City. Members of the local community in the North Inner City came together to do a soup run around the city and on the first night over 40 volunteers turned up wanting to help. By 2014 ICHH was operating a 7 night a week outreach service all across Dublin City. ICHH now have over 200 volunteers on their books, with an office in Dublin 1 that is open 14 hours a day, 5 days a week.

The ICHH outreach volunteers are on the streets of Dublin city and surrounding areas seven nights a week. The volunteers leave the office at 11pm on designated walking routes on both the northside and southside of the city. They bring supplies such as tea, coffee, soup, pot noodles, sandwiches, fruit, water, hats, scarves, gloves, clothes and sleeping bags. Most importantly they offer empathy and compassion as a simple chat can mean so much to people sleeping rough around the city.

ICHH offer a seven day advocacy service assisting homeless individuals and families and educating them on how to navigate through homelessness. As the number of homeless families and children has increased over 200% since 2015, the demand from families needing assistance in getting out of homelessness has increased. Over 3,000 children are now homeless in Ireland and ICHH have stepped in on numerous occasions and accommodated families that were left with nowhere to go.

ICHH has put in place an active team of volunteers who support the organisation's administrative functions, as well as the outreach and warehouse supports.

Each year, ICHH organises a Christmas campaign with partner organisations. These campaigns have worked to raise awareness and solidarity with the public as well as the collection of resources for homeless individuals and families. The Shoebox appeal represents a critical part of this campaign.

2.   The Station activity, outputs and costs

Dublin City FM has worked closely with ICHH to proactively support its activities and campaigns. This has allowed for ICHH to ensure that it can present its key messages on a timely manner.

ICHH spokespeople and volunteers have been interviewed on a regular basis and stories aired in relation to critical issues. These stories have focused on developments in housing and homelessness policies as well as on how they have affected people living under these challenging circumstances.

In one such recent interview, Brian Mc Loughlin of ICHH spoke at length with a Dublin City FM presenter in relation to a specific campaign and highlighted the issues of people's reality of "the groundhog day of dealing with homeless services and possibly sleeping on the street every night."[5]

---

5   https://soundcloud.com/dcfm-1032/gmd-interview-brian-mc-loughlin-3rd-december-lkm

Dublin City FM in working with ICHH has ensured that any such interviews are quickly available to be shared as podcasts or as news cuts. ICHH can then use these links of the interviews through their own social media channels. This support from the station has ensured that all ICHH interviews and reports can be shared widely and in a timely manner. Many such news stories are then maintained as an online repository through ICHH and the Dublin City FM Soundcloud pages.

During such interviews, ICHH spokespeople have been granted enough time to discuss key issues as they are emerging in the public domain. For instance, as complex figures are presented in relation to numbers living in homelessness (see figure below), the station has ensured that adequate time can be given to breaking down such figures and explaining their significance in terms of spikes in numbers.

Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government Homelessness Report January 2020

Details of households accessing local authority managed emergency accommodation during the week of 20 -26 January 2020

Region	Homeless Adults	Gender		Age Groups				Accommodation Type*			
		Male	Female	18-24	25-44	45-64	65+	PEA	STA	TEA	Other
Dublin	4,600	2,773	1,827	577	2,687	1,250	86	2,349	2,278	62	0
Mid-East	301	186	115	40	160	90	11	183	114	4	0
Midlands	109	58	51	22	58	28	1	73	12	24	0
Mid-West	341	208	133	48	189	97	7	121	182	38	0
North-East	128	77	51	18	63	36	11	70	56	2	0
North-West	67	45	22	14	34	18	1	19	31	11	6
South-East	222	160	62	35	122	56	9	58	162	0	2
South-West	578	358	220	73	342	138	25	328	524	0	0
West	351	202	149	42	195	101	13	205	144	0	2
Total		**4,067**	**2,630**	**869**	**3,850**	**1,814**	**164**	**3,406**	**3,233**	**141**	**10**

Other projects that have been promoted by Dublin City FM include the work of the Babs empowerment project, a free listening service provided though Inner City Helping Homeless.

The station has also assisted with the promotion of volunteering appeals. ICHH is dependent on the work of its extensive volunteer team and the station's support in promoting the need for further volunteers is considered to have played an important role.

3.   Benefit Generated

Through this informal media partnership, both ICHH and Dublin City FM have been able to ensure that an authentic voice for people living in homeless situations is consistently heard. This alliance has allowed that ICHH can continue to present its analysis and ongoing focus on the key issues that are affecting many of Dublin City FM's listeners as well as the wider community.

Press releases from ICHH are consistently used by the station news teams and reporters. Interviews take place and key messages are presented.

While specific numbers of new volunteers or donations are not logged in relation to whether the station's reporting acted as a referral point, ICHH consider that the work of the station has supported its recruitment efforts for volunteers and appeals for donations.

4.   The Future: Sustaining and replicating the benefits

ICHH has indicated that there is potential for increased levels of engagement with Dublin City FM, whereby more detailed monthly style interviews can be conducted and developed as podcast series. Such unfiltered stories could in turn be reduced or cut to shorter clips for use by station or ICHH. These podcasts could be shared more widely through streaming services that have a wider reach.

The media relationship that has developed over recent years between the two organisations is considered secure and sustainable. There is a proactive level of support from the station, whereby ICHH are confident that their voice and that of the homeless community will receive an audience through the station's reporting.

5.   Conclusion

Dublin City FM and ICHH have developed a strong working relationship that can be characterised as an informal media partnership. Press releases and campaigns receive airtime and recorded news clips and interviews are shared and re-shared through a wide range of media channels.

Appeals for new volunteers and donations are supported and considered an important means of maintaining the focus on the key issue of homelessness in Ireland.

Source: Brian McLoughlin, ICHH Head of Communications

4. Viva Vox: "A Disability Show with a Difference" (Dublin City FM)

	Types of Social Benefit generated by this story
XX	**1.** Individuals in the community, especially minorities and those marginalised, are growing in confidence and creativity, and/or reinforcing a sense of belonging. *This show targets especially people with disability, in a manner that treats them the same as abled bodies. It has also personally benefited the producer presenter, following an unexpected encounter with disability in his middle age.*
X	**2.** People's employment prospects are enhanced, through gaining skills and improved confidence *The presenters predecessor left for an position of employment, facilitated by his experience in the Station.*
XXX	**3.** Individuals are informed and aware of what is happening around their community *The programme covers many issues around disability, but – deliberately- those that affect everyone, able-bodies and not.*
XX	**4.** Individuals are responding more effectively to issues–local to global–because they have access to more and better information and to diverse viewpoints *The programme addresses topical and controversial issues, talking to politicians, activists and others.*
X	**5.** Collective actors are facilitated, and reinforced in their capacity, to achieve their goals *The programme often features people involved in community support and development organisations, allowing them to promote their positions and activities.*
XX	**6.** The community sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced. *Above all, the programme promotes an inclusive approach in content and style, for both abled-bodies and disabled.*

Summary

Gary Kearney has been producing and presenting the Viva Vox programme on Dublin City fm, as a volunteer, for over two years. The programme is about "issues that affect the disability community" and often that affect everyone in Dublin. Suddenly struck by a brain disability, Gary says he was "thrown on the scrapheap at 45 years old". The show has not only given him a voice; it educates and advocates for a wide community of disabled and abled, without shouting or lecturing. Whether you're a TD, Chief Executives, or a just someone with a story, you get treated the same. Gary, as a spokesperson for Disability Federation Ireland, is well used to both radio and television, but he believes this kind of show is only possible because of the flexibility, freedom, support and welcome that he and everyone gets in Dublin City fm, a central part of its ethos as a community radio station.

1.   Context and social issue addressed

Dublin City fm has always included a strong remit in the area of disability. Its programme Viva Vox has been dedicated to the issue and over the years has addressed it in different ways. In 2017, the show's presenter left for a full time employment (in no small measure aided by his experience there) and the position became vacant. For Gary Kearney, whose disability manifested at the age of 45 and from which recovery was slow, this opened an opportunity to move his role in advocacy on disability to a new level. He had long felt that much of the commentary on disability was condescending ("isn't she great – she can tie her shoelaces"), and that the able-bodied shied away from the topic unable to deal with it. His goal was to produce a programme that was different, that would treat those with disability like everyone else, and delve into topics that affect a much wider community.

2.   Station activities and outputs

Gary had been made redundant from his job due to the onset of the disability, and while recovering became active in the arts and in disability advocacy. In mid 2017, Viva Vox, was looking for a new presenter and the Station Manager was put in touch with Gary. In August, he took it on and has since been producing and presenting the 30 minute programme every Thursday at 12:30 am. He prefers it to be pre-recorded, so that he can spend time putting his interviewees at their ease.

The Station provides him with everything he needs to produce the programme, including initial training, (done by a Dublin City fm executive producer) and technical support. At the start he would spend up to 30 hours a week researching the subject, but he now has it streamlined and, depending on the topic, it might take him anything from 20 to just a couple of hours. Discussion is topical: from obstacles to people using Dublin's buses (he has become involved in Bus-Connect initiative), to issues of people - ill or with disabilities -being forced out of independent living and living indefinitely in nursing homes due to the absence of appropriate support and support s – these are discussed as issues that affect many more people than the disability community. Gary chats to his guests, putting them at their ease; those with disabilities "come across as people first, who just happen to have disability". He tries to introduce humour and avoids a "po-faced approach so often brought to the topic".

3.   Benefit Generated

When asked on the benefit to himself, Gary quips: "On the scrapheap at 45, an award winning broadcaster at 55". In 2019, he won a Community Radio Ireland, Silver Achievement Award for Social Benefit. It shows the benefits go well beyond himself as it was in recognition of a highly effective promotion campaign over the past two years of the "Ablefest", that helped attendance rise from 300 in 2017, to 90 in 2018, to 3,000 in 2019 (see https://www.ablefest.com/).

The programme's popularity is also attested to by the extensive feedback he gets on his Facebook and Twitter accounts (he has 950 followers) from individuals and organisations involved with the issues, and ongoing requests from politicians and others to appear on the programme.

He says the atmosphere of the station, not just for him but for many interviewees who are unfamiliar with and wary of media, is central to getting the tone of the programme right. He notes that Dublin City FM usually has interns from the National Learning Network working away in the office, and the feeling when you enter is inclusive - "for my guests, it's great for them to see others with disabilities when they walk in". He compares the ethos of the Station to that he tries to generate in his programme: "I found that people talked at me when I got a disability; Dublin City fm, the office and the programmes, talks *to people and with people."*

He feels that radio, when it is like this, can make a real difference, help people to express themselves; to show others that people with disability "don't bite"; to take the mystique and fear out of it. Gary himself, as a spokesperson for DFI, is no stranger to numerous local and national radio and television studios.

> "They are very clinical; the programme controller calls all the shots. The commercial ones are 'plastic', the clock is ticking. What I love about Dublin City fm is that everyone is pulling together for the greater good. They try to make it as human as possible – and everyone cares about what they are talking about; they are just sharing their interests with everyone."

4.   The Future: Sustaining the benefits

Dublin City fm invests heavily in its volunteer producer/presenters in terms of staff time, training and support, and creating a welcoming, relaxed and creative atmosphere. The programme does not cost any additional funding and from that perspective is sustainable. Gary is considering seeking sponsorship, to contribute to station finances .

5.   Concluding Comment

Dublin City has given Gary a platform to fully recover from the trauma and obstacles of his late-onset disability, allowing him to express his creative abilities. He also believes the programme really makes a difference to many people, to those he works with on the show but especially to the disability and wider community. He maintains that only a station dedicated to the community would have taken him in, in the first place – but more than that: this type of programme and the tone and ethos it sets, is possible only because of the ethos of the inclusive station itself.

Sources: Gary Kearney, Volunteer Producer/presenter with Dublin City fm. (Reviewed, approved)

5. Respect Words: A journalistic approach to hate speech (Near FM)

	Types of Social Benefit generated by this story	
XX	**1.**	Individuals in the community, especially minorities and those marginalised, are growing in confidence and creativity, and/or reinforcing a sense of belonging. *Through this project, an online and offline set of spaces were created for NGOs, activists and advocates to come together to support the voice of minorities and allow for their voice to be heard across local and international media outlets*
	2.	People's employment prospects are enhanced, through gaining skills and improved confidence
	3.	Individuals are informed and aware of what is happening around their community
X	**4.**	Individuals are responding more effectively to issues–local to global–because they have access to more and better information and to diverse viewpoints *The dissemination platforms used allowed for local and global issues to be examined and presented to a wide audience*
XX	**5.**	Collective actors are facilitated, and reinforced in their capacity, to achieve their goals *NGOs were enabled to work together across a common theme to develop a set of resources that will be used into the future to support their work*
	6.	The community sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced.

Summary

This was a two year long project (2016-2018) aiming to combat hate speech, racist and xenophobic projections in the European media by improving the quality of contents broadcast in Europe. The project successfully examined how media present issues of migration and minorities, involving more than 150 European media outlets, over 1,300 journalists, in 8 partner countries. In Ireland. Near Fm worked with a wide range of national and local NGOs and journalists to develop a framework and set of ethical guidelines to fight against hate speech. These resources highlight such issues as the use of terminology, accuracy in reporting and avoidance of sensationalist measures. The Ethical Code and Good practice map were shared widely through local and international seminars. A series of podcasts and programmes were developed giving voice to a wide range of marginalised groups and continues to act as a repository for NGOs, youth centres and schools interested in examining issues in relation to migration, discrimination and the lived experiences of marginalised communities in Ireland.

1.   Context and social issue addressed

During most of the last 20 years, Near FM has been working on EU funded European projects that involve collaboration with other community media in Europe to develop and organise training courses, seminar and/ or radio programmes. One of Near FM's recent projects that involved a lot of collaboration with organisations in Ireland was the project Respect Words. Seven radio stations in seven countries (Spain, Greece, Italy, Germany, Slovenia, Hungary and Ireland) were involved, and the International Press Institute of Vienna (Austria). It was supported by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Union. Shane O'Curry of the European Network Against Racism in Ireland was a key contributor to this, and has been working with NEAR FM as a guest on radio, advisor and partner on this project.

2.   Station activities and outputs

As part of this project Near FM made contact with community groups and organisations that already work in the field to combat hate speech to form a Local Expert Committee (LEC) of people working in the field of:

• Migration and integration of migrant populations

• Media and media discourse (online and traditional)

• Religious and Ethnic Minorities

• Cultural diversity and attention to migrant populations.

The LEC assisted Near FM by supporting the local seminars in Dublin (in Spring 2017) to which Near FM invited journalists and organisations working in the field of migration, racism, integration, religious and ethnic minorities to develop the ethical code to combat hate speech, racist and xenophobic projections in the European media.

The LEC also advised and participated in the selection process of good practices which were uploaded in the interactive European map of Good Practices about Communication and Migrant Population and also gave input and recommendations for the finalisation of the ethical code.

The NEAR FM LEC included representatives from: European Network Against Racism; New Communities Partnership; NUI Maynooth; Pavee Point; Immigrant Council Ireland; No hate Speech Ireland; Akidwa; Trinity College Dublin and Irish Traveller Movement

The BAI (Broadcasting Authority Ireland) as well as the NUJ (National Union of Journalists) also participated in this project and were sent all material that was produced.

3.   Benefit Generated

The project achieved the following results over its two year duration:

1. An 'Ethical Code' was created in relation to reporting on migration and minorities. This code presented a best practice approach and guidelines related to migration processes and ethnic and religious minorities in Europe.

2. Local seminars were organised in each of the participating countries, involving 20 journalists. These journalists received training on the Ethical Code. The seminar offered the opportunity for these journalists to work closely with 8 NGOs and experts. A set of recommendations were produced, emerging from workshops and panel discussions. Near FM facilitated 3 such seminars in Dublin during 2019.

3. An online interactive map was developed highlighting best practices about communication and integration of migrant populations and minorities. 10 good practices per country were identified and published within the interactive map (including audio and some with video).

4. An international seminar was held in Brussels, bringing together experts from the partner organisations and other stakeholders. This conference allowed for the dissemination and discussion of the finalised Ethical Code. It also allowed for a showcasing of the results, outcomes and findings that had emerged from the participating countries.

5. A radio campaign was broadcast involving some 20 programmes of 30 minute duration from each of the 7 radio partners. These programmes focused on the central themes of the project. Sister radio stations in each country also broadcasted the content and programmes.

The project results led to important social benefits:

1. Establishment of a working group in Ireland that had as a key concern matters of ethical broadcasting, ensuring that community radio was taking a lead role.

2. Mapping of examples of good practice

3. Engagement with journalists in relation to this practice, encouraging dialogue and interaction through a series of seminars, both at local and international level

4. Dissemination of the results through sharing seminar results, Ethical Code and the wide range of programmes

5. Liaison with key stakeholders in Ireland through the BAI and national media interests

4.   The Future: Sustaining and replication the benefits

The programme content remains available through the NearFM and Respect Words project websites. This content continues to represent a unique and invaluable repository of insights and interviews with hidden voices from Irish society, including members of the Traveller and Roma Communities, people living in direct provision, asylum seekers, activists and advocates. This has been disseminated widely by the team and has been in turn used within youth centres and schools as a means of better understanding issues in relation to racism in Ireland.

All partners in the project have remained committed to disseminating the materials produced from the project. NearFM continues to receive requests from groups about the project materials. The Ethical Code has also been requested and downloaded from these sites since the project has been completed. Near Fm have continued to promote this as an important tool for journalists and those working in the media.

The LEC group however does not continue to meet in its current form, although the relationships that were developed during the project have allowed for ongoing contact in relation to these issues.

5.   Concluding Comments

With its project motto `Ethical Journalism against Hate Speech' the project successfully examined how media professionals present issues related to issues of migration and minorities. In a context whereby these key societal concerns are often treated with a lack of empathy and understanding, the project successfully involved more than 150 European media outlets and over 1300 journalists in the 8 partner countries.

In Ireland, Near Fm worked with a wide range of national and local NGOs and journalists to examine a framework and set of ethical guidelines to fight against hate speech. The emerging Ethical Code acts as a detailed resource for the NGOs themselves as well as journalists to highlight such issues as the use of terminology, accuracy in reporting and avoidance of sensationalist measures. The guidelines were developed in a consultative manner and shared widely through local and international seminars. A mapping exercise of good practice led to another useful resource.

A series of podcasts and programmes were developed giving voice to a wide range of marginalised groups and continues to act as a repository for NGOs, youth centres and schools interested in examining issues in relation to migration, discrimination and the lived experiences of marginalised communities in Ireland.

Source: Ciarán Murray, Near-FM

6. Brothers of Charity, Roscommon (ROS fm)

	Types of Social Benefit generated by this story	
XX	**1.**	Individuals in the community, especially minorities and those marginalised, are growing in confidence and creativity, and/or reinforcing a sense of belonging. *Several people with disabilities gained significantly in terms of confidence and skills, and empowerment, as a result of volunteering, including as a DJ, with ROS fm*
	2.	People's employment prospects are enhanced, through gaining skills and improved confidence
	3.	Individuals are informed and aware of what is happening around their community
	4.	Individuals are responding more effectively to issues–local to global–because they have access to more and better information and to diverse viewpoints
XX	**5.**	Collective actors are facilitated, and reinforced in their capacity, to achieve their goals Brothers of Charity in Roscommon and ROS fm have a mutually beneficial relationships; with BOC benefiting from publicising and promoting its activities and services, and ROS fm receiving practical support during its establishment and in access to premises.
	6.	The community sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced.

Summary

Brothers of Charity in Roscommon were involved in the setting up of Ross FM and, especially in the early years, worked with the Station in several ways to support their activities with people with intellectual disabilities. BOC staff appeared on the programme with other staff, and with clients, to talk about what they do, the types of services they offer in the county etc. The Station also enabled some clients to pursue their dream to be a radio presenter. They also publicised events and activities of BOC.

1.   Context and Issues addressed

Brothers of Charity (BOC) Roscommon provides a range of services for people with intellectual disabilities, from mild to severe, including in-community residential support, in home respite, training etc.

Ross fm emerged from an earlier joint project involving many organisations across County Roscommon working in the area of disability. At some point, the idea of a radio station was put forward, and a number of enthusiasts ran with it and secured a license to broadcast. The Board included representatives from members of the earlier project.

More recently, the support relationship with BOC continues in that Ross FM rents a part of one of their premises at preferential rates. For several years also, support from Pobal enabled the Station to employ a manager and other staff, though this was discontinued over two years ago.

2.   Station activities and outputs

Because of its background, from the earliest stages the Station placed a special emphasis on supporting people with disabilities. The BOC Social Work Team Leader, and other staff, frequently requested and received airtime to talk about the range of BOC services, often in studio with another service staff member or client. Events and activities would also be advertised.

The Station also offered opportunities for clients to develop their media skills. For instance, a young man with cerebral palsy achieved his ambition of becoming a radio DJ in the station, with a regular music programme; and there were other cases.

3.   The Benefit Generated

For BOC, especially in the early years, ROS fm increased public awareness of the services available, and understanding of the work they do and of issues relating more broadly to intellectual disability.

The benefits for some of the volunteer broadcasters were immense, at a personal level, in terms of confidence building and skill development. The community, through listening to the programmes, were more sensitised to the fact that people with disabilities can fully develop their skills and talents.

4.   The Future: Sustaining and replicating the benefits

A challenge for Ross fm during this period was that working with some of the volunteers with disabilities requires a level and type of support that was not always available at the station, and so the service gradually fell away. A further issue was that the Pobal support for Ross FM came to an end, and the Station lost its paid staff. At the same time, volunteers are obliged to spend more time raising funds, leaving less time for supporting community participation in the Station.

Source: John Armstrong, Brothers of Charity

7. "Lions and Leprechauns" (Athlone Community Radio)

		Types of Social Benefit generated by this story
XXX	1.	Individuals in the community, especially minorities and those marginalised, are growing in confidence and creativity, and/or reinforcing a sense of belonging *Hundreds of children from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds gained confidence, and gained a heightened sense of belonging through the broadcasting of their stories*
	2.	People's employment prospects are enhanced, through gaining skills and improved confidence
	3.	Individuals are informed and aware of what is happening around their community
	4.	Individuals are responding more effectively to issues–local to global–because they have access to more and better information and to diverse viewpoints
	5.	Collective actors are facilitated, and reinforced in their capacity, to achieve their goals
XX	6.	The community sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced *Hundreds of children, parents and the community shared in this multi-ethnic celebration of stories and storytelling throughout ACS the catchment area.*

Summary

Our production 'Lions and Leprechauns 1, 2 and 3' had the active participation of more than 350 children from national schools who were reading their own stories. Most were rural schools from the area and Athlone Community Radio (ACR) brought equipment to the schools for the recordings of stories.

Simmy Ndlovu does her piece

1. Context and social issue addressed

Children in primary schools have few opportunities to see radio production or to take part in one, and this was changed for about 350 children in the ACR catchment area, in three annual projects implemented with the support of the Sound and Vision Broadcasting Scheme.

2. Station activities and outputs

This series were completed over the course of three years. Twelve schools participated with different age groups and classes, altogether around 350 children. A technical team set up the equipment and four microphones in each school.

Each of the 18 programmes creating during this project involved two short stories told by professional storytellers, one African and one Irish folklore story.

The African story was told by the girl from Zimbabwe in her traditional, colourful outfit; and she would do an African dance with the kids who just loved it. The Irish story was bilingual, recounted in Irish and English languages. After that, the children themselves took to the stage and read their original stories. These had been drafted and sent in advance so we could prepare sound effects (thunder, knock on the door). Some sound effects were made by other kids (laugh, knocking etc.).

The programmes were all broadcast throughout the area, to the delight of the children, parents and community.

Group of Students in Lions & Leprechauns

3.   Benefit Generated

At the start of the recordings we anticipated that maybe 5 to 10 children from each class would be interested in storytelling. We were thrilled with that response – every child in the class wanted to be part of this programme. We had teachers approaching us to ask if we could record more kids and we said yes. So instead of the five programmes originally planned for Lions and Leprechauns 3, we produced seven. Reading the stories in front of the class and microphones, and taking active roles in the production, boosts their confidence and experience.

Raising awareness for community radio was especially positive as we were working with rural schools. Demand for the podcast of this programme was very high and the promotion was in the local newspapers and social media. All programmes could be easily reached on Mixcloud.

4.   Conclusion

This major production was very big step for Athlone Community Radio. Nothing similar had been done in the primary schools on this scale, covering 350 voices and original stories.

Both community radio and the participants were making sure that the ancient art of storytelling in Ireland is still alive and well.

Source: Athlone Community Radio

8. "Roller Coaster of a Radio Course" (Community Radio Youghal)

	Types of Social Benefit generated by this story
XXX	**1.** Individuals in the community, especially minorities and those marginalised, are growing in confidence and creativity, and/or reinforcing a sense of belonging *This Story, largely narrated by one of 12 asylum seekers who completed a radio training course, clearly gained enormous confidence and a sense of belonging in Ireland*
X	**2.** People's employment prospects are enhanced, through gaining skills and improved confidence *Course completion yields a QQI Level III certification.*
	3. Individuals are informed and aware of what is happening around their community
	4. Individuals are responding more effectively to issues–local to global–because they have access to more and better information and to diverse viewpoints
	5. Collective actors are facilitated, and reinforced in their capacity, to achieve their goals
	6. The community sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced

Summary

Asad Mahmud came to Ireland as an asylum seeker. While living in a Direct Provision Centre he and twelve others completed a radio course, during UCC's Refugee week on 21st to 26th January 2019, run by Community Radio Youghal (CRY 104) FM). He enthusiastically described the impact on himself and the group of asylum seekers of learning to produce a programme and of hearing it broadcast in a highly articulate ten page testimony "Roller Coaster of a Radio Course", complete with photographs.

1. Context and Issues addressed

UCC Asylum Week raises awareness and offers activities and practical assistance, and Youghal FM decided use the occasion to deliver a community radio training course specifically tailored to their needs and circumstances. It was run on the UCC Campus.

The Direct Provision system in Ireland has been heavily criticised in a number of ways, including the constraints imposed on everyday life of residents, such as a prohibition on seeking gainful employment (recently somewhat relaxed) and even on households preparing their own meals.

Studies have shown that these can lead to a decline in the feeling of self-worth and sometime to serious depression especially for long-term residents.

2.   Station activities and outputs

As part of Refugee Week celebration in UCC, Youghal Community Radio organised a five-day crash- course in radio production for twelve asylum seekers from around County Cork. Community Foundation for Ireland provided €4,000 in funding.

They learned how to do record Vox-Pops (in the Campus), to introduce and present topics, record programmes promos, undertake interviews, develop a running order, and create "intro", "outro" and "Anchor" links – everything you need to produce and present a programme from scratch. The five-day training was followed by a sixth day in CRY-FM's studio, where the various components were assembled and a panel discussion recorded and added.

A radio programme was produced from the course entitled "Life In Limbo, Any Hope For The Future". It was broadcast by CRY 104 FM at 7.00pm on February 5th.

The evidence here is Assad testimony, written on his own initiative. For him the event was a welcome antidote to the experience of Direct Provision, though he was by no means embittered about the latter. He says:

Asad Mahmud at work

> "Today I am not gonna bore you with the discussion about Direct Provision and how to Improve it on the other hand I will try to make you a part of that beautiful and amazing experience which we had while learning an extensive Radio Course . . ."
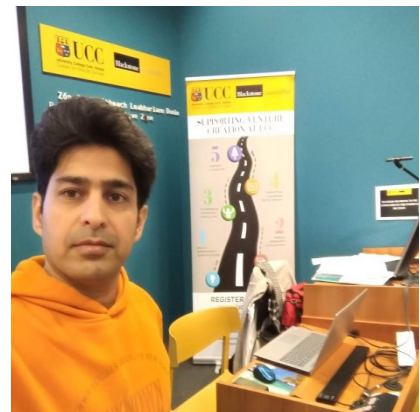
He praised the trainers for developing skills he had no idea he could achieve:

> "We were able to do an unscripted Panel Discussion with ease under the able and experienced supervision of Linda and Darragh".

His final description points strongly to the confidence and empowerment gained.

> "During the week of Course, [as] I listened back to my own recordings, I was abhorred by my own voice frankly, It was nothing like very soothing and composed voices of anchor persons, I used to hear on Radio or TV. But believe me, the end result which came after editing was really amazing, I was sounding way better than I really am. The end result in the form of a programme aired on 5th February at 7 PM was really a beautiful programme, I was not abhorred this time to hear my voice on Radio, contrarily, i loved it."
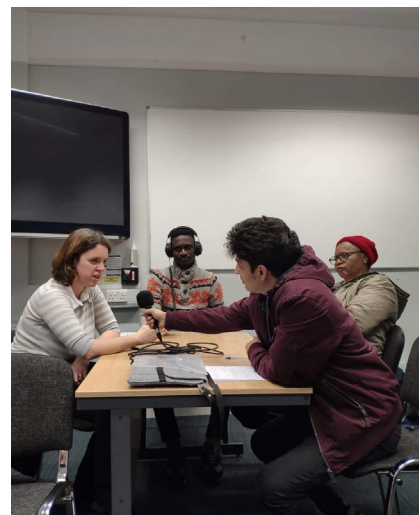
His sense of belonging was also clearly enhanced:

> "Representing all of my class fellows, here, I would love to thank Ireland. First of all, despite dealing with various issues . . . , It's only because of Ireland and the good people of Ireland that we were able to earn this honour for ourselves to record our own Radio Programme."

Successful course completion also yields a QQI Level III certification.

3.   Benefits and Conclusion

With a modest, though essential, grant of €4,000, the radio course targeting Asylum Seekers generated strong immediate outcomes for the participants, certainly for Assad, in terms of new skills, boosting self-worth and confidence, and in countering some of the negative feelings towards Ireland and the community that inevitably accompany living in the Direct Provision system.

Although his future remains uncertain, it seems likely that this has potential for long-term benefits, including the possibility of enhancing employment prospects.

Sources: Community Radio Youghal and Asad Mahmud.

9.   Reaching the young LGBT Community (Liffey Sound)

	Types of Social Benefit generated by this story
XX	**1.** Individuals in the community, especially minorities and those marginalised, are growing in confidence and creativity, and/or reinforcing a sense of belonging *For Caitlin and James, producing this programme offers an opportunity to develop their creative skills, build confidence, skills and capacity, and experience a sense of belonging among the Station team.*
	2. People's employment prospects are enhanced, through gaining skills and improved confidence
	3. Individuals are informed and aware of what is happening around their community
	4. Individuals are responding more effectively to issues–local to global–because they have access to more and better information and to diverse viewpoints
	5. Collective actors are facilitated, and reinforced in their capacity, to achieve their goals
XX	**6.** The community sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced *The young LGBT community in Dublin has few collective media outlets to express their interests and build a sense of identity. This programme offers that.*

Summary

This is a story of Caitlin and James, in Caitlin's own words, who came to Liffey Sound and got a lot more than she was expecting, and now believes she can reach out to her community, the young LGBT community of Dublin.

1. Context and Issues addressed

Liffey Sound is a not for profit Community Radio service licensed to serve the community of Lucan and its environs. The Station is committed to serving its community irrespective of creed, class, colour or race, and to giving a voice to those not served by the mainstream broadcasting services. In the last 20 years, many different nationalities have moved to Lucan, and Liffey Sound endeavours to give them a voice.

The context for this specific story is the absence of any programme on mainstream radio discussing LGBT topics among young people.

2. Station activities and outputs

Caitlin Early came to Liffey Sound to do work experience as a transition year student. She then submitted a proposal to present a programme with James. This is her personal account of what it means to her:

"I first came to Liffey Sound when I was 16 years old. I was in transition year at the time, and I came to the station to do work experience with them. As a teenager unsure what career to pursue, or what exactly interested me, Liffey Sound offered an opportunity to challenge myself and to explore my own abilities by putting together an interview and an opinion piece of my own to be played on the radio.

"Almost two years later, James and I now present our own show, *Insert Title*, in which we discuss important topics and issues faced by young people today, in our own fun and light-hearted style. When we first wrote the proposal for our show, we both felt it was important to try to reach out to young people on the radio, and to try to establish a safe space for teenagers to tune in and hear popular topics discussed by people their own age."

3. Benefit Generated

"We believe that, by offering this type of radio show in our area, we are enriching the community by inspiring young people to become more involved in the media, and in radio, specifically. We believe that its important and beneficial to discuss topics of this sort on the radio, in order to encourage young people to tune in and listen, even if it is just once a week. We believe that it is vital to introduce teenagers to the radio now, so that they can help bring radio into the future.

"We like to think that we are assisting this effort by making radio appealing to a younger audience. As well as that, we like to address a wide range of topics in our show such as school and college, politics, personal issues, mental health, and LGBT topics by making teenagers and young people feel less alone in their thoughts and in their feelings. We like to think that radio has helped us provide a beneficial insight into these issues and offer help to those who need it. We take pride in using our radio show to communicate our views and our message to a diverse group of people from different backgrounds.

"When I first began at Liffey Sound, I never could have imagined the positive effects and the benefits that it has supplied me with, and continues to supply me with today.

Since the beginning of our show, James and I have both seen a noticeable increase in our confidence levels, as well as in our social skills, which have both supplied us with skills that we will have for the rest of our lives. We have become more capable, organised, and more in tune with and aware of the world around us. As for the feedback we have received at the station, all the volunteers and staff have treated us with nothing but kindness and generosity. The support system at Liffey Sound is one of the most rewarding attributes of volunteering there, as the warm atmosphere of the station makes it seem as though it's a second family."

4.   Conclusion

"The benefits of being involved with Liffey Sound have truly enriched our lives, and we like to think that these benefits have extended beyond just us, and into our community. It amazes me to think of what community radio stations, such as Liffey Sound, could do for other people if they opened up their ears and their hearts to it. James and I are willing to help them on that journey, and we know that every other volunteer at our station would say the same.

"We honestly believe that working in radio has opened new doors for our future, and has provided us with new skills and abilities that we will never undervalue or forget. More than anything, we love what we do and we look forward to participating in radio for many years to come."

Caitlin and James have the potential to podcast their programme, thus reaching more young people.

Sources: Caitlin Early