

Heeding the voiceless

“A guide to use
Oral Testimonies for Radio
Documentaries”

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Oral Testimonies for Radio
Documentaries”

*The Panos Institute West Africa,
Winner of the Alioune Diop Prize for promoting
publication in Africa*



This manual is a publication
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The Panos Institute West Africa (PIWA) is an international non-governmental organisation (independent and non religious), created in January 2000.

From its head office in Dakar, PIWA carries out activities in West Africa and has representations and correspondents in most countries of this region.

After Panos London, Panos Washington and Panos Paris, it is the 4th independent institute of the Panos Council, which also includes Panos East Africa (Kampala), Panos Southern Africa (Lusaka) and Panos South Asia (Kathmandu).

PIWA aims to contribute to the building a culture of democracy, citizenship and peace in the field of information and communication.

All ideas and opinions expressed in this work are the exclusive responsibility of the authors, and should in no way prejudice the official position of Panos Institute West Africa.



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• FOREWORD

The Oral Testimony is a new format in community radio, adapted from a social research tool set up by Panos London. It is an inverted interview because it is guided by the interviewee and not the interviewer. It stems from the principle that to know what is really going on in a community, you have to listen patiently to the people at grassroots level, instead of asking only the leaders of that community as is usually the case. These leaders tend to hide problems in their efforts to present a nice face of their community to outside eyes and ears. The consequence is the vast majority of community members who effectively shape social trends, never get a chance to say their views, perceptions, experiences, priorities, values. Thus, a lot of projects have failed and a lot of community conflicts have remained unsolved because the attempted solutions have ignored the silent majority, or did not have the right approach in identifying the pitfalls ahead.

Because it goes deeper, the Oral Testimony is much longer and much more structured than a classic interview or traditional researchers questionnaires. In the classic interview, the questions are based on what we believe listeners want to know, or facts we want to establish for a project. In the Oral Testimony, the resource person is called the narrator. He or she is encouraged to tell things through his or her experiences, values, priorities. This is what informs behaviour more than hard facts. The idea is, for instance in cases of conflict in a community, when the adverse side hears the deep motivations of the narrator, his or her fears, aspirations, beliefs, it can foster understanding. The recorded interview can last several hours. For community radio it is adapted to the documentary format by selecting the dominant topic.

This manual explains in detail the philosophy of the Oral Testimony and suggests a step by step approach for community radio volunteers, and radio journalists at large who may want to use this revolutionary format.

Diana SENGHOR *Director,*
Panos Institute West Africa

• SUMMARY

Chapter One : Why this guide ?	15
Chapter two : What is Oral Testimony	
Differences between OT and normal interview techniques	19
The methodology	22
What for ?	23
Why use Oral testimonies ?	24
Summary	27
Chapter three : Why Oral Testimony for radio production in Africa ?	29
Radio and Oral Testimony : an ideal couple ?	31
Oral Testimony Radio : what makes the difference ?	32
Summary	33
Chapter four : Some practical guidelines for listening and airing Oral Testimonies for radio	37
Who to select as interviewers for OT programmes ?	39
Radio Journalists versus OT reporters	40
How to plan an OT project for radio - development of themes and topics ?	42
Linking the topics with potential narrators	45
How to prepare the interview and the interviewees	49
Setting up the interview	49
The interview itself	51
Recording the interviews	60
Technical requirements (portable recorders)	62
Location of the interview	62
Summary	64
Chapter five : Listening, Logging and Editing (Producing)	65
Listening to recorded interviews	67

Why logging is important	67
Editing and producing the OT programmes	70
What is a radio documentary ?	71
How to edit a programme based on OT elements ?	73
Summary	79
Annexes :	81
Training Module :	83
Practical Tips for producers :	84
Notes for laying out a script :	85
Terminology used in scripts :	85
Bibliography :	86
Abbreviations :	87

• INTRODUCTION

The experiences of Oral Testimony (OT) Radio Production in two countries and one regional pilot with Panos' Anglophone network of radio correspondents, have made it valid, justified and necessary to expand the existing in-house knowledge to a wider range of potential users (radio stations) in Africa. The most plausible method to scale-up this experience is through a small and practical guide that has the following objectives :

to inform radio producers about the extra-ordinary approach and uniqueness of the OT methodology for radio production,
to establish a pedagogical document that allows radio producers to discover and practise this methodology through simple and effective exercises,
to share experiences developed throughout the three PIWA pilot projects.

The manual is targeted at radio producers and program directors. It expects a basic know-how of talk radio production, as well as sound editing capacities. It focuses on the expansion of traditional methods of interviewing for radio.

Expected outcome

- A pedagogical document for senior radio producers and radio broadcasters is developed and ready for use.
- Development oriented stations have a support tool for the reinforcement of production capacities of radio producers.
- There is better cooperation between community radio stations and NGOs in conceiving Oral Testimony radio projects.

“Oral Testimony has the power to make you see deeper than usually done by radio : it is an outpour of feelings and sentiments that is more revealing than a classic interview”

Koffi LARWEH
Radio Ada, Ghana

“We broadcast an Oral Testimony by a former commander of the RUF militia, and the RUF was no longer the villain”

Beresford TAYLOR
Radio Democracy
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Chapter 1

Why this guide ?

In 2001, Panos West Africa proposed to launch a special project that would link the “Oral Testimony methodology” with classic community radio work. As a concept, oral testimonies were never really being used for participatory community radio work even though the word “oral” proves it. It is however strange that radio and oral testimony research had not found each other yet. The concept needed necessarily to be developed to cater for some of the lapses that come as a result of separating the two.

The Panos Institute West Africa (PIWA) has set up, in all five Anglophone countries in the region, pilot radio projects using Oral Testimonies. The methodology of Oral Testimony (OT) radio reporting is based on a specific interview method using the “Oral Testimonies” of the local population in their original languages. Experiences drawn from mother tongue education have revealed that people do critical thinking and concept formation in their own languages. Again, one can present or contribute better to a radio programme if she/he has a good command of the language used as the medium of broadcasting and instruction. So far the best language is the natural language of the people in which one does not have to think deeply of grammatical issues. Local and rural community radio stations generally broadcast in these languages, as a result, interpretation and communication problems are not foreseen or reduced to the barest minimum. Oral testimonies are relatively flexible and can get a lot of audience attention as well as response. People feel good listening to their own language on the radio.

OT focuses on “hidden” voices, contexts and content. The hidden voices refer to the masses in the country who do not have the opportunity to make their voices heard either at the parliament, district assembly, or on public platforms. These are exactly the same areas of emphasis that community radio stations aim at. Therefore, the application of OT in community radio programme production is seen as particularly appropriate. Unlike the normal and familiar character featured on air, the listener learns that the people involved, the speakers or narrators are ordinary folk. Essentially, their ideas, wisdom and concerns are being passed on unnoticed, unrecognised and are therefore of no consequence on the development process.

The Oral Testimony Radio Production project of Panos West Africa was the first of its kind. Based on the firm conviction that community radio programming can help develop the capacities of communities in general, it is believed that this methodology enhances the capacity of radio stations to listen to and give voice to their communities.

This guide is developed for and targeted at journalists of radio stations in Africa. These people were trained to interview, to listen and to report. They often claim to have the necessary experience and competence to conduct professional interviews. For all those, I hope that this guide will serve as an inspiration source for many new and exciting forms of radio productions.

(Source Johan DEFLANDER)

CHAPTER 2

What is Oral Testimony ? Differences between OT and the normal interview techniques

This chapter discusses the concept of oral testimony (OT) and gives a brief introduction to explain why OT is different from the normal interview techniques that are popularly employed in radio broadcast.

In the classic interview, the journalist seeks information he believes his listeners want or need to know. In that sense he represents his listeners and asks the questions about the facts the average listener would have wanted to elicit if he had the opportunity. Before deciding on which person to interview the journalist must first be clear on what kind of facts he wants to establish. That will determine the question line and the type of interview he will carry. There are five types of interviews.

The witness interview

The journalist is looking for the story of an event. He talks to a witness who may or may not be involved in the event.

The explanation interview

Here we seek a technical, theoretical, or methodological explanation of an event from somebody who is knowledgeable about it. Again here the interviewer is not necessarily involved in that event.

The portrait interview

It is used to paint someone in words, by asking questions on his life, his activities, his relations, his tastes, etc.

The statement interview

With that type of interview we can get somebody's stand or opinion on a specific matter. It is usually the case with politicians, trade unionists, human rights activists, or lobbyists of various causes.

The vox pop

It means the voice of the people. The journalist seeks quick responses on a specific matter from passers by in a street, or several people in a chosen area. The vox pop is in a way a non scientific opinion poll. To avoid accusations of bias, radio stations tend to balance the pros and cons responses.

(Source : Dr. Ibrahima SANE)

The Oral Testimony is a completely different type of exercise

The methodology

OT is designed along the lines of story telling using the narrative approach in research. There have always been stories and people – all over the world- like to tell them. As storytelling, oral testimonies are probably the oldest form of passing on personal life experiences to one another. Oral Testimony interviews are long and extensive discussions on personal life histories. Although there may well be a broad issue or topic (for instance, post conflict reconciliation) which the interviewer tries to meet, every interview will be different. This is so because it is mainly the narrator rather than the interviewer who influences the shape and content of the interview.

Oral Testimony is a qualitative research (interview) that attempts to investigate people's perspectives, understanding of and feelings about events and changes. It is a powerful tool to uncover aspects of people's lives which otherwise remain hidden, and allows us to understand subjective positions. It covers the socio-cultural, economic, political, religious, health, educational, agricultural environmental and every aspect of the people's lives.

INSERT : What is oral testimony ?

Oral Testimony (OT) is a pervasive phenomenon that encompasses all the following :

the oldest form of communication : story telling, myths, legends, riddles, etc.,

a form of communication accessible to everybody for passing on tradition, knowledge and expertise, without a dependency on literacy,

a multi-faceted account of individual experiences,

a way to promote a transparent and participatory democracy: people are the actors and they have the right to self-definition and expression,

a very applicable technique for research on sensitive subjects, such as human or social rights, HIV/AIDS,

a very useful tool for the monitoring and evaluation of development projects (source Panos Haiti web site).

Oral Testimony (OT) uses the phenomenological interviewing approach that enables the researchers to examine everyday human experiences in close detailed ways. It attempts to discover the meaning people place on their own experiences. According to de Marrais (2004:56), “phenomenological researchers create contexts in which participants are encouraged to reflect respectively on an experience they have already lived through and describe the experiences in as much detail as possible to the interviewer.” We will see in the subsequent chapters that this is exactly what OT does and it is an interviewee-based methodology.

The methodology is based on a specific interview method using personal “testimonies” of the local population in their original languages. The other advantage is that the local population itself understands –as no other- these languages and/or dialects.

(Source Johan DEFANDER)

What for ?

“The voice of poor communities is seldom heard in the development debate. Why ? Simply because this debate takes place mostly through written documents, normally written in foreign languages. In order to change this, one should allow people to express themselves in a form that they know : orally and in their own languages”. This phrase orients us directly towards the practical use of these testimonies, namely that the wider society can be informed about what people say and think. It is thus a proper mechanism for the dissemination of public and general information. But what exactly are Oral Testimonies ? Are they always a way of giving volume and power to the voices of people who are outside the main flows of communication ?

If being poor means having less of a voice, then being the poorest of the poor means being the most silent of all. It will thus imply that economic power also connotes linguistic power and vice versa. These individuals and groups tend to be “spoken for”, sometimes by well-meaning governmental or non-governmental organisations. However, they can be misrepresented. Their problems and issues are often generalised, and the concerns of community leaders and elite are sometimes over-represented. The way they are represented depends on the interest the leaders have in the particular subjects.

Individual testimonies are important touchstones against the generalisations of the “collective” version. In OT, the people themselves are placed

best to formulate their own problems and defend their interests. As such, the dissemination of testimonies gives the society access to the views and experiences of more marginalized people. It can provide an information exchange forum, which can assist in the resolution of conflicts which polarise communities. It is a communicative platform where class distinction is neutralised since both the poor and the rich, the elite and the masses, the literate and the illiterate can equally speak.

Above all, personal testimonies connect the various spheres of life, such as family and work, or health and income. They can inform us on various related topics that otherwise would not come forward. Specialists tend to tackle community development in disconnected sectors : health, agriculture, economics, nutrition, law, psychology and so on. People's first hand accounts will stress the connections rather than the differences. Oral testimonies show that all aspects of life are intertwined and also that the perception of things is nearly as important as the facts themselves.

(Source Panos Haiti website)

As a complementary method to other research methods such as quantitative surveys, Oral Testimonies could be used to strengthen all aspect of the design, implementation and analysis of development work. It is a very useful tool for the monitoring and evaluation of development projects by grounding interventions in terms of the lives of individuals.

OT can be used as a tool for promoting pertinent and adequate information, for instance by community radio programming. Furthermore, it can be used as an advocacy instrument to disseminate experience of individuals which are then linked up to policy. This can reach wider audience at local, national and international level, depending on the range of broadcast of the stations that are airing the programs. If it is well programmed, the elite and the administrators will be tended to listen to what the "exposed voices" are saying and adhere to their views.

The process itself can lead to awareness raising both of the narrator telling their stories and of the listeners.

Why use Oral Testimonies ?

Oral testimonies are vivid, personal and direct. They challenge generalisations and platitudes of public statements and official versions of events. Full of human detail, anecdotes, opinions and information, they can bring

to life a range of experiences with an authenticity and persuasiveness which is hard to match. Most importantly, they cut across barriers of wealth, class, gender, race and education, and give voice to the experiences of people whose views are often overlooked.

Testimonies are a way of giving volume and power to the voice of people who are outside the main flows of communication or who are usually spoken for by other people and thus can help to cut across barriers such as wealth, gender, class, ethnicity etc.

Oral testimony is also a powerful instrument for highlighting personal sensitive and political issues, which are usually difficult to enquire into using other methods such as quantitative questionnaires, surveys and statistics.

Listening to “ordinary” people can be particularly important for those reporting on development and environment issues -an area where there is always an “expert” point of view. For example, listening to community and personal histories can place current development priorities and views in a much wider context, and reveal the influences of the past. Equally importantly, relying on spokespeople and community representatives for information may result in an incomplete picture, lacking true depth or colour. The views and experiences of the more marginalized members - whether by virtue of sex, age, disability, social status or ethnic identity - will often be inadequately represented or even distorted, if voiced at all.

Indeed, one of the reasons for collecting individual stories and experiences is to redress the balance in the existing literature. Personal testimony does not replace other kinds of information gathering, but it can provide insights and illumination to more quantitative material, and fill in important gaps. Personal testimonies are first hand rich stock of information from the people themselves devoid of any alteration.

Oral Testimony collection is a prime example of an information activity in which the “process” is as important as the “product”. Therefore, being listened to can be empowering too, raising confidence and self-awareness. Interviewees can take on public roles, speaking out on important issues for development (peace among others), or for their right to take part in a fight they believed to be right. Most of the time, people do not have the opportunity to voice their views and experiences outside their immediate circle. Sometimes too, it is because of the different cultural background they grew up in.

Many remarked upon the restorative or therapeutic value of telling their story in their own way. They are happy of being patiently listened to, and of knowing that their views and experiences would reach thousands of other women, in countries all over the world.

(Source Olivia BENNET).

OT uses the narrative enquiry method, the narrative method provides an effective way to undertake the “systematic study” of personal experiences and meaning and to see how events have been constructed by the active subjects (people). The narrative enquiry method is both a process and a product. It is a process because a narrator tells or narrates his/her experiences, and it is a product because the story or narrative told becomes a substance that can be used. In telling their own stories, active and enthusiastic narrators come out with narratives that are particular, personal and contextualised in time and space. The stories told are the basic units for analysis. (See Kramp 2004 : 104-105).

Summary

In this chapter, we have identified OT as a qualitative method that emphasises the use of the narrative inquiry method or story telling as a tool for tapping multi-facet information from interviewees. The enquiry method allows the people to express themselves and come out with their experiences in life. The chapter further identified the reasons why many people are cut off from the public communication and suggests that OT is the most natural technique that can bring the marginalized people into public limelight. We have seen that in using OT, we have a first and rich account from the people themselves rather than a second hand and collective version of information from their leaders or the elites.

The chapter has also made it clear that OT is a way of empowering the voices of people who are outside the main flows of communication or who are usually spoken for by other people and thus can help to cut across barriers such as wealth, gender, class, ethnicity etc. Oral testimony is also a powerful instrument for highlighting personal sensitive and political issues, which are usually difficult to enquire into using other methods such as quantitative questionnaires, surveys and statistics.

What has been made clear in this chapter is that OT methodology reaches a wider audience at the local, national and international levels and this is a true reflection of mass communication. In OT there is a combination of both process and product. In listening to the interviews of the people they also gain the power, confidence and the hope to participate in things that concern them, their localities and their nation.

CHAPTER 3

Why Oral Testimony for community radio production in Africa ?

“With OT you can feel your community”

Mohamed Lamine KANU
Sky FM, Freetown
Sierra Leone

This chapter discusses the need for the incorporation of OT for community radio production in Africa. It seeks to find out whether radio and OT can be effectively combined and what will be the differences in using OT.

Radio and Oral Testimony : an ideal couple ?

Radio is the most popular, pervasive and affordable means of communication in most developing countries, where lack of basic infrastructure and illiteracy are common denominators, and where funds to produce and distribute media materials for development are in very short supply. The radio, viewed against the backdrop of problems highlighted, would be the most viable and accessible medium of instruction and communication. The approach of OT reporting for rural radio, based on this specific interview method of the local population in their original languages is adapted to reality. Local and rural community radio stations generally broadcast in these languages, so interpretation and communication problems are not foreseen. The other advantage is that the local population itself understands –as no other –these languages and/or dialects. OT focuses on “hidden” voices, contexts and content. These are exactly the same areas of emphasis of community radio stations everywhere in the world. A project to develop the application of OT in community radio programme production is therefore seen as particularly appropriate and indispensable .

The focus on the Oral Testimony methodology, adapted for radio use, brings about a concept of a more “listener – friendly” radio format that facilitates integration and synthesis and encourages creativity and unity in diversity. Naturally, creativity is heightened if the person has control over the language that is being used as the medium and tool for creativity; and there is no other language suitable for this purpose than one’s own language. The specific format is suited to community radio objectives and approach. Often as a conclusion, all collected OT material is being looked upon as a real “treasure”. It is a real treasure because the materials include the people’s traditions, customs and institutions and oral art forms such as folktales, proverbs, dirges, poetry, riddles, puzzles, myths and legends and all categories of folksongs that have been neglected over the years. The OT methodology is thus one of the tools for going back to the roots and making sure that nothing is left behind.

The problem of communicating one's messages in an effective way has caused a lot of frustration among professional communicators, radio journalists and development workers. Different supports have been used and radio, for a while now, is often seen as one of the best 'communication tools for development'. However, the type of radio formats used in these campaigns is often limited to sensitisation spots, sketches and dramatic features. All of those are conceptualised to teach the audience. Oral Testimony radio formats are advocating a different approach.

(source Johan DEFLANDER)

Many (radio) journalists will be aware that testimony is often the basis of good reporting. Many may feel that gathering testimony is what they do on most of their assignments anyway. But there is a qualitative difference between asking pre-set, specific questions on a subject, and really listening at length to people and allowing them to guide much of the shape, tone and content of an interview, with the intention of broadcasting their story in their own words and others. Oral Testimony projects give a platform to people who want to speak for themselves, rather than be heard through the medium of outsiders, "experts" - or journalists.

Working this way and letting the interviewee guide the mood and structure of the conversation may be time-consuming, but can be very rewarding. By not just focusing on what they want to know, the listener/reporter may well gain insights and information that she/he would not have decided to ask for. Personal testimony does not replace other kinds of research or reporting, but it does complement it very well. And it can significantly increase the interviewer's understanding of the sensitivity to the views, priorities and experiences of those with whom they are working.

Radio can be a particularly powerful medium through which to communicate personal testimony (source Olivia Bennet). This is so particularly in Africa, where oral cultural traditions are still highly valued, with its potential audience of millions, and with its dramatic use of sound and the human voice. It is, therefore, plausible and feasible to apply OT method so as to achieve the goal of tapping all these cultural traditions.

Oral Testimony radio : what makes the difference ?

What is the difference between the way that themes/topics would be handled through OT and through conventional radio ? A question that we put to all participants of the different training workshops. What follows is a table showing a summary of the output of a group reflexion of what OT would do differently in terms of Who, What, When, Where, Why and How ?

Summary

OT in Africa community radio production employs the people's indigenous language. We have noted that the most important way community radio can be beneficial to the masses is to incorporate OT into the radio production and broadcast. We have seen that OT helps the interviewee, the contributor and even the reporter to feel more natural and confident in their presentation. More importantly, OT gives voices to the voiceless who were previously marginalised.

The chapter revealed that radio is the most viable, affordable and accessible medium of instruction and communication. Having this in mind, OT is therefore closely related to community radio stations for both of them lay much emphasis on the local population. OT is thus a listener friendly and locally based radio format. In OT every aspect of the people's socio-cultural, socio-economic and political life is collected as a real treasure that must be stored for other uses.

OT is a method that unfolds itself as the interview grows and it thus helps the interviewer ask questions s/he had not earlier on decided to touch on. Finally, we have seen that the major difference between OT and the other qualitative and statistical methods is that OT uses who, what, when, where, why and how to enquire about all aspects of people's lives.

WHO

The underprivileged, marginalized, voiceless
Those who are knowledgeable about the issues
Those who are directly involved in the issue(s)/event(s)
“Victims”
By community radio volunteers

WHAT

The unknown, the hidden
Their (WHO) own experiences (individual)
Memory / recollection
Common/everyday experiences that are not given sufficient importance
Issues/practices that affect people – that leave people as “victims” – but which are considered culturally acceptable
Emotions/ feelings
Personal judgments and objectivity
Personal meaning/importance
“Victimization” by dominant practices/thinking
Power relations, rank, status, gender, and ethnic differences and relations

WHEN

Daily life – everyday events
The time of the events
The time the storyteller is available to tell his/her story
Continuum of experience – before / now / after (yesterday/today/tomorrow)
The full spectrum of time
May be the person’s life story
Linkages between different events/times
When the voiceless are ready to talk

WHERE

Where the story happened/is happening
Where the WHO live(s)
Unreachable places – remote/most marginalized
Where it is most convenient for the storyteller to tell the story -
Feeling at home, secured, safe (especially if in a threatening situation)

WHY

To get the “real” story from those who live with it or are affected by it
To give voice to the voiceless

- To learn from the storyteller's experience
- To sympathize / empathize with the “victims”
- To help the voiceless realize that their contributions are important for the development of the community
- To encourage the voiceless to express what is within them
- To complement – or make up for – what is not covered by conventional radio programmes/broadcasting

HOW

- Building empathy – we are all human
- Using approaches that enable the marginalized to tell their stories freely
- Main tool = interview (person-to-person)
- PRA (Participatory Reflection & Action) tools may be used to draw out themes and issues for OT
- Giving due respect to those you are approaching
- Listening
- Language that people can express themselves in – in which they can bear their soul (innermost feelings and thoughts)
- Encouraging the voiceless to feel it is time to tell their stories
- Non-verbal signals (body language, facial expressions, etc)
- NOT investigative journalism – probing hard, going after specific answers
- Prompt gently – allow story to unfold
- Allows silence – part of the story

CHAPTER 4

Some practical guidelines for listening and airing Oral Testimonies for radio



This chapter discusses the ways of listening and airing OT for radio. It concentrates on the selection of interviewers of OT, planning of OT project for radio and the development of the project. The chapter further considers themes and topics, linking topics with potential narrator, preparing the interview and the interviewees, finding the right interview techniques, choosing the right questions and recording the interview.

Who to select as interviewers for OT programmes ?

It goes without saying that radio work should be done, in theory, by trained radio professionals. However, community radio broadcasters on the African continent tend to be working a lot with volunteers or community members that have little or no experience in formal radio production. This procedure lends heavily on the different concept of community radio stations that is operated by, for, with and about the population itself. The principle of working with non-professionals radio journalists does not, in itself, lead to extreme difficulties to undertake Oral Testimony radio work. As soon as adapted training is foreseen, radio testimonies do not require very experienced senior radio producers. What needs clearly to be defined is the exact role of the radio producer. Will he/she be only the interviewer, i.e. the person that collects, records and broadcasts the narrators tales ? Or will he/she be the coordinator of the Oral Testimony project (which might sounds more logic sometimes) ? Each production slot will necessarily enter in a form of project. It could also be a regularly time slot in the program schedule that is reserved for this type of radio format, or the co-production between the radio and a development organisation or a civil society action group. In both cases, a coordinator need to be identified and his/her roles need to be clarified.

PIWA's experiences working with community radio stations show that motivated broadcasters or journalist do in general have the capacity to fulfil both role. As soon as the project takes up a bigger scale and management and/or funding aspects are getting complicated, it might be handy to separate the project development side from the management and funding side. The project development involves the theme and topic identification, selections of interviewees, recording and broadcasting.. In any case, the coordinator-journalist needs to be well informed at all stages of the project. He/She will need to do some initial research into the

subject of the topic to be developed. There will also be the need to do some research to find out which other organisations have been working on this thematic field in the broadcast area of the radio station. This is to only to avoid duplication of efforts but merely to identify potential interviewees in the community (*See later*).

In general, we can identify in the team of radio journalists some interviewers for OT work who are trustable and who can take initiatives. But in several cases we could recommend the whole team of radio producers. Interviewers for OT should always be interested in and have a good understanding of the theme and topic to be developed throughout the whole project. They should also be sensitive in dealing with the information obtained and should be able to handle difficult situations. PIWA worked with interviewees in post-conflict situations in Sierra Leone where reconciliation and post-war stress and traumatic experiences were high on the agenda. For all OT documentaries, it is highly recommended to have native language speakers, preferably from the same ethnic, religious and sexual group or background, since they gained the necessary sensitivity in understanding the different ethnic, religious and sexual differences.

Working for radio demands a more than working knowledge of the languages the stations broadcasts in. Therefore, it is always clearly demanded that OT radio producers will be native speakers of the language the interviews will be conducted in and broadcast. Due to the extreme difficulties in translating the experiences of interviewees into another (inter) national language it is not recommended to dub OT radio documentaries. They've proven to be valid in the original native language. Translation will always lose certain important characteristics of the testimony.

Radio Journalists versus OT reporters

It has been said several times during the training sessions of PIWA that radio reporters (even community journalists) are too heavily looking for scoops and sensational news reporting. The complementary approach of OT reporting is focusing on these other voices, always neglected and never listened to. This will necessarily need another journalistic approach and the potential OT reporter needs to be, above and before all, an enthusiastic and motivated reporter, interested in the local customs and cultural habits. Some seasoned older experienced senior journalists, tend

to be less tickled in the different approach of OT journalism. For some of them, interviewing means getting to record whatever you want to get out of someone. Identifying interviewees is clearly defined differently from classic news reporting for radio. Some journalist may even lack patience and willingness to listen for a longer period to persons to be identified as non-resource persons for the case. The expression came up several times during training sessions, that our trainees were learning to “listen” for the first time in their life.

(source Giving Voice)

How many narrators are necessary to fill a radio documentary ? There is definitely no general answer to the exact amount of interviewees needed to come up with. The general rule will always be, the more the better, but for practical financial and editing reasons, it has been agreed upon by all participants of our training workshops that to edit a documentary of about 30 minutes airtime, a

Narrators are not always easy to handle. You have to listen very intently. They don't always have a logical development. So if you listen you can bring them back.

Mohamed Lamin KANU
Sky FM, Freetown
Sierra Leone

total of 2 to 6 narrators are necessary to discuss extensively a given topic.

Since some of the interviews are less successful, it is always good to identify enough narrators during the identification phase; so that you might try to collect slightly more than the initial agreement.

The content of the interview determines the need for extra recordings. Some experiences in Sierra Leone have shown that even with only one good narrator and some extensive editing work, a program of one hour length was still interesting enough to follow for the audiences. One thing to consider, and we will come back to this later during the editing phase, is that radio listeners nowadays tend to have difficulties to focus for a longer period on only one narrator that speaks. Therefore, getting more narrators to alternate the voices used in the documentary makes it not only more rich in terms of difference of content, it also makes it more listener-friendly.

Allow yourself not to do more than two OT radio interviews a day. Knowing that it takes a lot of your attention and concentration, as well as

preparation, it seems undo-able to have several interviews a day. The narrator him/herself will probably give verbal and non-verbal indications of and when he/she loses concentration. In general, whenever the narrator is not enthusiastic anymore the content is less interesting and the responses will be less accurate. Therefore, for specific radio use, we never recommend sessions to be longer than one hour (sixty minutes). This also goes for editing reasons since listening, logging and editing an interview of sixty minutes is a harsh work at community radio level.

(source Johan DEFLANDER)

How to plan an OT project for radio – development of themes and topics ?

As much as radio producers were concerned initially when Panos West Africa started its work with radio, Oral Testimony radio work is not being looked upon as a specific project standing on itself. Most of the radio stations combine different formats and programs to complete their broadcast schedule. It ranges from news and entertainment programs to educational, cultural and dramatic performances. Therefore, OT for radio production needs to be seen as one of the potential formats to be used. It is really a format that needs to be developed rather as a project than a normal radio programme.

Projects tend to be described using the following language :

- to have a general objective
- to have a specific objective
- to define the activities to be undertaken to achieve this objective
- to develop mechanisms to follow up on the expected outcome results (monitoring and evaluation).

If and how an OT radio project needs these terminologies depends heavily on the implementers and the potential need for external funding. It would be our idea to minimize this official language and to start from the development of a theme or topic you would like to work on. Once identified a theme of importance to your audience, you will necessarily develop the main angle of approach and the underlying vision you would have or you would like to develop. You will soon discover that the main development axes of a project will use the above cited “four-line” approach. The more detailed a project becomes, the more need you will have to involve professional aids. These include developing a logical framework to clarify the objectives and activities, initiating also a budget

and a detailed time framework of the implementation of all activities. It is however important to remember that most community radio stations do not have extensive administrative back-up capacity at their organisation. Enthusiasm and creativity are, as usual, the key factors of realising good OT radio work. Our own experiences in Ghana have shown that by limiting the bureaucratic tendencies (including the writing of reports – community radio journalists tend to speak, not to write) elements, the radio work gains.

Take as an example the topic development session that PIWA developed in Ghana, when the first OT training workshop was organised. All radio producers from partner community stations were not briefed in advance on the topic that Panos West Africa would like them to be working after the training. We could even imagine that some of those stations did not have any experience of Panos' programmes in the sub region. To show that topic development is a cultural embedded process we transcribed all ideas that came up during a brainstorm session. We strongly recommended that whenever your radio station is planning to set up an Oral Testimony project, this participatory approach will be followed.

After all participants have been divided into three different groups, the trainer gave them one hour to brainstorm on topics to be treated through Oral Testimony Radio Broadcasts.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of women in fishing Hygiene in the community Violence against women and children African culture and agriculture Children at war Religion in Africa Youth and community-building Food security You and your community Green talents Living with AIDS Music for food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding democratic values (political parties) History of villages/towns Chieftaincy – land/leadership/authority Religion – beliefs Ethnic diversity (language, culture etc) Men and women (equity) Class structure (old boyism, economic, social) Resources (private, communal, privileges) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girl child education Female genital mutilation Domestic violence Religious conflicts Prohibition of inter-marriage among different Muslim communities Changes in traditional husbandry Land degradation Chieftaincy disputes History of chieftaincy Migration Fishmongers practices Women and work Fishermen's stories Village histories Traditional drumming Child abuse Child labour Teenage pregnancy HIV/AIDS Income generating activities Dress codes – their significance Single parents

As the scheme shows us, almost every imaginable topic was envisaged as a potential topic to be dealt with using the methodology. Topics and themes to be dealt by OT radio programming are not limited. You can probably identify as many topics as the potential community can or will come up with to testify. The approach is probably valid for all issues of importance in a community, as soon as there is a basic understanding of the theme. Ideally, topic development at the radio station needs to be done by a process that includes group participation. The radio team in partnership with local NGO members or Civil Society Actors seem to be the key stakeholders to develop potential topics. They have a good working knowledge of what happens in the society and where the key problems need to be researched. The way themes and topics need to be discussed and detailed can mainly be done through brain storming exercises in which writing down any potential themes/issues for future radio programmes using the oral testimony methodology is important. During the PIWA sessions, several radio producers reflected during a short time (30 minutes to one hour) on topic development (see above the outcome list of topics)

Mainly a distinction can be made in :

brainstorming on general topics by all radio producers of the community radio (or all involved in the production),
discussion in groups to develop sub-topics and related topics.

The second part of this participatory method will not only come up with sub-themes and sub-topics linked to the general theme. It will also analyse the appropriateness of all these sub-themes and their acceptance by radio producers. During training sessions in Ghana, it was felt by all participants that all selected sub-themes on the three different topics selected by the three stations (see beneath) lent themselves to giving a voice to the voiceless. The cited two main reasons :

1. by projecting and highlighting a (hidden) way of life and showing its inherent value of self-reliance and how it is worthy of respect,
2. by focusing on relatively marginalized groups

Station	Theme	Sub-Themes
Radio Progress	The search for democracy and peace	The Early search (40s mid 50s) Emergence of democratic principles & practice in the Upper West Region
Radio Peace	The fishing system	Challenges to an emerging democratic system Maintenance of democratic practice in the Upper West Region Institutional structure Distribution structure Sanitation Conflict resolution
Radio Ada	The Dangme way of conflict-resolution	Traditional arbitration in Dangme marriages Traditional arbitration in intercommunity conflicts Traditional arbitration in conflicts over resource allocation 4. Contemporary influences on traditional arbitration practices

INSERT

Later, during the second production phase in Ghana, the overall theme to be developed was “Where lies our future – lives of youths in our communities”. The general theme was then, through a participatory process, detailed into the following main-sub-themes : parenting (role of extended family), gender, culture (the impact of westernisation), education, employment, reproductive health (teenage pregnancies, child care), the youth underworld (drugs, prostitution), child labour, violence and politics.

Linking the topics with potential narrators

“Narrators or interviewees should come from a range of ages, occupations, social backgrounds, and experiences. Most of them should be ordinary people who can speak about their own experiences, perceptions and concerns.” (source Giving Voice). One of the main objectives of the oral testimony approach is to gather the testimonies of ordinary men and women rather than just the traditional spokespeople of a community. The objective of selecting those is in line with the aim of being deliberately

subjective : OT documentaries do not aim to give balanced, neutral information, they focus on the individual in its own personal life experience which is not biased, coloured and subjective. The aim is partly to listen to “alternative voices”; the voices of the quieter members of society who are usually not heard. Those chosen for regular radio interviews are members of the community with more status, especially the men, sometimes priests, researchers, politicians, resource persons or chiefs (traditional or religious). However, there are those who have pertinent and important views and knowledge of the community we deliberately refuse to hear; they can now air their voices on OT radio programs.

The radio interviewers need to ensure that when the project gets fully underway, specific efforts to interview “ordinary” people need to be done. As far as the topic itself is concerned, given the complexity of life in communities, every topic that affects the narrator individually or his community is of importance to him and he should be able to discuss them through an OT radio session. The complexity of certain themes and topics should not exclude some community members to have their opinions and views and to get them heard (aired through radio). Using this methodology, the word “appropriateness is not appropriate for the selection of narrators, once the topic has been identified.

How to pursue the factual identification of narrators for OT radio

The personal experience of the interviewees are always the most important. Statements of the general social conditions are useful but much less so than specific memories of : what narrators saw, heard, said, did, thought and felt. Hence, the essential choice of the word “testimony” in the name of the methodology. OT coordinators should actively be looking for these type of narrators in the community and several tools can help them identify those participants.

In most cases, experienced narrators have been selected through local contact networks of the radio producers. A radio journalist has always his own network of contacts and resource persons. Identification of community members having specific experiences linked to the topic to be developed, has not often led to problems. Local and rural communities are known to be smaller and the effect of “everyone knowing everyone” is helping most radio producers in the identification stage.

In some cases, especially where the theme is less known, the radio producers managed to get professional help from civil society organisations

or development organisations who are experienced in working on the same thematic issues. Those organisations tend to have an extensive network of potential narrators, able to testify on their own behalf.

Whatever methodology is used to identify the narrators, it is important to focus on those that have a high degree of confidence in the community. “It is also important to select people that can talk fluently, have interesting things to say and may positively enjoy being interviewed. It is important, however, not to neglect those people who appear to be less “easy” to interview, but whose experiences are suspected to be particularly illuminating.”

(Source Giving Voice)

Some narrators ask to be paid. We avoid it if we can because they will flock in to be interviewed just for the money.

*Samuel Haffner
Kiss FM, BO
Sierra Leone*

Make sure that once the initial selection of narrators is done, you envisage a balance in opinions. To air via the radio the viewpoints of several members of the community on a specific topic, it is important to have a wide range of experiences and thus resulting opinions, visions or viewpoints. The tendency to overlook small and marginalized opinions are often great, especially when persons at hierarchic positions (at the station itself or the community in general) have an outspoken

vision. It is, in those cases, very important that the OT reporter has the editorial freedom to include all narrators, and not only those that represent the dominant viewpoint.

(Source Johan DEFLANDER)

INSERT - Selection of Storytellers

All radio producers were asked to examine carefully whether their selected storytellers were really the voiceless and if through them they would really build capacity to give voice to the voiceless. Beneath are some of the answers given :

- departure from conventional studio production to field production to listen to authentic voices,
- allowed storyteller to lead the process (driver’s seat),
- going out to the field heightens the involvement/excitement of the voiceless,
- satisfaction of storytellers in discovering their own capacity,
- building tolerance and selfeffacement on the part of the producer.

Station	Storyteller	No	Characteristics
Radio Progress	Student	1	Prisons School/Accra Women
	Pito Brewer *	2	Women
	Catechist **	2	(1) Man, retired; (2) Male Youth
	Farmer	2	Men
	Monsignor ***	1	Man
	Retired Teachers	2	Men
Radio Peace Winneba	Chief fisherman	1	Man, head of fishermen
	Chief fisherman's secretary	1	Man
	Canoe owners	6	Men
	"Partners" (co-owners)	2	Men
	Fishing worker	1	Man
	"Big man"	1	Man
	(Fishing boat proprietor)		
Radio Ada	Traditional Chiefs	4	Men, clan/village heads
	Saltwinner	1	Woman
	District Assembly person	1	Woman, divorcee
	Unemployed old Men	1	Man, elderly
	Church elder	2	1 Woman, 1 Man
	Bailiff and Divine drummer	1	Man
	Marriage broker	1	Man
	Retired Teacher	1	Woman
	Stool Elder	1	Man

*** Pito : traditional liquor;**

**** Catechist : lay teacher of Catholic faith;**

***** Monsignor : prelate of Catholic church)**

However, one main conclusion on the multi-dimensional aspect of “voicelessness” is of much importance to all OT radio projects produced in more rural areas, i.e. the idea that people who were voiceless in a larger (national) context may be dominant in their own (local or rural).

Anyway, it is important to develop criteria for selection of narrators. In the case of the pilot project in Ghana and in regarding to the overall topic (Where lies our future – lives of youth in our communities), we came up with the following practical criteria to select what was called OTS (Oral Testimony Storytellers) :

youth,

ages 18 – 30 years approximately,

those normally not heard (marginalized), those with an uncertain/difficult present and probably uncertain future, the voiceless within youth,

at least half should be women,
native speakers,
spread throughout the community.

How to prepare the interview and the interviewees

Before the interview : prepare the narrators

The practical selection has been described above, in this section we will explain the importance of the preparation of the interviewee, once he/she is selected. First of all, make sure you get a good introduction. As a journalist from a local radio you are probably well placed to approach narrators directly yourself. Otherwise, ask a local government, non-government or community-based organisation for advice, and if possible to make the introduction for you. In every country or region, there are national, regional and local organisations who work with grassroots organisations and who can target specific interest groups of men and/or women. If you explain to them carefully what kind of material you would like to record, they may help you to reach the right narrators.

Ask if someone (community or development worker) can go with you when you make introductions for the recordings. This approach will create cultural confidence and the better that person is respected and trusted, the more likely you are to find people willing to talk to you. If you are accompanied by someone who does not have the narrator's trust, then you will find it impossible to get good material, so cross-check the reputation of your guide or the organisation they represent beforehand.

Setting up the interview

Make sure you introduce yourself correctly to the narrators. Give a clear description of why you want from them. Most narrators also want to know what kind of use you will make of their "voices". So, explain the type of radio station and/or programme you are collecting the material for. Most of the community members will have a general idea of the work done by radio stations, especially if it is a proximity one. However, they might not know anything about radio production, technically spoken. In some cases, our PIWA projects have encountered problems of people being afraid to speak in a microphone. Some of the narrators were very shy, even when the interview was conducted indoors without any witnesses. Some have problems for traditional belief reasons, namely the fact that "their voice" is captured

on a machine. In general, the radio producer needs to explain who the audience of that programme will be and what interests them. In some communities, you may well have to introduce yourself indirectly due to cultural traditions and value-systems. In this way, you might introduce yourself to others (village chiefs, religious leaders, community leaders), before the narrators will agree to talk.

It is very important to explain the purpose and use of the oral testimonies. The interviewer should explain the project and be sure that the narrator understands its purpose and nature. This will help the narrator to feel more secure and to understand that the interview is an opportunity for her/him to give her/his thought on some issues.

Some interviewees may be reluctant to be interviewed. This must always be respected, although it may be because of uncertainty about what it involves, how the material is to be used, the degree of anonymity they will be allowed and so on. So always explain your programme, and their role in it, clearly from the beginning. Some narrators may also be reluctant to be interviewed by journalists of another sex. It is generally preferable for women to interview women.

There is no general line on the confidentiality status of OT for radio. It is important to assure interviewees that their testimonies can be kept confidential, i.e. anonymously broadcast on air, but often due to the proximity status of the radio broadcasters this is rarely guaranteed. Voices are easily recognized by radio transmission. If Oral Testimonies are disseminated through radio waves, the interviewee can not remain anonymous.

Narrators may prefer to meet you in their family, friendship or community groups. However, it can be daunting to find that you have a group of men and women waiting to talk with you when you really only want one or two voices. The challenge is to record material with several narrators who best represent the views and experiences of the group and not to come away with just the voice of the leader or the most outspoken woman.

All experiences we have are based on individual interviews. This is mainly due for technical reasons, knowing that it is very difficult to make good quality sound recordings of a larger group of persons for radio broadcasting. But the choice is also for thematic reasons. People tend to speak more openly and vividly when not being listened to by a group of by-standers. Listening in OT radio interviews is defined as concentrating on the most interesting responses when taken people aside. In general, recording

interviews while the rest of the group looks on is not a good idea. You are more likely to get self-conscious speeches than personal detail and opinion. When the narrator understands why you are there and has had a chance to think through their responses to your questions, you will get much more confident testimony.

(source Johan DEFLANDER + Giving Voice)

Practical tips

It is important to make the narrator at ease at the beginning of the interview. This can easily be done by obtaining some basic biographical data such as :

- their name,
- when and where they were born,
- their family status,
- their occupation(s),
- educational background.

This information will provide the context for the interview. In addition, most of these questions are relatively easy for the narrator to answer and may help them to feel comfortable right from the beginning of the interview.

During the interview, narrators need to recall specific events that tend to illustrate social conditions. An OT radio program should include as much detail as possible.

The interview itself

When you are comfortable that your interviewee understands the nature and purpose of the interview, establish a time and place where he/she will feel comfortable and private enough to talk at ease, with as little interruption as possible.

Try not to ask leading questions, or questions likely to prompt yes or no answers. Open questions, such as “what happened then ? how do you feel about that ?” will get the fullest responses. Sometimes you can discuss difficult or controversial issues most successfully by adopting an indirect approach. For example, “I’ve heard some people say the refugees are greedy, always grabbing what they can get. What do you think ?” could prompt a strong, colourful response. Similarly, “I’ve heard that some women are forced to sell their rations on the black market. What do you think about this/Do you know any people doing this ?” is more likely to get an honest

description of the situation than asking the interviewee if she is doing this herself.

Begin with some simple questions for background information, which will help the narrator to get used to being recorded. Remember all the time, however, that he/she may want to remain anonymous, so don't request details which would compromise this.

If the programme is about a particular activity, if possible begin by asking questions while the narrator is actually performing that task. However, this approach might be difficult since microphone and recording equipment must normally be installed before starting the interview. As a radio reporter, you are not so flexible to follow the narrator wherever he or she might go. Later on, when your speaker is feeling more confident, you can ask more general questions and explore more about her opinions and concerns. Doing interviews in this way will also sound more interesting as you will have the right sound-effects to go with each action. It will also help you, as well as the interviewer, to ask the right questions so the listeners understand the processes involved.

If your subject is less practical, and you wish to record more personal and emotional material, remember that it may take some time to get the best testimony. Be prepared, with enough tape and time, for a long conversation.

You may wish to prompt old memories and reflection on difficult experiences. Sometimes props -old photographs, for example -can help people to talk about past events. Don't rush your interviewee and always respect her right to anonymity, and to leave certain subjects unexplored. If you can do so without it being distracting, take notes of any questions you may wish to return to later, for a fuller explanation or recollection.

At the end of the interview ask the narrators if there is anything they would like to add. Some may have other advices or experiences to share that you have not asked about.

INSERT : Finding the right interview technique

There are some basic key issues to keep in mind that will assist the process of conducting the interviews :

*Active role

It would be preferable to know the topics/questions well enough before the interview begins, although you still have to remain open. This strategy will help the interviewer not to lose her/his train of thought. Oral Testimony interviews should be open but guided encounters where the interviewee feels confident to freely narrate her or his own experience. The interviewer should keep an open mind and respond quickly to unexpected aspects for deepening the questions. In this sense, the interview plan is not a list of specific questions, but rather grouping of topics to be covered. The interview plan should be a “road map” which shows where the interview should be going, and should prevent that it drifts aimlessly or loses direction.

* Anecdotal evidence : Because Oral testimonies interviews look for meaning and significance, it is essential to ask for personal experience, proverbs, telling stories etc. This may help to avoid bland statements and generalisations.

* Adaptability

It is very useful to provide some context to a particular question, especially to the “open” question so that the narrator understands why the interviewer is asking it. Giving a context before asking an open question can clarify better the question and help to elicit more details. This strategy can also be used in conjunction with a photograph or some other item which has meaning for the narrator.

Always remember your questioning skills

Because of the fact that OT techniques are not widespread, some community radio stations might find it helpful to organize an internal training session in order to get accustomed to the methodology and the questioning skills. Participants (radio producers) and facilitators should go through the different types of questions that can be asked. For some professionally skilled journalists, this will not be new, although very interesting and tempting to discover appropriate use of each question type. The attitude of the interviewer is also important. Therefore, try to remember to give positive feedback and use it to find out more “...that is very interesting, but can you tell us more ...”. In conducting OT interviews, one of the most useful virtues is patience. Remember that in oral testimony and narration, silence is part of the communication and it may have its own meaning. Silence may be employed when the next issue is so controversial, difficult, divisive and a taboo to be mentioned. Patience is a virtue doing OT interviews. Be

aware of the narrator's pace and allow them to complete their story without interruption. Don't be worried by silences or pauses (radio producer tend to fear them ...), the narrator may be gathering their thoughts. And remember that silence speaks better than words often do in a radio documentary.

INSERT

The right questions

Open questions

Because Oral Testimony interviews are about individual perspectives, understanding, and significance of events described by the narrator and not factual information, it is important to uncover this kind of qualitative information through certain type of question, the "open" questions :

- Why do you think this happened ?
- What do/did you feel about this ?
- What do you think is/was the meaning of this ?
- How important is/was this to you/your family/community ?
- How does/did this affect you/your family/community ?
- How is this different from the past/now ?
- Why do you think that this changed/happens ?
- What is your own experience of this custom/event ?
- Why did you/your family/community make this decision ?
- Did you feel you have/had a choice ?
- In what ways could things have been easier/better/more helpful ?

There is a risk that open question might be too vague. For example, asking "how was your childhood/ what can you tell me about your childhood" might not encourage the narrator to talk and expand upon the topic. The best way to avoid a vague open question might be : "what are your most memorable moments of your childhood"

Sensitive questions

Sometimes it is very hard to talk about issues that are too personal or sensitive. In this case, if the topic can be discussed in the third person, it might be much easier for the narrator to give an honest reply.

For example :

"I have heard that some women in the community refuse to continue any old practices, what do you think about this ?"

“What is your view about parents who do not want their children to study their mother tongue ?”

Also, using a statement (but ensuring it is as neutral as possible), followed by a question, can be another right approach to raise sensitive issues without making it too personal. For example, “I believe the government has recently banned the importation of frozen chicken, What do you think about the government’s action ?”

Prompt and probe questions

These questions should be asked to encourage the interviewee to expand further in a certain direction or to go into greater details :

“Could you tell me more about that ?”

“Could you explain exactly how the system works”

“Could you please suggest how we could improve the health facilities of our community ?”

The wrong questions

Closed questions

These questions tend to elicit “yes/no” answer and little else. However, they are useful to establish detail, or clarify something, but should almost always be followed by open-ended questions :

(closed) “Had you met him/her before”

(open) “What was your impression when you first met ?”

Leading questions

These tend to assume an answer and may lead the narrator to respond with a simple yes or no :

“Was that helpful ?”

“Weren’t you angry when they changed their plans ?”

“All politicians are dishonest, aren’t they ?”

It is advisable to avoid the use of leading questions since they do not go further to allow the interviewee to express his/her testimony in OT.

Double-Barrelled questions

A double-barrelled questions a question framed in such a way that it demands two or more answers at a goal. These can confuse, and almost always the narrator answers only one of the questions :

“When did you marry and what does your husband do ?”

“What is your favourite radio station and why do you like it and where is it ?”

During the training workshop in Ghana and for the purposes of the initial practice of the OT interviews, the broad topic of religious conflict was selected among the list of possible themes by all participants. In the Ada area, where the training session was being held, it was felt that this was a topic which participants from other areas of Ghana could also relate to and work with. The results of the detailed group work on specific topic development was written up and presented to all participants to assist them with their preparation for their practice interviews. Here beneath, you'll find the outcome of that session.

INSERT – A SHORTLIST OF KEY QUESTIONS (questions that unlock doors)

Note : Questions are keys to opening the inner doors in the experience and memory of the storyteller. The main key is to LISTEN and follow the way to the doors that are left slightly ajar by the answers of the storyteller.

Main key question

If you had all the power in the world to make one change in your life, what would it be ?

Use this question to try to unlock the storyteller's “main door”. It may also be used at different points – perhaps rephrased in different ways – to unlock inner doors.

Other potential key questions

- Why this change ?

What is it about your present situation that made you call out this change ?

What have you tried to do to bring about this change ?

How did you feel, what did you experience in doing this ?

- If people who know you were to describe how you feel about your situation, what do you think they would say ?

Why do you think they would say this ? Please explain.

Would you agree with them ? Please explain.

- Whom do you live with ?

Explore : Family relationships

If living alone or with people other than parents, circumstances / reasons for the situation

- Which person has had the greatest influence in your life ?
What kind of an influence ?
What difference has s/he made in your life ?
Why do you think that s/he was able to influence you so much ?

Have there been other major influences ? Who ? What ?

- What is your most memorable experience ?
What happened ?
Why do you think you remember this most ?
What difference has it made to your life ?
Any other memorable experiences
- What would you say is the main lesson you have learned in life?
- How do you feel about your community ?
Do you feel that your future belongs there ? Please tell us more.
- What are some of the experiences you want to share with others ?
- Is there any other information you would wish to share ? Please, we are listening.

Making the Interview Entry / Carrying out the Interview

- Have a clear aim, but open mind
 - Go through trusted intermediary (liaison)
 - Build rapport
 - Build trust
 - During the actual interview
- Make sure storyteller understands the aim of the interview
- You should be heard as little as possible
 - Use encouraging body language
 - Let the story flow
 - Don't worry about story's repetitions
 - But you should not be repetitive
 - Deviation by storyteller from theme
 - Be polite

- Return to topic
- In case of refusal by storyteller to go ahead with story

Use re-assurance

- Shift the mood
- Make the storyteller comfortable again

Listen

- Not only to the words (facts)
- But also the meanings and the moods
- And what is not yet spoken but wants to be said
- Acknowledge storyteller's feelings
- The types and role of silence
- Break uncomfortable silence
- Respect 'sacred' silence

- Ethical questions

- Consent of storyteller is a must
- To tell the story
- To have it broadcast
- Final editorial decision belongs to the storyteller
- Make it clear that only segments will be used

This list was used as a roadmap for going to do their first OT interviews. It was felt necessary by the different trainers during the session to use the following two techniques during the “learning phase” to practice OT interviewing

a) Scenarios and Role play

In a plenary session, we discussed several scenarios of what could happen during your interview (see page 35 of the OT manual for ideas). Following this, participants got into pairs and each pair was given an instruction for a role play to act in front of the rest of the group. The group then discussed what was happening in that situation and what might be the consequences. See page 34 of the OT manual for some ideas for this role play exercise.

b) Practice interviews in pairs

In the afternoon participants spent some time interviewing each other in pairs for 15 minutes each. The purpose of this exercise was to help participants prepare for their full practice interview the following day and also to provide some material to carry out the logging exercise in the following session.

After the interview

Sometimes your interviewees will request to hear what you have recorded or even ask for copies of the final versions of the edited documentary before it is being aired. This might be a very time consuming process, especially if you need around 5 to 6 narrators for each radio program. Having authorisations of all of them is necessary before your station can take the decision to air the program. Therefore, it will be better to ask all narrators at the end of the interview if they agree with all they've said, and to ask them if they want to modify some of their outings. Some of our experiences have shown that for very delicate topics, radio producers even ask a formal written authorisation to use the recorded elements. In any way, you would have to reassure the narrators that you will not use anything that they were not happy with at the time.

Make sure you also give the day and time of your intended broadcast, as soon as it is confirmed. In this way, the narrators, as well as their direct surroundings will have the chance to hear the results for themselves. If they hear what they helped you to produce, and are proud of their part in it, they are more likely to be willing to speak with you again. Most of our experiences show great satisfaction from the interviewees once they've been aired. In some cases, their testimonies have played an important role in the rebuilding of the community or the society at large. Through radio broadcasts some narrators were taken more serious afterwards in the community itself. In Sierra Leone, partner radio stations have been informing us that all their OT recordings have been used at judicial testimonies in the Truth and Reconciliation commissions of the International Tribunal in Freetown.

For radio producers and the stations, we recommend that every recorded tape or any other support of the original interview should be archived. Even if you had only used five to ten minutes of the recording for the final program, it might always be very useful to re-use the same elements or other audio-pieces for new OT programs. Archiving audio is enormously time consuming, especially if well documented, so the elements can be made useful to other users at the radio. It is, however, part of the oral tradition that often is being recorded at your locally rural radio stations. Most of your interviewees will never have the chance to be recorded again on these or other topics, so collecting their voices can be seen as part of the common heritage of the community.

Examples of the use of Oral Testimonies in Ada have shown that radio producers, once the elements have been practically archived, often refer to these recordings and quite often re-use elements in new programming. These other programs are not necessarily based on the OT documentary format. This also proves that the voices of seldom heard narrators are interesting to be listened to not only in specific format programs. Classic community news programming can easily benefit from this recording and collection methodology.

Recording the interviews

Why record the interviews and do logs ?

Our main output is envisaged for radio, so during each interview recorders will be on, the whole time. For several reasons, we recommend not to take notes :

- it can distract and break the flow of talk. During an interview it is vital to show that you are listening and be able to keep eye contact in order to have a positive reaction,
- the material will be used in radio documentaries to illustrate themes and topics of interest to the general public. Testimonies highlight the way people speak, with hesitation, repetition, exclamation, emphasis, and metaphors. For these reasons, written transcriptions (as well as translations) should be as accurate as possible. A summary of what was said will be less powerful and informative, because the testimony will lose its colour, individuality and “oral” character.

Recording for radio demands some specific needs. First of all, it is highly desirable that the recordings are done on professional sound recording equipment. Most community radio broadcasters tend to be working with semi-professional radio equipment, mainly because of the user-friendliness in use and the purchase price. It is however possible to acquire a quality mobile sound recording machine with an external directional microphone for a reasonable price. Nowadays, most community radios are replacing their old analogue equipment for digital one. The advantage of digital sound recorders is that they are less expensive than the analogue ones for obtaining the same (or even better) sound quality. They will also give some extra advantages in treating and storing the audio material afterwards. If possible, by the means of the project, a digital Mini Disc recorder and one external powered directional microphone, as well as a set of closed headphones, are the necessary elements to start doing OT radio productions.

Recording interviews in the field will need some specific basic training for radio reporters. It goes without saying that they will need to know how the equipment functions. The following elements are relevant to each training session :

- how to connect the recorder and the microphone ?
- how to start/stop recording and use the playback function ?
- how to check and adjust the sound recording level ?
- how to monitor the state of the batteries and the tapes/discs while doing the recording ?
- how to use the microphone effectively so that no background noises are recorded ?

One thing the interviewer should avoid is to be distracted by his equipment. The narrator will witness this and feel directly uneasy. He/she will probably cease the story and you might need to re-do the whole element with risks of not being complete or natural. If an interviewer is to restart, he may not get everything the interviewee said earlier on since it is an oral narration. Any interruption of the interview by not natural elements distracts the recording phase and will lead finally to bad OT recordings. Therefore, when starting the interview do not rush things. You, as well as the narrator, need to have enough time. There is no need to watch your clock during the interview and surely do not give any impression to the narrator that you're embarrassed because of time reasons.

Explain why you would prefer to make a tape recording (writing reduces listening, things might be missed, needs full attention etc). However, if some people are intimidated by recorded interviews you should respect the interviewee's wishes if they do not want their testimony to be taped.

In this case, an alternative approach is to take notes during the interview and then to write out longer interpretations of the responses very soon after the interview is over. However, taking notes during an interview is a skill that must be developed and practised over time.

It takes time- one interview can last up to 2 hours (Max). It is often useful to come back to the same person.

Include a brief review of the interview at the beginning of each transcription for identification and clarification. This may include explanations of difficulties encountered, interviewee's responses, some notes on the main points of the conversation including non-verbal expressions and what the

interviewee and NGO/ interviewer learnt from the process. This will help the interviewer to improve her/his technique of research.

During the pilot phase in Ghana, it was recommended that after recording each OT interview, the radio producer should directly dub the interview onto a second Mini Disc (or other support). The master recording should be kept in a safe place so that the second dubbed MD should be used to listen, log and edit the final program.

Technical Requirements (type of portable recorders)

- What equipment do we need ?
- Equipment for OT interviews should be portable and mobile, easy to transport and very heavy-duty. It should also be professional in its audio recording capacity. As community radio stations tend to use more and more professional equipment, its sounds recording quality should be up to international broadcast standards.
- Special attention is necessary for recording different audio elements, one after the other on different supports. When an edited OT programme is made up of different interviewers' work, it is especially important to double check that they are all using similar equipment and that recordings has been done using the same technical templates (recording rate, stereo or mono, on MD or chrome tape, etc). Different supports tend to sound differently, which will be very annoying in streamlining the editing work and coming up with a final master version. Although some digital editing equipment, powered by cheap PCs, is nowadays available to balance all sound differences, it is always better to start with good original sound recordings.
- For community radios without the necessary funding to acquire the necessary professional equipment, the general rule is to aim for the best sound quality that you can manage in the circumstances. Even analogue recordings and reel-to-reel editing work can deliver some good results.
- For recordings done in the open we recommend that radio producers would be extremely careful for surrounding noises such as sounds from the streets, highways, market noises, etc

Location of the interview

Since all interviews for OT radio are individually focused, there is a need to have an isolated space where the narrator and the interviewers can con-

duct their session. It is not important that this recording session takes place in professional sound proof radio studio. On the contrary, the narrator might be impressed by the strange environment of the studio, as well as by the fact that one or more sound engineer(s) is recording and thus listening to his testimonies. It is, therefore, preferred to organise the session in the natural setting of the narrators habitat. This might be his house, his workplace or any other place where he suggests that peace and quiet can be found. In general we recommend in-house spaces that are well furnished. This to avoid echoing sounds of the voices of the narrator and interviewer. For outside recording places, try to avoid places that are noisy. Even with a directional microphone, you will pick up sounds from around the location. Avoid noisy roads, ceiling fans, playgrounds (children in general are to be avoided in the recording area), building sites or factories. Always watch out with outside recording that the microphone is not catching any direct winds. To give a few examples : we have been recording under village trees, in the woods, in bedrooms, on the roof of houses, etc. The recordings need to be chosen and accepted by the narrator. As soon as this criteria is fulfilled, there are not so many problems to be foreseen.

Summary

In this chapter we have seen that most African radio broadcasters are not professionals but that is not a major hindrance since they can have on the job training based on their schedule. There are coordinator-journalists who help and do the initial research and feasibility studies to find out which themes and topics to inculcate into their problems. OT interviewers should preferably be native speakers from the same ethnic group so that they can understand the sensitivities of the people and be interested in the local customs and cultural practices. OT documents are normally valid in the local languages since translations lose some important aspects of the testimonies.

It is noted that the number of OT documentary narrators is not fixed. It depends on the topic and the type of narrators. It is ideal to have more than one since it is monotonous to listen to a single narrator for a longer period on radio. Notwithstanding this, an interviewer should not over task himself or herself with many interviews per day. In looking for narrators, it is ideal to consider the ordinary people who have “less voices” in the society and are marginalised. Such people will provide alternate voices to the spokes people and the elite whose voices are heard daily. The selection of the narrators should also spread across the length and breadth of the entire society. Before the interview starts the interviewer needs to be introduced by a respected person from the society. It is better to choose a good setting so that the narrators will feel very comfortable. It is also better to respect the interviewee, and do not rush him/her through the interview. It is ideal to conduct the interview on a location chosen and accepted by the narrator.

We have seen in this chapter that in order to get good responses, it is better to use open and fact finding questions and avoid the use of leading or yes-no questions. Questions are designed in such a way as to get the best responses. An interviewer can give a contextual background of the topic before asking the questions. After the interview, the interviewer should ask permission from the narrators before broadcasting and also to inform them of the day of the broadcast so that they can listen to their own voices on the air and feel confident and proud.

We have seen in this chapter that in planning and developing themes and topics for OT, a four-line approach is used and it involves (a) having a general objective, (b) having a specific objective, (c) defining the activities, and (d) monitoring and evaluation. To achieve all these, OT uses open-ended and fact finding questions to cover all aspects of the topics. OT documents are so essential and multi-valued that they can be used for other purposes rather than radio; it is thus essential to store them well. For OT documents to last longer, they must be well recorded on good quality digital equipment with good sound quality too.

CHAPTER 5

Listening, Logging and Editing : producing an Oral Testimony

*“You breathe after you’ve finished an OT :
It’s the most demanding programme to produce”*

Kofi LARWEH
Radio ADA : Ghana

This chapter highlights on listening, logging and editing which are major concepts in production. It will look at how to listen to recorded interviews and how to use them. It also looks at the importance of logging and how to edit an OT documentary. The chapter further deals with documentary process of producing a documentary and it includes the laying out of a script. The chapter concludes with the terminology for scripts and the feed back after the broadcast

Listen to recorded interviews

When the interviewer starts listening to his interviews with the objective to come up with a detailed log, the following questions must be kept in mind during the whole listening process :

- what is the overall theme and the specific themes of the OT series ?
- what contributes to the theme/topic and should therefore be kept ?
are there any quotable notes ?
- what does not contribute to the theme/topic and should therefore be left out ?
- what additional questions should have been asked to get better information ?
- what key elements are linked to the theme/topic or a more adequate atmosphere ?
- what do you hope to achieve through this programme ?

Why logging is important

Logging is the process of taking notes on a special paper regarding the content of what the narrator said. Good and accurate logging will be very time-consuming and challenging. Logs serve a similar purpose to the summaries the OT Programme writes for each interview. Being disciplined and noting timings on the log sheet makes it easy to find selected extracts on mini-disc or cassette and it might give other producers an idea of the content should the interviews be needed for other programmes. Good logs provide another opportunity to reflect upon the interview content. It is not a transcription of the whole interview, but a summarized version, based on key words and key elements. It can give the interviewer an overview on one-to-two pages of paper, while listening to an interview might take more

than one hour. Of course, logging doesn't replace scripting and combining the two would be confusing, especially for a radio technician that is charged with copying and pasting audio elements together.

During the PIWA training sessions, participants were provided with a blank logging form (see Appendix) and were given an introduction to logging interviews. Time was reserved so that everyone then went to separated rooms to practice the logging methodology during one to two hours. Most participants declared that it was extremely time consuming, knowing that they have not had any previous experiences in using this log method. Logging will be of considerable help once the interviewer developed the scenario of the documentary and when he/she will start looking for adequate audio elements to illustrate the different themes and topics. If logging has been done correctly, key elements of the narrator's story will be easy to detect. Digital recording equipment will also be very helpful to track certain issues and elements with what is called a "tracking code" on the Disc itself. If linked to a log sheet, the interviewer or technician will find it easy to paste the selected elements together, leaving open the necessary blanks for the presenter to be filled in at a later stage of the editing.

The following log frame document has been developed during the first session and has since then been successfully used by all radio stations involved in Panos project.

Sample of a FIELD PRACTICE INTERVIEW LOG

Remarks

Main Points / Highlights / Items of Interest / Quotable Quotes

Time / Topic / Track (Subject)

Editing and producing an OT radio documentary

Selecting audio parts and integrating OT into classic radio programmes

The first step to start an OT programme is to decide on a single, unifying theme, sub-theme or topic. The next step will then be deciding on the different interviewees you will need and what will be the preferable sequences. Making a feature or a radio documentary will necessarily ask for selection of testimonies. Since scheduled testimonies recorded by radio journalists can take up one to one-and-a-half hour, it is, therefore, important to have a “vision” in mind, when identifying or selecting the different pieces. The development of this vision will lead to the overall topic development in the program through the use of a scenario. This scenario must be logic to the radio producer and easy to follow. It includes the necessary repeaters and break moments, to keep audience attention and interest going. For our pilot projects we chose 4 (as a minimum) to 12 (as a maximum) part series of topic development to illustrate extensively the viewpoints of the community members. The duration of these radio documentaries, developed by Panos varies from 10 to 60 minutes. Radio stations were asked to stay within the norms developed through the training sessions, but due to external factors some programs have been longer than the indicated timeframe. Sometimes this is due to lack of decent editing equipment, but more often it hinges on the interest of the speakers in the OTs.

Far from being exhaustive, there are other ways of using testimonies for radio. Most of them will be of a shorter duration. The then selected elements will be picked to illustrate themes made by others in the programme. One of the most famous ways of this use is often done on radio through what is called as “vox-pops” inserts, i.e. a short element in which the opinion of a passenger on the street is asked about an issues at stake.

Radio stations may wish to use testimonies to spark discussion around certain issues. In that case they can be used as small introductive features. A 15-minute feature, for instance, can be used in a half-hour programme to prompt studio discussion or a phone-in. A similar length feature can be used after introductions and comments by others, as a final and powerful illustration. Whenever the demands of programming mean cutting or editing original testimony, always ensure that the meaning is not changed. If you use sound effects and music, as we did, ensure that these enhance, and do not distract from, the testimonies.

INSERT

Through the examples of Panos in West Africa and in most instances in general, it was preferable to use the direct testimony that have been recorded. Every element has been recorded, but also produced and broadcasted in the original (native) language of the narrator that was interviewed. Because of poor sound quality during the first year in Sierra Leone, some elements were translated into the lingua franca Krio, but the need for translation complicated the production matter. There was the need to decide whether to use professionals or ordinary people (other radio announcers with well known voices) to voice the testimony. Quite often the budget does not allow for the use of professionals (as in the programmes Panos developed). If it is so, you must ideally choose people who are sympathetic to the idea of using personal testimony. Their commitment to doing their best to represent the narrator's words will help the process and product immeasurably.

What is a radio “documentary”

It seems very useful to summarize in this chapter the essence of a radio documentary developed and produced for broadcasting. This is done for the sake of editing and cleaning up a professional OT documentary. Instead of going through all aspects of radio documentary production, we have chosen to limit ourselves to the essential steps in producing a radio documentary. These steps were developed by one of our trainers during the OT training sessions. As probably most readers of this manual will have the basic experiences in documentary production, this recap should be enough to put the OT approach into the general documentary perspective.

INSERT - A documentary for radio

A documentary is a specific format of a radio programme which explores several aspects of one topic. The topic is a unifying theme. Any element brought in must contribute to a better understanding of the unifying theme. In television, a documentary can last 13, 26 or 52 minutes. There are different time standards for radio documentaries all over the world and depending on the type of radio stations but the general trend in radio is a 25 to 30-minute format. Longer than half an hour, most radio listeners encounter difficulties to concentrate on the whole of the program. This may, however, depend on the type of documentary and how it has been structured.

THE PROCESS OF PRODUCING A DOCUMENTARY

1. - The Theme

A radio programme starts with an idea, a vision, that is materialized in a theme.

To move forward we must answer the following questions :

- What are the different aspects of the theme ?
- Why do we want to make the programme ?
For whom ?
- In which language ?
- At what time will it be aired ?
- What could be the listeners expectations ?
- With which resource persons can we make the programme ?
- Do we need documentation ?

2. - Contents and identification of means

At this stage we can validate the idea, change it or abandon the project.

3. - Selection of various aspects and of resource persons

This stage is, in effect, the definition of the content. We gather information on the aspects of focus and on the resource people. We must bear it in mind that the selection of the resource people should be spread out through the entire community and the topics to be treated should be multi-varied.

4. - Recording

Here we proceed to record selected resource persons on the agreed aspects.

5. - Logging the recordings and structuring the programme

What are we going to keep ? Where do we start ? Where do we pause ?

6. - Choice of music and sounds

Which music is suitable ? Do we need sound effects ?

7. - Writing of texts (links)

The text or links serve as the guiding thread throughout the programme. They can also be used to remind us of the theme and the resource persons.

8. - Mixing

9. - Editing

10. - Last listening before airing

TEXTS OR LINKS IN A DOCUMENTARY

They must be written clearly, with short sentences, simple words with no ambiguous meaning. Texts or links are used to lead in or out of various elements of the programme

(Source : Dr. Ibrahima SANE)

INSERT - Appropriateness of the Oral Testimony Documentary Format

During the workshops and after a period of pre-testing, participants felt that the radio documentary format was appropriate to giving voice to the voiceless. Some comments were that the format :

- Is more “listener – friendly”
- Facilitates integration and synthesis
- Encourages creativity (unity in diversity)
- Sustains the flow of the material
- Is challenging
- Is suited to community radio’s objectives and approach.

A note of caution was, however, sounded that the multiplicity of voices may enrich a theme but dilute a story. It was also observed that the many steps involved in this particular OT project were not necessary for every documentary production.

How to edit a programme based on OT elements

Working to a classic radio documentary format, as seen above, threw up challenges during our training sessions a few instances where this format was somewhat in conflict with the principles of oral testimony. Therefore, this chapter proposes to develop some practical guidelines/principles for an oral testimony radio programme methodology. The main one is that the focus of the programme should be on the topic and the way the storytellers explain it as much as possible.

Each OT documentary should, as every radio documentary, have clearly remarked aspects like :

- a signature tune,
- a teaser (if wanted),
- a title (with reference to the series introduction),
- an introductory,
- a presentation of persons that were interviewed,
- a body containing the different interviews, logically enchainé by musical interludes or by presenters voices,
- a conclusion,
- a farewell message,
- questions soliciting listener feedback,
- a sign tune with credits (producers, technicians, funding agencies, sponsors, partner structures, name and dates of next broadcasts, etc.),
- an apology if there was a hitch or a late start.

To facilitate the use of OT, it is generally agreed that the interviews gathered would form an archive and could be used in more than one programme, within and beyond the life of only one programme (or small project). During the PIWA training sessions, some ideas for ways to use the material which were briefly mentioned include :

- a documentary programme on a theme or topic using different interviews, presenting different points of view and leaving the listener to make up their own mind. This might or might not have linking narratives,
- a series of short “spots” coming at regular times each week e.g. 5 minutes from different people on one theme e.g. my job/craft/skill, my family/community, etc.,
- a life history of one person, perhaps over several programmes; (the danger of hearing the same voice all the time needs to be considered here.),
- a docudrama with or without linking narratives, which may be put together from different original interviews, or need some re-recording if the interviews are in different languages and the aim is to make a programme in a language that can be understood regionally.

As soon as the community radio stations participated in the Panos project, they started working on recollecting and recording the experiences and lessons learned, and identify different methods and formats for using the OT interviews in radio programming. As for the Oral Testimony Programme

of Panos London, they currently developed two partners in Poland and India which were also working on oral testimony radio programmes and it is likely that there will be much to learn from their experiences in terms of process and format. By sharing ideas and pooling experiences together, the team who made up this first workshop should be able to refine our thoughts on the uses and value of radio and oral testimony. This will go some way towards developing useful guidelines which might be of help to a wider audience.

Editing, as often seen and understood in radio work, has nothing to do with alternation or modification of the original voices. Therefore, radio producers need to be well briefed that the interviews need to be used just in the same way as the original interviewees told them. This is in line with the nature and purpose of the topic of the programme, and to relay to the audiences the exact context of the individual testimonies. Working with experienced radio journalist showed us to allow ourselves plenty of time for rehearsal of the methodology. The concept, how easy it might sound from the beginning, is not “done” by most radio journalists. Repeating questions or phrases used by the narrators that have not been pronounced well or that need to be put clearer to the audience, should only be included if no other direct solutions are available. If such alterations are necessary, always ensure that the meanings are not changed. When using non-professionals, you will have to judge carefully, and treat accordingly, those who respond well to a lot of dramatic guidance, and those who will begin to lose all natural intonation or spontaneity in their voice if they have too much direction. When using professionals, avoid the temptation to over-dramatise the words of ordinary people.

The format of a documentary obliges us to use external narration. This is done by radio announcers/presenters in the studio room and after the editing phase has been done. These narrations are necessary to link sections of one or different testimonies. They are “gluing” together several pieces of a testimony and create some logic evolutions in the topic development. When selecting the pieces of testimony, aim at variety of pace, colour, tone, length and content. If there is variety in the voices of different narrators (age, accent, tone etc), it will help keep the listener’s interest throughout the whole program. It has been advised that one OT element of one narrator should not run longer than seven minutes maximum. Of course, duration will depend extremely on the capacity of the narrator to speak clearly, and to generate interest on one topic and to keep the concentration going. The interviewer would have already witnessed periods

of extreme concentration and interest during the recording phase. If and when these occur, selection of audio elements will be made easier afterwards during the logging phase.

Specific recommendations for the presenter-announcer : the tone needs to be friendly and sometimes familiar but s/he should never talk down to the audience. It is generally better to prepare and practice any introduction and linking narrative; if you try to do it spontaneously on the air you will make mistakes.

For practical radio reasons, it is accepted that OT pieces of interview generally shouldn't start with the question but with the narrator's words. Because the identity of the narrator is not so important, his/her name should not necessarily be mentioned when he/she starts to speak. This method of not-mentioning the names as well as the questions itself, reinforces the need for good open-ended questions so that the narrator's answer is full and complete rather than a response to a long question where much of the issue has already been covered. When correctly done, the listener will feel at ease following the documentary without any comprehension problems. The interviewers - like the programme audience - should primarily be listeners, not the stars of the show.

As clearly mentioned above, an "unedited program is like a dirty room". This means that before going on the air with any Oral testimonies extensive editing work need to be done. The importance of editing seems clear : to identify, select and cut/paste the essential elements needed out of the Interview so that together with others they stand as a whole documentary on a topic. The editing process is a time-consuming but crucial part of communicating interviews effectively through radio, as it is when developing print outputs from testimony collections. Several participants of our training sessions remarked as follows : "I did not just learn about OT but a lot more, such as mixing with others, learning more about radio production, etc. I shall try my best to conduct my own personal interviews on oral testimony and if possible more other things I have learnt from this workshop."

INSERT

The following guidelines were provided by GCRN to decide how participants would link different audio elements together and to achieve a logical (natural) flow.

Narration :

- Pay particular attention to the narration. Use simple language, but also try to write in proverbs and local idioms that add colour and reinforce the theme of the programme/programme series.
- Ideally, the OTN (Oral Testimony Narrator) should be the same person for the entire series. Choose the most suitable voice and personality – someone who is both appealing and conveys authority and maturity - for the objective and the subject of the programme series. Unless the OTI (Oral Testimony Interviewer) has special qualities that recommend him/her over and above everybody else, the OTI should not be the OTN.

Music :

- Traditional.
- Instrumental. Use lyrics only if they contribute directly to and enhance the development of the theme.
- Use only as much, or as little, music to develop the theme or to provide a necessary interlude, e.g. to heighten or shift the mood. Do not use music as a filler.

Fx (sound effects) :

- As far as possible use local, including actualities of characteristic community sounds.
- Again, use only as much, or as little sound effect to develop the theme or to provide the necessary background or atmosphere. Do not use sound effects as a filler.

Special attention should be paid to the overall duration and the duration of the individual. Depending on the experiences of the radio producers, a final script can be produced to accompany the documentary. This script will use specific “radio” language that is understood by all journalists, producers, directors and technicians. Beneath is an example of such a script that was used during the OT programming in Ghana.

Control/Actor	Instructions/Dialogue	Track Duration
CONTROL	SIG TUNE	
CONTROL	FX :	
NARRATOR	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	
CONTROL	INSERT 1 : first audio track (CUE INCUE OUT:)	
NARRATOR	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	
CONTROL	INSERT 2 : second audio track (CUE IN:CUE OUT:)	
CONTROL	MUSIC :	
CONTROL	INSERT 3 : third audio track (CUE IN: CUE OUT:)	
NARRATOR	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	
CONTROL	INSERT 4 : fourth audio track (CUE IN: CUE OUT:)	
NARRATOR	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	
	Etc	

Summary

This chapter has revealed that it is ideal to log so as to get the opportunity to reflect on the context. A log is an overview of the entire document that takes a shorter time to go through. We have seen that the log contains the key elements of the narrator's story that will be easy to detect.

We have also seen that in editing and producing an OT radio documentary, the interviewer should select audio parts and integrate OT into classic programmes. The interviewer should decide to embark on a single, unifying or sub-themes. A short documentary of about 15 minutes can be used as an introduction to a major theme or sometimes as a prologue or a final illustration to it. This may depend upon the type of themes and the OT testimony.

The chapter further looked at the elements in documentary production and they include : theme, contents, selection of the aspects and resource personnel, recording, logging and the structuring of the programme. The others are the selection of music and sounds, text writing, mixing, editing, and listening before airing on the radio. The chapter also discussed text writing, interviewing and how to edit a programme based on OT principles. In all these, we have seen that the focus of the programme should be on the topic and it should be very close to the narration. In effect, we have seen that one of the principles in OT is for the interviewer to be loyal, respectful, fair and sincere to the narrator and scarcely should there be major changes in the original recordings.

In this chapter, we have also seen that a programmer can use an external narration to link different testimonies. When you have two or more narrators on one programme, it is better to vary their voices by not allowing one person's voice to stay on air for more than 7 minutes. We have also found out that it is ideal to prepare and practice an introduction and linking narratives to a programme before you go to air. All these are parts of the editing process meant to get a good production. Finally, it came out that it is better to edit your script and lay it out in a good manner to make reading and broadcasting easier and more efficient.

ANNEXES

TRAINING MODULE FOR THE ORAL TESTIMONY

Duration: 5 days

Objectives:

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- identify underground social trends in the community
- use the Oral Testimony to foster understanding within the community
- adapt the Oral Testimony to a documentary
- master a methodology of social research

Indicators:

- discussions during the session
- results of exercises

Session outline:

- | | |
|--|---|
| - Introduction to the Oral Testimony
(interactive presentation) | 30mn |
| - Preparation of an OT
(group exercise on various aspects of an OT) | 45mn |
| - Correction of exercises in plenary
(brainstorming) | 60mn |
| - The various steps to make a good OT
(interactive presentation) | 3hours |
| - Introduction to the documentary
(brainstorming) | 30mn |
| - Preparation of a documentary
(group exercise on various aspects of a documentary) | 30mn |
| - Correction of the exercise in plenary
(brainstorming)
(field exercise in groups) | 60m-Production of a documentary
1.5 days |

- Corection of exercises in plenary (brainstorming) 3hours
- Logging a recording (interactive presentation) 30mn
- The cue sheet of a programme (interactive presentation) 30mn
- Recording and adapting an OT to a documentary (field exercise in groups) 1.5 days
- Correction of exercises in plenary (brainstorming) 3hours

(source : Dr Ibrahima SANE)

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PRODUCERS

Conflict resolution

In the case of conflict resolution the documentary must be produced in a prospective way. The producer must keep in mind that the aim is to reconcile, open new possibilities, forster understanding. The evaluation carried out in 2005 by Panos of OT documentaries produced in Sierra Leone has shawn that stations have tended to merely record the sufferings of war victims. The overall image was so negative that some listeners said they were tired of hearing atrocities. One listener event asked : “Why can’t we have a success story for a change?”

Training

Training in Oral Testimony is best when done in stations so that every one can take part in practical exercises. This will ensure that decision makers, technicians and producers understand the spirit of the format. It will also favor ownership of the format by the station.

Implamentation

It is during the training that participants, with the help of the trainer, must identify araes in the communities where Oral Testimony can be best applied : research for social development, conflict resolution (religious, land disputes, ethnical disputes, domestic violence...), etc.

Partnership

With the help of the trainer, participants to the training should draw a Venn diagram (chipata diagram) of the station and identify potential partners.

NOTES FOR LAYING OUT A SCRIPT

The script is a guide to production for everyone - the producer, the technician, the characters, etc.

To make the production work well, everyone must have the same set of instructions.

A script should be written clearly, so that all instructions can be taken in at a glance.

Type or write the script double-spaced. (If writing, use ruled paper and skip every other line.)

Keep each column separate. For example, do not allow the dialogue to spill over to the column for Control/Actor.

Type or write all CONTROL instructions in CAPITAL LETTERS, UNDERLINED.

Type or write all ACTOR drama script, instructions for the Actor are placed in brackets at the appropriate point.

Indicate the track or counter indicator under the appropriate column.

Indicate the duration of each item under the appropriate column.

See the production process as a wonderful, creative, co-operative - and in the case of community radio, inherently worthwhile - activity. Enjoy!

TERMINOLOGY USED IN SCRIPTS

CONTROL Indicates all aspects of the production that are not read or voiced by a live character. (In some script formats, TAPE is used in place of CONTROL. Others may simply state MUSIC or EFFECTS)

FX Short for SOUND EFFECTS (another abbreviation is SFX).

CUE IN The first few words of a spoken line, recorded insert or piece of music.

CUE OUT The last few words of a spoken line, recorded insert or piece of music.

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Panos Haiti website

Giving Voice

ABBREVIATIONS

Here is a list of abbreviations used in this manual

OT	Oral Testimony
NGO	Non- Governmental Organisations
PIWA	Panos Institute West Africa
OTN	Oral Testimony Narrator
GCRN	Ghana Community Radios Network
OTS	Oral Testimony Storytellers
OTI	Oral Testimony Interviewer
FX	SOUND EFFECTS. (Another abbreviation is SFX.)

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