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National Community Radio Forum



Vision: To build a vibrant and sustainable Community Media Sector in Southern Africa.

National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) Charter

Principles

All Members of the National Community Radio Forum, whether they be Stations, initiatives or service providers, are, or strive to be:

Initiated, developed, owned, managed, staffed, mandated, monitored and evaluated by communities.

- Non-profit, non-discriminatory, non-aligned, non-partisan, non-exploitative,
- Anti-poverty, anti-racist, anti-discriminatory,
- Developmental, Plural, Sustainable, Accountable,
- Active, Proactive, Creative, Innovative, Collaborative, Positive,
- Affirming, Uplifting, Inspiring,
- South African, African, Global,
- Pro-people, pro-dignity, pro-freedom, pro-security, pro-shelter, pro-peace,
- Pro- democracy, pro-empowerment, pro-redress, pro-solidarity, pro-fairness,
- Pro-humility, pro-humanity.

Preamble

The launching of the National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) in South Africa in 1993 was the culmination of years of "Free the Airwaves" activism during apartheid, and during the CODESA power-sharing talks of the early 1990s. The South African community radio movement is based on the belief that radio, as the most affordable, egalitarian and accessible communication technology the world has ever known, should be harnessed, at the community level, to carry forward the country's reconstruction and development. The South African community radio movement supports the definition of community broadcasting in the Windhoek Charter on Broadcasting in Africa (2001): "Community broadcasting is broadcasting which is for, by and about the community, and whose ownership and management is representative of the community, which pursues a social development agenda, and which is non-profit". Realising the need to ensure that community radio in South Africa reaches its full potential, and that community radio stations excel, Members of the National Community Radio Forum commit themselves to the following:

Media Freedom & Diversity

- Playing a role in the continuing history of media activism and advocacy in South Africa, Southern Africa, the African Continent and globally.
- Engaging in non-violent protest and solidarity work for the protection of the ideals that the Forum launched itself to uphold in 1993, as represented in this NCRF Charter.
- Opposing any and all threats to freedom of expression and media freedom and diversity in South Africa, and showing solidarity with similar campaigns in Southern Africa, the African Continent, and around the world.
- Ensuring a diverse media environment that has diversity of ownership, control, content, methods of distribution and audience.
- Engaging in advocacy work on matters pertaining to legislation on, regulation of, and access to, information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructures.

Community Media & Community Radio

- Ensuring that communities retain ownership of community radios through community-elected Boards of Trustees who oversee the management of the stations.
- Guarding against threats to freedom of community media -- print materials, television, video, internet content, other new media content, arts and culture content and, in particular, radio - in South Africa, Southern Africa, the African Continent and the rest of the world.
- Showing solidarity with, and where possible participating in, like-minded community media advocacy organisations and campaigns in South Africa, Southern Africa, the African Continent and the rest of the world.
- Supporting, and where possible participating in, community media production, capacity-building and support service projects involving like-minded organisations in South Africa, Southern Africa, the African Continent and the rest of the world.
- Obeying and supporting the provisions of South African broadcasting legislation and regulations, except in cases where legislation and/or regulations threaten the freedom and diversity of community radio, community broadcasters, or broadcasters generally in South Africa.
- Forming strategic and operational partnerships -- between the NCRF as a collective entity and other organisations in South Africa, Southern Africa, the African Continent and the rest of the world -- for the purpose of advancing the cause, the activities and sustainability of the community radio sector in South Africa.
- Collaborating with communities in ways that limit the commercialisation of the style, content and values of community radio in South Africa, and that ensure the distinctiveness of community radio when compared to commercial and public radio services.
- Supporting the "natural partnership" between community radio and the public radio broadcasting sector in South Africa, given that both the public and community sectors, while distinct and different in their methods, have an educative and developmental mandate, as outlined in South African broadcasting legislation and regulations.
- Advancing the cause and practice of community development and democratisation through community media, and in particular community radio, in South Africa, Southern Africa, the African Continent, and globally.
- Supporting and advocating the role that community media and community radio in particular, can and must play in ensuring the protection of the rights of all people living in South Africa, as outlined in the Constitutional Bill of Rights.

Accountability, Best Practices

- Setting an example for other civil society organisations by working with the community to establish and nurture legitimate and transparent structures for governance, management and operations, including a Board, a Management Team, and clear operational structures.
- Developing and maintaining accurate, efficient and transparent financial management systems, so as to prevent financial mismanagement and fraud.
- Developing, documenting and adhering to standards for best practice in community radio development in South Africa and internationally. The pursuit of best practices must be carried out in all areas of Member activities, from governance to employment to training to community participation to programming.

Community Development

- Fostering sustainable development, through projects and campaigns.
 - Truly "collaborating" with communities through egalitarian, communal, participative methodologies.
 - Promoting and facilitating quality programming, underpinned by participatory research, which is informative, of good technical quality, and enhances people's development.
 - Upholding the sustainable development values that underpins the NGO/CBO/non-profit/civil society movement in South Africa and internationally.
 - Working together with other South African civil society organisations, particularly community-based organisations (CBOs), whenever such collaboration will add to the impact and sustainability of a community radio initiative. Members also work with civil society organisations from other countries, whenever such collaboration will add to the impact and sustainability of an initiative.
 - Collaborating with communities in ways that support the fight against discriminatory practices that threaten equality, such as discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, religious belief, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, poverty, HIV-AIDS status, or any other kind of discrimination that curtails a person's right to be treated equally by all other people living in South Africa.
 - Collaborating with communities in ways that support the work of the Independent Electoral Commission, the Human Rights Commission, the Public Protector, the Gender Commission and any other statutory bodies mandated by the Constitution to protect Constitutional freedoms.
 - Collaborating with communities in ways that support the use and preservation of all Official and indigenous languages. Complying with the Broadcasting Act in ensuring that local content takes high priority in all programming.
 - Collaborating with communities in ways that support the respect for, and preservation of, all cultures, practices and ways of life in South Africa except in the case where a culture, practice or way of life violates the provisions of the South African Constitution.
 - Collaborating with communities in ways that support International Conventions on human rights, including Conventions on the rights of women, children, minorities, refugees, migrants and indigenous peoples. Collaborating with South African communities in ways that support the ethics of developmental journalistic practice.
 - Collaborating with communities in ways that support the principles and regulations of the Skills Development Act, the relevant Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), and employment practices in line with relevant legislation.
 - Collaborating with South African communities in ways that support the principle of Access to Information and make use of the country's Access to Information legislation.
 - Collaborating with communities in ways that support the principles of Universal Service and Universal Access for telephony, computers, Internet and other ICTs.
 - Embracing the inextricable link between traditional community media distribution systems (newspapers, TV, analogue radio) and newer digital Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as digital radio, satellite transmission, fibre optic telephone land lines, cellular technologies, the Internet and other data carriers (including electricity power lines).
 - Collaborating with communities in ways that support sustainable, cost-effective, participatory and inclusive use of ICTs in their skills development.
 - Collaborating with communities in ways that encourage cooperation between community radio and other Community ICT Projects such as Telecentres, "digital villages," and computer training initiatives.
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