

REPORT ON THE TRANSISTOR RADIO DISTRIBUTION NORTH MALAITA

1.0 INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

Radio remains the most powerful, and yet the cheapest, mass medium for reaching large numbers of people in isolated areas. Thanks to the revolution of the transistor, even the remotest villages have access to rural radio, which builds on the oral tradition of rural populations. Although men own the majority of radio receivers, women can listen to programmes at home in the evenings when the main chores of the day are finished.

Radio is an important tool for the rapid diffusion of important messages on new agricultural production ideas and techniques as well as on health, nutrition, family planning and other social and cultural issues. Combined with other media, it can be used for training and the transfer of technologies. It can promote dialogue and debate on the major issues of rural development as well as providing a platform for the expression of rural women's needs, opinions and aspirations. Radio enables women to voice their concerns and speak about their aspirations with external partners such as national policy-makers and development planners. Finally, radio is a tool that can be used to develop community cohesion and solidarity. Community involvement is fundamental for the successful use of radio with rural populations. Radio programmes are most effective when produced with audience participation, in local languages and with consideration for cultural traditions. Successful features include live public shows, quizzes and village debates. (Matt Grimes – 'Radio and Society: New thinking for an old Medium').

1.1 Key Areas Supported by the Project

North Malaita is a densely-populated zone of remote villages historically marginalized from services and an area in which majority of displaced people from the ethnic tension and ex – combatants returned and settled to date.

1.2 Rationale for the Transistor Radio Distribution

Following a successful week long engagement with senior journalists in November, 3 days forming a workshop discussion, this solar radio concept was supported. UNPBF to supply radios to communities along the Weathercoast and Northern Malaita to support information sharing and provide a tool for these communities to accelerate their participation in peacebuilding.

2.0 DISTRIBUTION OF TRANSISTOR RADIOS IN NORTH MALAITA

A total number of 467 transistor radios were estimated to be distributed in communities in North Malaita. With the very limited number of radios available, the calculated ratio for the distribution in each community in the 4 wards was 1 radio is to 6 households.

The transistor radios were distributed in communities/ villages in the following wards: -

1. Ward 6 Mandalua/ Folotana with a total number of 45 villages and an estimated number of 547 households. Out of the 91 transistor radios ear marked to be distributed as per the above calculated ratio, a total number of 107 transistor radios were distributed
2. Ward 7 Fo'ondo/ Gwalau with a total number of 84 villages and an estimated number of 918 households. Out of the 153 transistor radios ear marked to be distributed as per the above calculated ratio, a total number of 76 transistor radios were distributed
3. Ward 8 Malu'u with a total number of 62 villages and an estimated number of 823 households. Out of the 137 transistor radios ear marked to be distributed, a total number of 134 transistor radios were distributed as per the above calculated ratio
4. Ward 9 Matakwalao with a total number of 42 villages and an estimated number of 483 households. Out of the 81 transistor radios ear marked to be distributed, a total number of 118 radios were distributed as per the calculated ratio
5. Although ward 10 was not originally included in the plan for the radio distribution, the distribution team saw it fitting to distribute radios as these villages are very remote and in the highlands of North Malaita. Therefore, a total number of 30 transistor radios were distributed to communities within the ward.

Date	Description	Location
29/07/2017	Transistor radios shipped to Auki and picked up by Ben Oto'ofa, the Senior Peace Desk Officer in Malaita	Honiara/Auki
31/07/2017	Erick Hale M&E Research Officer UNPBF Project travelled by boat to Auki to oversee the distribution of the radios in North Malaita	Honiara/ Auki
01/08/2017	Team traveling to North Malaita in the afternoon and started distributing the radios in ward 6 in North Malaita of radios in the afternoon (sleep over)	Auki-North Malaita
02/08/2017	Distribution of radios continue in ward 6 (1 whole day – sleep over)	North Malaita
03/08/2017	Distribution of radio continued in ward 7 (1whole day – sleep over)	North Malaita
04/08/2017	Distribution of radios continued in ward 8 and covered part of ward 9 (1 whole day)	North Malaita
05/07/2017	Distribution of radios continued in ward 8 and covered part of ward 9 (1 whole day)	North Malaita
27/07/2017	Travel to Honiara	Auki -Honiara

2.4 Stakeholders Involved in the Distribution of the Transistor Radios

This was a joint effort by the United Nation Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF) Project, the Ministry of National Unity Reconciliation and Peace (MNURP), Malaita Provincial Peace Desk and Leaders in the communities. The distribution team consist of an M&E Research Officer, UNPBF Project and two personals from the Malaita Provincial Peace Desk Office to ensure that the distribution is coordinated and the transistor radios distributed and reach the intended beneficiaries. All transistor radios distributed were signed against by individuals receiving them on behalf of the six households. Household representatives who were not available but have their names recorded in the list provided by community leaders, a village chief or elder would singed and receive the radio on their behalf. This is done to ensure accountability and for proper documentation purposes.

3.0 DISTRIBUTION OF TRANSISTOR RADIOS TO THE AREA HEALTH CENTERS IN MALAITA PROVINCE

Area Health Centres are the second level of health care at the provincial level. AHCs are in sub – centres in the provinces serving a good number of the rural populace. There are a total number of 4 AHCs in Malaita province.

3.1 Number of Transistor Radios Distributed

A total number of 4 transistor radios were ear marked to be distributed to 4 AHCs in Malaita province. However only 2 transistor radios were given to health facilities, namely Arao health centre and Malu’u health centre. The radios were received by senior nurses manning the health facilities.

4.0 RESONSES FROM INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED

The following narrative highlights responses from individuals interviewed during the distribution.



Mr. Augustine Bueka from Falau Village

I use to own a radio way back in the 1980s. Now I don't have one. When I use to own a radio I often have access to important information on happenings both overseas and in the country. For example, information on disaster such as earthquakes and weather information for example rainfall. Some of the things I have learnt with access to radio include agriculture for example farming and other stuff like fishing. Now a days people only have access to mobile phones and missed out on very important information which is normally pass through radio.

I am very happy to have received a radio on behalf of the 6 households. The radio will help us have access to important information regarding our government. I use to have a radio before but now I don't have one. Now a days information about our government is only pass through by word of mouth from those who may have travelled to Honiara and returned home. Now that we have a radio we will now have access to information on happenings regarding our government on a daily basis.



Mr. Severino Waiko from Folotana village



This is my first time to see such free distribution of radios in our community and it has make me happy. I don't own a radio before. I hear information regarding issues about women only by word of mouth from some other women. Now that we have a radio I will make use of it to listen to our national local news and other information such as climate change.

Josephine from Folotana Village

I am very happy to receive a radio on behalf of our six households. This will enable us to listen to very important information such as our local news, important information regarding issues on women and youths.



Hellen from Roso villages



Chief James Naga from Roso villages

We are very happy that you have come to visit our community and give us radios. People in my community do not have access to radios because a lot of them only use mobile phones to listen to FM radio stations and miss out on important information such as our local news, services messages, information regarding women's issues and youth issues which normally comes through SIBC.

5.0 LESSON'S LEARNT

- Community leaders were appreciative of the efforts made to distribute radios in their communities and mentioned that they will use the radios to access information that will enabled them to participate in peace and development activities in their region.
- It was found by the team that there were a limited number of transistor radios available in the communities and vast majority of people do not have access to very important information that would enabled them to participate in national issues affecting their lives. Information received is only by word of mouth.
- In general, the coordination mechanism put in place for the distribution of the transistor radios has supported the successful outcome of the radio distribution. However, there were some confusion at the start of the distribution especially with the village people thinking that 1 radio per household. The team has taken sometime to explain the rationale of the radio distribution, including the calculated ration of 1 radio is to 6 households. This has brought understanding and resulted in high participation by the community people
- Being innovative in working out the radio distribution based on the situation and context has made it efficient and effective to distribute the radios in the communities.
- Poor infrastructure such as roads, communication and transportation can hamper many aspects of such work in these remote areas and must be factored in future planning as a major logistical consideration
- Provincial staff insight on the geography and location of the communities was extremely valuable. It is always important to include provincial and community people in decisions about where to go and how to reach the communities. They can provide invaluable insights into local context.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Overall, the people in the communities reached during the radio distribution were happy. Community leaders and elders took time to thank UNDP/ UNPBF Project, MNURP and the Malaita Peace Desk for a joint effort that made them have access to information through the radios that were distributed. By listening to the radios and having access to important information they said will enabled them to participate fully in national and provincial related development programmes and activities. A total of 467 transistor radios altogether were distributed.