



GREETINGS FROM KAMPALA, UGANDA!

April. Four months into the year, and have you started working on your new year resolution?

Well, at CHARM Africa, we have achieved some of the items on our bucket list. Our main goal was to develop our identity, and brand, and we can, proudly say, are on the right track. We have our logo! Whoop whoop! And with that came caps, hats, travel mugs, pens, tote bags, banners and anything that can hold the CHARM logo! Look out for this too, they might be in your mailbox soon!

Growing up, most of us loved going through a directory, if not to get ideas on careers we could pursue, we could get names to name our imaginary babies. Our fingers did the talking on the yellow pages, as we usually shouted. And now, with a click of a button, Ethiopian journalists can get contacts of experts in any field suing an online directory through the partnership of CHARM and FOJO! Read more about how this inventory is revolutionizing media and journalism in the East African country.

This month, we e- travelled to South Africa, Wits University, and had a glimpse of their launch on their State of Newsroom report, that hit the streets in February. Very interesting discussions emerged from this engagement, and, in this edition, we not only share the report, but we share what the report foreshadows as the future of radio in South Africa.

On upcoming trips, the coordination team will travel to Rwanda, as the first of many field visits to our partners for an engagement with The Citizen Rights and Development (CRD) and the FOJO team. Be sure to catch up with updates on the trip on our next edition!

Enjoy your read!

The Coordination Team.



The Wits Centre for Journalism (WCJ) recognises the power of the original wireless device in sustaining our hard-won democracy. With debilitatingly high levels of illiteracy and increasing lack of access to other forms of media, the importance of radio in South Africa cannot be overstated.

Dr Dinesh Balliah
Director, Wits Centre for Journalism



CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF RADIO IN SOUTH AFRICA

For the first time in the 100 years since the first experimental radio broadcast in South Africa, radio listenership dropped significantly in 2023. The top South Africa Broadcasting Cooperation (SABC) radio stations fared the worst, losing over a million listeners. Alan Finlay, who authored the report “The State of the South African Newsroom,” a project by Wits University under the CHARM project, points out that this could be attributed to the loadshedding in the country where 2022 saw the country hit by some of the worst months of electricity cuts.

The report points out that radio continues to have the potential to forge an inclusive, democratic culture, and is an important part of nation-building, but points out that there are critical issues that need to be addressed in the sector.

“Since the forward-looking broadcasting legislative amendments in the 1990s, many big and small shifts have happened in the sector, and regulation now lags behind new opportunities and developments – such as the rapid emergence of internet radio. Much needs to be fixed in community radio, a sector that is pivotal to an inclusive democracy, including management and governance structures, and the old bone, sustainability,” reads a section of the report.

On a positive note, the report celebrates the rise of robust stations broadcasting at the community level; the emergence of radio clubs appear to be flourishing and broadcasting happens in all the official languages of the country. There is also exceptionally strong expertise and experience in the sector, many of whom were part of the seminal period of policy transition in the 90s; and, as the glass ceiling has been smashed for female radio broadcasters. You can read more about the report [here](#).



Radio remains the medium that is able to penetrate spaces that exist on the margins of internet access, streaming services, local language, print media, and television broadcasting.

In a century of broadcasting, of connecting people to news, entertainment and information, radio remains effortlessly accessible

Dr Dinesh Balliah
Director – Wits Centre for Journalism



CHARM

Consortium for Human Rights and Media in Sub-Saharan Africa

DIRECTORY EASES JOURNALISTS QUESTS FOR WOMEN EXPERTS IN ETHIOPIA

A 2021 Gender Baseline Assessment Report by FOJO institute, indicating that less Ethiopian women were used less as sources for news and analysis, birthed a beautiful bridge between the journalists and experts in all fields in the country.

Through their partnership with The Ethiopian Media Women Association, (EMWA) and with funding from CHARM, the two collaborated and produced the first ever online and offline directory that comprises of women experts in 18 different fields including the arts, engineering, journalism and fashion.

CHARM communication officer Joyce Kimani, sat down with three EMWA board members, Melkamsew Selomon, Rebecca Hunde and Yeshewa Masresha to analyse the impact of the directory.

“Bringing women’s voice to the media is one of the major activities that we are proud off,” said Selomon. “An immediate impact we noticed was the increased uptake of women as news sources especially in radio and tv interviews,” she added.

A total of 198 women are featured in the directory, which contains their names, professional history, phone number and area of expertise, making it easier for any journalists doing an interview on any field to find the information on how to reach them.

Ms Hunde, said the availability of the directory in hard and soft copies makes it easier to penetrate across the regions and the countryside.

“We have also noticed a lot of confidence and willingness by women experts to give their point of view whenever they are approached by journalists, who, in turn have enjoyed the accessibility of the experts. Consequently, there has been very outspoken on topical issues especially those affecting the population,” she added.

As the distribution plan, the directory has been taken to ten regions and key ministries including the ministry of the information, media development institute and other government facilities. You can access the online directory [here](#) too!



Above: A screen grab of the online directory cover page

We have grown. From a point where women less used as a source either in the news, a discussion and even in multiple issues, to women walking into an interview and owning the expertise, and sharing their wisdom

Melkamsew Selomon, Board Member-
EMWA



CHARM

Consortium for Human Rights and Media in Sub-Saharan Africa

CONSORTIUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND MEDIA IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (CHARM) aims to promote and protect human rights, civic space and media freedoms in Sub-Saharan Africa.

CHARM is a partnership of CIVICUS, Civil Rights Defenders, DefendDefenders, Fojo Media Institute, The Wits Centre for Journalism, Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement, and Magamba Network.

The partnership acknowledges the role that a free and active media and civil society have in the protection of robust democracies and the promotion of national development.



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