

Working Paper: Research on community media in the DACH-Region with a focus on community media as spaces for local dialogue and cohesion

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Introduction

Community media in Austria, Germany and Switzerland are non-profit communication initiatives accountable to the communit(ies) they seek to serve and open to participation in content production and management. Among the sector's main societal contributions are the capacity to strengthen cultural and linguistic diversity, social inclusion and local identity. Community media in the region also act as catalysts for local creativity and improving citizens' media literacy. Furthermore, they strengthen media pluralism by balancing the decreasing localness available on digital and commercial broadcast platforms.

As noted by Bart Cammaerts¹, it is ironic that European community radio and TV stations are often forced to operate in the margins, whilst community media discourses, theories and policies are oriented towards developing countries and emerging democracies. Many international organisations, such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and Western development agencies, are strong advocates for the introduction of local community radio stations in Africa, Asia or Latin America.

However, efforts to secure the distinct nature of community media in (Western) regulatory regimes are still insufficient. In 2019, community media were systematically obstructed in EU member states like Hungary, Croatia and Spain. Overall, there is a lack of critical reflection on the role of community media in democracies. The present report would like to highlight policy recommendations and share experiences to support community media in their struggle for existence, adequate frequencies and distribution platforms, and (political) recognition.

The legal status of community media in Austria will be examined in more detail. Furthermore, a selection of case studies and interviews will describe how community radios and TVs in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland involve different age groups and contribute to exchange and dialogue across generations, dealing with various challenges in rural, peripheric and urban areas. The interviews were conducted between November 2018 and February 2019. Warm thanks to Alice Reinhard (3FACH), Jürg Morgenegg (Kanal K), Mike Schedlberger (B138) and Erich Benesch (Freies Radio Potsdam) for their generous availability and insights.

¹ Cammaerts, Bart (2009) Community radio in the West: a legacy of struggle for survival in a state and capitalist controlled media environment. *International communication gazette*, 71 (8). pp. 635-654.

Austria

1. Status of community media

- **Legal status**

The first licenses for community radio in Austria were awarded in 1998, after more than ten years of struggles for recognition. Until 2009 the radios, however, had to rely on personal loans and sporadic support to finance their infrastructure, such as small grants for cultural initiatives or support for national minorities from the Austrian Federal Chancellery.

The implementation of the Fund for the Promotion of Non-Commercial Broadcasting (Fonds zur Förderung des nichtkommerziellen Rundfunks) by the Austrian Regulatory Authority for Broadcasting and Telecommunications (RTR) in 2009 was a milestone in the history of community media in Austria. This political decision acknowledged the achievements of Austrian community media, as highlighted by the 2016 European Media Pluralism Monitor: access to community media for minority groups is among the indicators of social inclusiveness in a pluralistic system. An important enabler for this recognition was the Austrian Communications Authority, KommAustria, the regulatory authority for electronic audio and audiovisual media. Since 2010 KommAustria has been an independent panel authority not subject to instructions from any other institution.

- **Funding and sustainability**

A yearly fund of 3 million euros is available for 14 community radios and three community television stations in Austria to cover operating costs and training. The funding comes from a portion of the radio/TV license fees and is allocated to community media after detailed applications have been submitted, with two deadlines per year. Funding can be requested for a. program development (up to 90% of the total costs) b. training (up to 70%) c. research (up to 100%). Also, the Federation of community radios (VFRÖ) and the research and training institution COMMIT can apply to the non-commercial broadcasting fund. Criteria for attribution are the non-commercial nature, the adoption of the Charta of Free Radios in Austria and open access to programming for all potential participants (individuals and communities).

The European Union, foundations, local and regional institutions, and private individuals provide additional funding for the sector through donations, partnerships, membership fees, and support for educational or cultural projects. In principle, neither advertising nor sponsoring is allowed, although sponsoring small parts of programs is envisioned.

The community media sector in Austria has a yearly turnover of almost 6 million euros, employing around 250 people and relying on over 3000 volunteers to produce the majority of its 146.000 hours of programming.

- **Overall development**

Unlike other European countries, where 'pirate radios' started operating boldly in the 1970s, community radios emerged almost 20 years later in Austria. Experiments like Ö-Frei in Graz in 1979 were more like interruptions than real disturbances of the public service monopoly. It was finally during the student protests of 1987 that several 'illegal' short programs went on

air in Vienna condemning the cuts to social services (“Radio Sozialfriedhof”, “Radio Sprint“, “Radio ÖGB - Österreich geht’s blendend”). In 1989 the Association AGORA (Arbeitsgemeinschaft offenes Radio) started broadcasting a bilingual program from Italy to Carinthia to serve the local Slovene language minority. From 1992 onwards, various associations were formed with the intent to operate non-commercial radios.

The late start of community media was undoubtedly also linked to the late recognition of the private broadcasting sector. It took a judgement by the European Court of Human Rights in 1993, following a complaint by AGORA requesting access to the radio waves for language minority groups, to shake the long monopoly of public service in Austria. In March 1997, a new regional radio law introduced the concept of regional and local radios, awarding 42 local frequencies, including programming windows for eight community (free) radios.

The first community radio to air after receiving a full license in the summer of 1998 was Radio Orange in Vienna, followed by Radio FRO in Linz and Radio Agora in Carinthia. Okto TV in Vienna started operating as the first Austrian community TV in 2005. Today, there are 14 community radios spread across all regions and three community televisions (in Vienna, Linz and Salzburg), bringing 41 languages on air.

From the onset, Austrian community media shared the aim of democratising communication and giving a voice to the voiceless. Despite their late start, they quickly developed high standards, infrastructure and outreach. According to Katharina Schell², co-founder of Radio Orange in Vienna, media literacy and participation are the key mandate versus market shares, advertising revenues or formats of commercial broadcasters. Community radios and TVs in Austria operate as independent non-profit organisations and have become a respected third media sector. However, truly widespread recognition of their public value is still an ongoing process.

- **The role of community media in the larger (regional/national) media landscape**

In contemporary society, Austrian community media represent important platforms for debate and engagement at the local and regional levels. Social inclusion is facilitated by the opportunity to express one’s concerns and viewpoints, regardless of cultural, linguistic or socio-economic barriers. Having a voice in discussions on future developments of cities and regions is the first step to active participation in their implementation and strengthening a sense of belonging.

Community media activists Amina Handke, Juliane Nagiller and Birgit Denk³ highlight several ‘strong points’ of community media versus commercial social media platforms: a setting for personal exchanges, for reflections, for the improvement of individual and collective competencies, a constructive feedback culture, a high degree of tolerance and pluralism. These are all available for listeners, viewers and producers alike and provide a counterbalance to an increasingly narcissistic on-demand society, eager to blend out unwanted voices, opinions and languages.

² 20 Jahre On Air, Community Medien - Die etwas anderen Privatsender (2018)

³ Ibid.

2. Community media in rural and peripheric areas

Regional development depends on several factors, such as the existence of businesses and jobs, technical, cultural, knowledge-based and social infrastructure, and human resources. If regional development is approached from a socio-cultural perspective, the region is understood as a social system, a network of relationships between different actors, institutions, initiatives, projects and groups, or as a spatial area containing multiple networks.

The OECD differentiates between rural and urban communities based on population density. Rural communities have a population density of less than 150 inhabitants per square kilometre. This delimitation provides the basis for the definition of rural areas at the regional level:

- In predominantly rural regions, more than 50% of the inhabitants live in rural communities.
- In predominantly rural regions, between 15 and 50% of the population live in rural communities.
- In predominantly urbanised areas, less than 15% of the population lives in rural communities.

Distance from cities is a relevant aspect of rural areas, as it provides access to opportunities that are not available in the region. Remote rural areas face challenges other than rural areas close to the city. The preservation and further development of rural areas as a functioning and future-oriented habitat require cooperation between different processes and projects. Culture should not only be seen in the sense of culture as a product, but rather as the relationship between the regional actors and thus as a factor for the success of regional development projects.

Seven out of the 14 Austrian community media organisations are located in rural/peripheric areas. They train people of all ages (children, teenagers and adults), regardless of their gender, culture and origin to become radio/TV producers. The training courses and workshops are carried out by qualified and trained people in the radios. They often take place within an institutionalised framework on behalf of state institutions, social associations, NGOs or NPOs. Community radios in rural areas also offer spaces for encounters between generations and cultures, and they become places of participation. The radio premises generally play an important role; in rural areas, they often fill a gap as meeting places for a wide variety of people who would not otherwise meet at any other location. The radios also invest time, money and space in many social events that are not directly linked to radio production: it's 80% Community, 20% Program.

- **The study «Wirkungsradios - Freie Radios im ländlichen Raum»**

In 2016 the community radios B138, Freies Radio Freistadt and Freequenns conducted a complex year-long study on the impact of their activities⁴. They wanted to assess whether the radios were actively co-developing their regions, whether they were relevant civil society actors and whether the participatory processes in their structures were also strengthening a sense of 'regional awareness' and interaction. As described by the initiators of the study, "*Our research regions are centuries-old cultural landscapes.*"

⁴ Wirkungsradios - Freie Radios im ländlichen Raum (2016)

The results were impressive and showed a web of cultural, educational and socio-political projects initiated or facilitated by the radios, with a direct connection to local regional development. The radios provide precious opportunities for youth animation, media training and intercultural/intergenerational cooperation in geographical areas that are otherwise quite poor in options.

The research investigated, amongst other aspects, how the radios position themselves, how they are perceived, and which topics related to regional development they discuss. Examples were the broadcast 'Nationalparkradio' in the Styrian Ennstal about the National Park Gesäuse, or productions covering the local development strategies of the LEADER-Regions. Freier Rundfunk Freistadt, together with the LEADER Region Mühlviertler Kernland and with the support of the Federal Government, the State Government and the European Union, created a program that was clearly positioned as a regional magazine. A similar format was later developed by Freie Radio B138 as part of a LEADER project in the Traunviertler Alpenvorland region.

The study also showed how small, local development projects by citizens, NGOs or associations find a broader audience through community radio programs. There is a two-fold magnifying effect – on one hand, community radios can portray smaller portions of initiatives linked to regional development whilst also providing a regional viewpoint on global topics. This can facilitate identification with the territory in question and convey emotions connected to regional topics. Local topics that rarely get coverage in national media, linked to sports, education, arts and culture, have the opportunity to reach a broader audience.

Conny Wernitznig, a journalist involved in regional development work, confirmed that *"regional development as a topic is underrepresented in the media."* The freedom and independence of community radios allow them to react quickly and to have a critical look at regional initiatives and events.

Overall, it was noted that a small radio is already a powerful tool for regional development communication. Communication is an essential factor, not only in a journalistic sense but, first of all, in order to initiate processes and discussions on regional topics by bringing people together to share their ideas. The interviewed stakeholders pointed to community radios as crucial spaces and facilitators of this dialogue.

It was also repeatedly highlighted how the future of rural communes lies in the hands of their youngest inhabitants, regardless of citizenship or voting rights. Radio training and production in community media can equip children and students with critical media literacy competencies and opportunities for social engagement.

The study gave visibility not only to the diversity of topics but also to the diversity of profiles of the volunteer producers: workers, employees, school children, students, retired citizens, and asylum seekers are among the people involved. All equally proud of their work: *"With our radio work, we strengthen the essence of these landscapes and their inhabitants."*

Looking back on the study during a Skype interview in December 2018, Mike Schedlberger, station manager at Radio B138, summed up that rural areas are still not involved in many decision-making processes that concern them and that the presence of a radio in a rural area is an indicator of 'activeness' of the area. He said that topics like sustainability and climate awareness are a huge opportunity for youth involvement.

Radio B138, Kirchdorf an der Krems

Radio B138 was the youngest Austrian community radio to have been awarded a full license (in 2013). The broadcasting area of B138 lies in the Upper Kremstal in the northern part of the district Kirchdorf an der Krems in Upper Austria and reaches into the neighbouring districts Steyrland, Welsland and Gmunden. The broadcasting area is part of the LEADER region Traunviertler Alpenvorland. Somewhat more than 43,000 people live in this area. Of the working population, 6.43% are employed in agriculture and forestry, 35.33% in industry and commerce and 57.91% in the service sector. The radio has a theoretical coverage of around 80.000 people via FM and the internet.

3. Involvement of volunteers

According to data collected in 2014⁵, over half of Austrian citizens above 16 are active as volunteers in cultural associations, social initiatives, political parties, church groups, neighbourhood support, civil society activities etc., whereby social engagement is higher than political activity. This constitutes an important target audience and offers recruitment opportunities to community media, as socially engaged people naturally look for communication channels to articulate, promote and document their activities.

Indeed, many community media activists from Okto, Orange, Dorf TV, and FS1 are rooted in environmental, civil rights, human rights or cultural/artistic associations, a background often reflected in their programming content. The potential of community radios and TVs to serve as media partners and multipliers of local cultural events, campaigns and topics could, however, be promoted further.

The research conducted by Medienhaus Wien in 2014 also asked how volunteers come into contact with community media and how they become involved as producers. The main facilitators mentioned were peer groups, especially friends and family, but also work colleagues. One out of seven who later became producers had discovered their local community radio or TV by zapping through cable channels or turning the radio dial. At the time, contact via social media was not yet mentioned as a relevant first point of contact. The study recommended increasing the use of digital communication channels for PR purposes.

⁵ BürgerInnenjournalismus 2.0 - Perspektiven und Strategien von Community-TV
Eine Studie von Medienhaus Wien im Auftrag von Okto Community TV-GmbH (2014)

Two years later, the study 'Wirkungsradios' collected data on how people come into contact with community radios in rural areas. Most frequently mentioned were personal contacts and invitations, followed by PR work done by community radios, events and cultural activities where the radios are involved. The stakeholders that were interviewed only partly defined themselves as listeners, confirming that the impact of the work of community radios goes beyond the impact of their programming.

They highlighted the following as promising strategies to enlarge the radios' networks:

- Public events organised by the community radios
- Visible presence in public spaces and mobile studios
- Open access to the radio facilities
- Discussions between listeners/producers and other people on topics covered in the programs
- Stronger cooperation with local regional associations and small businesses
- Recognition of volunteering and social engagement as driving forces in rural areas

Stakeholder Bettina Hellein sees community radios as active in shaping the regional landscapes: «*Menschen stärken und vor den Vorhang holen, Projekte stärken und vor den Vorhang holen.*» (Strengthening people and bringing them in front of the curtain, strengthening projects and bringing them in front of the curtain), whereas Klaus Preining mentions so-called "radio nests" as an important point. Radio nests are small nodes with technical infrastructure for radio production, a mobile outdoor studio in the term specifically used in the Salzkammergut. "Well, I think it's a wonderful story if you don't concentrate on just one studio. After all, time and distance are two important factors for voluntary work. So why not offer people opportunities that are as uncomplicated and as time-saving as possible? Radio nests as decentralised production sites would allow circumventing the sometimes-long distances in rural regions."⁶

Mike Schedlberger of Radio B138 describes the area where his radio operates as having a very mixed-age structure in small villages, with no students. Young people tend to leave around the age of 16 to study or work in cities. The region has a vivid and active NGO scene for such a small area, with social food cooperatives, local book and info-shops, organic small-scale farming and markets, and associations demonstrating for human rights.

Some asylum seekers from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan live in private homes, and most asylum centres have moved towards bigger cities. They are families or young men who would actually like to stay in the region – but "*die Region checkt das nicht*" (the regional authorities don't acknowledge this). The radio tries to provide human contacts and exchanges, for example, by organising parties in asylum residences or through side events and invitations, to build trust also with those who are sceptical towards media after having experienced authoritarian regimes. The radio offers space and opportunities and tries to be "*an open and accessible place, a learning place*".

Networks in Radio B138 are established and maintained through "*private and personal relationships, through the radio program itself, open editorial meetings, cultural events that we host and side projects we are involved with*". The radio offers an open space also to non-

⁶ Ibid.

radio-related projects and ideas. It is strongly positioned on migration and climate action; it participates in and organises demonstrations, school initiatives and campaigns.

Structured activities such as local projects or workshops also take place. LEADER on Air invited people to present their regional development projects and initiatives, and *“was a good way to make contacts with more people and invite them to the radio”*.

Another example was a project with the unemployment agency, which ran for six years. The media module was aimed at the self-esteem stabilisation of unemployed citizens but was recently cancelled due to budget cuts to unemployment services. *“Local funding for projects involving women and migrants is difficult to find nowadays.”*

Radio B138 also offers school workshops for youth, *“even if we know that most of them will leave the region to study or work elsewhere”*. But as long as they’re there, the students can *“use the radio studio as their office”*.

Which policies guide these activities? Participation, dignity, communication at eye level, and respect for different opinions. Projects don’t necessarily aim to secure the permanent involvement of participants as volunteers but to *“open doors and show possibilities”*. And what helps to overcome linguistic or other obstacles? *“Cooking and drinking together. And eye-level respectful communication”*.

- **Cooperation with local media**

The study ‘Wirkungsradios’ gives some examples of how community media cooperate with other local media, especially print or online publications, but also with local events, to promote their activities and to give broader resonance to their projects.

“Aktion der 99 Sachen” was an interactive project that took place in cooperation with the media, including Radio FRF. It was about *“collecting contributions from the region from people in the fields of culinary arts, culture, originality, tradition, sightseeing, and social interaction. To list this and then also to transport it in the local media and also on air via community radio, to edit it further”*. There was a joint closing event with a publication that is available in print.

Various workshops are offered at local trade fairs and events in rural areas. For example, radio contributions can be produced at the ‘Lehrlingsmesse’ (trainee fair), and in summer animation programs such as the ‘Kirchdorfer Talentewoche’ 10- to 14-year-olds can attend a 3-day workshop on media production, combining TV, radio and print/digital tools.

- **Use of social/digital media platforms**

All 14 community radio stations in Austria and the three community TV stations in Vienna, Linz and Salzburg deal with digitalisation, Web 2.0 and cross-media - in different ways and with different intensities. All stations are represented on the internet with their own websites. The terrestrial and cable programs are offered as live streams. Partly Facebook and Twitter are used, as PR, but also as networking instruments⁷. The ‘Cultural Broadcasting

⁷ BürgerInnenjournalismus 2.0 - Perspektiven und Strategien von Community-TV

Archive' (CBA) has been online since 1999 and offers more than 85,000 program contributions from community radios available for listening. Community TV stations FS1, dorf tv and Okto also work with a common platform for on-demand offers.

At dorf tv, television is increasingly supplemented by Web 2.0 and social media applications. According to managing director Otto Tremetzberger, the aim is to transfer the new developments online to the TV sector. Despite all virtual possibilities, however, the establishment of an 'offline community' and face-to-face communication at the Linz broadcaster remains the most important component for the commitment of producers. dorf tv, with its hybrid orientation of TV and social media, currently sees itself as unique in Austria. As early as the 1990s, in conjunction with ars electronica, activists in Linz began experimenting with new forms of television.

Many particularly successful young producers who first found their audience on the internet later became active on Okto TV. *"With Okto as a strong umbrella brand, they get additional attention for their content,"* comments Barbara Eppensteiner⁸. Critical use of social media is promoted via media literacy training in community media, drawing attention to issues such as data privacy and copyright.

4. Exchange and dialogue across generations

Valentin Galic started producing for Vienna-based Okto-TV's youth program CU-TV at the age of 14. He then developed and led the program 'Teenie Lounge' for four years, covering topics from politics to entertainment seen from a teenager's perspective. Today he works as a video journalist for private TV Puls4. *"Community TV allows you to experiment and make mistakes"*⁹.

The study 'Wirkungsradios' focused on the importance of working with different age groups, in particular with:

- Young people, because they are the adults of tomorrow
- Schools and possibly pre-schools (Kindergarten) as cooperation partners
- Trainees and firms, to enable them to exercise their presentation skills through radio production
- Older people, who no longer have a voice in our societies.

According to Mike Schedlberger of Radio B138 there is *"great potential for youth involvement in community radio and in the provision of alternative content which is not covered in schools"*. Media literacy offers for schools can bring precious rewards – *"a student who hardly speaks in class is one of the best moderators"*, but the concrete possibilities depend on the settings, on the openness of the teachers and on general logistics. For example, a previous project, Kinderradio, was stopped because the students' schedule was too full.

Eine Studie von Medienhaus Wien im Auftrag von Okto Community TV-GmbH (2014)

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ 20 Jahre On Air, Community Medien - Die etwas anderen Privatsender (2018)

It's a matter of choosing compelling topics: How do you see yourself in 30 years? Radio B138 is inviting kids to explore Cyborgs, Bitcoin and sustainable development goals (SDG) in their programs.

Young people should be made enthusiastic about community radio work from an early age, linking them to regional topics and development. This would turn them into experts and, at the same time, tie them to the region; there would be a moment that would clearly create identity. The positive effect of this identity-building process could be that these young people would be more likely to return to the region after their professional or academic training in other federal states or cities.

Radio B138 offers editorial activities and training also for the "silver society": a workshop about fake news spreading online and the editorial group 'Trau dich' (trust yourself). The empowerment of older generations to express their opinions is important because the population is ageing. There are many women and, in general, many people over 50 who need support to become socially involved and confront 'digital ageing'. The radio wants to be a participation tool (Beteiligungswerkzeug)¹⁰.

Stakeholder Angelika Beer insisted on giving older people an opportunity to express themselves through community radio: *"People who live on the margins of society, and that is what many old people who live in nursing homes are today, are no longer heard at all. There would be much to tell and much to learn from the elderly population."*

The research conducted by the community Radios FRF, Freequenns and B138 is an important contribution to a fundamental debate for the future of our societies: *"We have a demographic development that clearly shows that young people are migrating because life in rural areas is not attractive, for whatever reason. It's crucial to understand how and what young people need to stay. The answer "jobs" is not enough."*

¹⁰ Skype interview, December 2018

KiZnewZ – Wir und die Welt

‘KiZnewZ – Wir und die Welt’ is a children’s news program produced at Radiofabrik in Salzburg. It reaches out to school children and young adults, promising that “here is finally news where you have the say! KiZnewZ is about topics that concern you. You can ask experts who explain what is going on in an understandable way. And: you can get a taste of radio work and record your own news as presenters and interviewers in the Radiofabrik broadcasting studio.”

A recent edition covered the wolf sightings in the region of Salzburg. The students of the 1B of the Akademisches Gymnasium invited wolf expert Robert Lindner from the Haus der Natur, who answered their questions about the wolf sightings: Where are there still wolves? Why was the wolf extinct in Salzburg? Are wolves actually a danger to humans, and do we now have to fear them again? In addition to clarifying these questions, the students produced short reports about the European Football Championship, refugee children in Austria and the federal presidential election.

In another production, the students of the 2B class at the Akademisches Gymnasium tackled the topic of smartphone use by children and teenagers. The pupils approached Katharina Maierl (IMB/Safer internet consultant) with the most frequently asked questions about the internet from the perspective of children and young people who use Apps such as WhatsApp or Instagram on a daily basis. What are the dangers?

KiZnewZ won the Salzburger Kinderrechtspreis in 2014 and the radio prize for Erwachsenenbildung in 2013.

Radio auf Grätzltour

Radio **auf Grätzltour** was a project cooperation between Radio Orange and the Brigittenauer Gymnasium in Vienna.

Through outdoor workshops, students made acoustic explorations of the neighbourhood, interviewed teachers and passers-by and discovered the world of community radio hands-on. The experiences of this project showed that radio-making and the emancipatory spaces of free radio are also of interest to young people.

In preparation for their recordings, the students discussed in the plenum what a 'Grätzl' was for them. Grätzl would be a district (not an entire district), in which people would know one another better than anywhere else, places near your home, places you stand up for, where there is a 'neighbourhood', where there are certain places you repeatedly visit (especially restaurants, squares and - concretely - spots in the neighbouring Augarten). "Grätzl begins already before school". The pupils named places important to them: Wallensteinplatz, Wallensteinstraße, Gaußplatz, Augarten and many streets in the immediate neighbourhood of the school.

The pupils developed an interest in finding new angles and perspectives to each place, exploring visual and auditory aspects, describing details, and trusting in the power of their voices. Because of this self-determined way of working, the young people decided on their own when they had enough sound material and then returned to school to prepare the program.

In this project, radio work offered an excellent opportunity for people to interact, get to know each other, exchange ideas and tell stories - across generational boundaries and regardless of their origin. It turned out that the medium of radio in the district was able to bring people closer together and that people also liked to talk about their experiences in the Grätzl.

Furthermore, thanks to the broadcasting of the productions, the interest in the local conditions of the Grätzls was communicated via radio through the voices of young people. The communication in the context of the interviews and discussion rounds was largely based on constructiveness. Especially in the recording of their statements, people stood or sat opposite each other, a setting that apparently can lead to more appreciative and respectful statements than when posting online.

5. Ongoing discussions and recent challenges

Even though Austrian community media have evolved hand-in-hand with internet activism and pioneered experiments with cross-media tools, as well as developed their own archiving and programming software, they are not immune from the ‘challenges of digitalisation’. The hype around multimedia storytelling has led to questioning the added value of community media productions in a world where anybody can upload their content online. Ironically, a study¹¹ commissioned by Okto TV in 2014 on future perspectives for community TV pointed to a purely commercial project from Switzerland as a good practice example in digital community building and cross-media production. The project in question – joiz TV – was an interactive lifestyle and music TV for 15 to 34-year-olds, merging all available digital channels to maximise user engagement. It shut down two years after the report was published. joiz TV spectacularly failed because it had become a ‘sponsoring machine’, dependent on funding acquired through product placements on social media, which ultimately led to a loss of credibility for its contents¹². Community media definitely should not look to commercial projects that market content to youth audiences under an aura of ‘authenticity’ as role models.

Remaining relevant in a changing media landscape is, however, crucial and requires adequate resources and competencies. Despite the successful embedding of social media tools for PR activities and the high digital involvement of community media producers, the reality of day-to-day work in community media is a constant struggle with financial resources. According to station managers, sometimes the funding isn’t even enough to keep a website updated¹³.

There are also concerns that the current government could negatively influence the development of radio projects. According to Mike Schedlberger, neoliberal ideology has influenced funding strategies, requiring “business models, which radios don’t have”.

“In Austria, we are constantly asked ‘what is your business model?’, because public funding is more and more only seen as a co-funding instrument to build up functioning independent business models.” He sees the challenge in *“finding our unique selling point and clearly explaining why society needs community media in the near future. Otherwise, the free market will just munch us up. And that’s pretty hard for us.”*

If the value and development potential of community media are not recognised, they will disappear, and not come back. («Das Werkzeug für Entwicklungspotential wird nicht anerkannt, und es wird nicht wiederkommen, wenn es einmal weg ist».)

So once again, community media are tasked with explaining their public value and defending the space they have conquered as third media sector in order to secure sustainability.

¹¹ BürgerInnenjournalismus 2.0 - Perspektiven und Strategien von Community-TV (2014)

¹² <https://www.watson.ch/schweiz/tv/355574780-man-muss-kein-mitleid-haben-mit-den-ex-mitarbeiterinnen-moderatorin-guelsha-exklusiv-ueber-das-lichterloeschen-bei-joiz>

¹³ BürgerInnenjournalismus 2.0 - Perspektiven und Strategien von Community-TV (2014)

6. Further potential of community media at the local and regional level

„Das Radio kann nur bestehen, wenn die Region besteht und sich entwickelt.“ (Mike Schedlberger, 2016)

In the opinion of the promoters of the study ‘Wirkungsradios’, a region is much more resilient through the presence of a community radio. It gives the region a “background vibe”, and the possibility to articulate and demand things. And it provides a meeting place, a physical space where to experiment with a different, intercultural, intergenerational ‘art of hosting’.

A vision for the future and an inspiration for other European countries would be to strengthen the role of local community media as sustainable development promoters. They could act as platforms that translate sustainable development goals, become ‘SDG converters’ in their regions and involve schools, local businesses and institutions, act as a local think-tank for regional development projects.

In rural areas, there is a higher potential for community-building than in large cities, so community radios can become places of action, part of the public sphere, and at the same time, places for experimenting, discovering and training one’s individual potential. In a scenario where more and more people are without regular jobs, social cohesion depends (also) on the possibilities for direct interaction.

Some concrete ideas to further develop community media at the local and regional level were shared in the study ‘Wirkungsradios’:

- Ensure that volunteers can experience media production as a rewarding (and fun) activity – people who are actively involved and enthusiastic about community media are the best multipliers and communicators for the projects
- Experiment with communication on different channels, prioritising direct and personal contact with people in the region
- Provide a ‘living room’ for meetings and dialogue, make interventions in public spaces (pedestrian streets, schools)
- Involve the local communes and institutions in program production, make them experience the power of community radio
- Work with role models/personalities who are respected and trusted in the region (people who are socially engaged, independent, and responsible)
- Look for topics which are local/regional but also have a supra-regional relevance
- Tackle also ‘difficult’ global issues, which people tend to feel disconnected from, like the financial world
- Provide a platform for connection to educational and professional opportunities in the region

The need to actively support regional development is the underlining thread: keeping people in the region, keeping in touch with those who have left to study and work elsewhere and providing information about internships or work opportunities that might encourage them to return. It’s about combining tradition with a vision – tradition which is at the heart of the

region and visions which are developed by its inhabitants. A community radio in rural areas can inspire love and fascination for its surroundings.

«Die beste Ressource sind die Leute in der Region, das beweist's immer wieder. Und wenn die Motivation stimmt bei den Leuten, wenn die Leute Perspektiven sehen, wenn die Leute Freiräume haben, wo sie ihre Kreativität ausleben können, dann entsteht auch Wertvolles»
(The best resources are the people in the region, this is confirmed again and again. And if the motivation is right, if people see perspectives, if they have free spaces where they can live out their creativity, then something valuable develops.)¹⁴

¹⁴ Wirkungsradios - Freie Radios im ländlichen Raum (2016)

Germany

1. Status and development of community media

The call for citizen radio stations in Germany dates back to 1928 when the “Arbeiter-Radio-Bund Deutschland e.V.” demanded before the Reichstag elections that “experimental radio stations should also be released for serious amateur groups”. The first German free radio station to air was Radio Dreyeckland in 1977, initially as pirate radio, later (from 1987) with a license. Towards the end of the 1980s, non-commercial, non-profit citizen media developed further, in conjunction with the rise of new social movements and many citizens’ initiatives. The first Open Channel to broadcast was the OK Ludwigsburg in January 1984. The “principle of the snake” was invented, according to which - theoretically - the broadcasts of citizens in the Open Channel were to be broadcast in the order of their arrival. Open channels were established as a democratic-political corrective, at the same time as when private radio with massive economic interests was admitted to the market. The prime ministers of the federal states already agreed at that time that a share of the broadcasting fees should support the Open Channels.¹⁵

Today we find 180 community media broadcasting initiatives (both radio and television) across the country – 31 are members of the federal association of free radios (BFR). The existence of several strong open television channels characterises the situation in Germany – around 20 are members of the national open channels association (BOK). In addition, there are “Bürgermedien” initiatives in North Rhine Westphalia, which primarily enable citizens to produce content but do not broadcast this content due to a lack of licenses. Between 20.000 and 30.000 people are involved in production activities each year. According to the regional media authorities (Medienanstalten), more than 1.5 million listeners/viewers access their local community media on a daily basis. Volunteer producers create about 1500 hours of program every day – the equivalent of more than 60 full-time programs. Through their work in community media, they benefit from media training and can develop their media literacy skills further – it is estimated that 10.000 new people access community media as producers every year.¹⁶

The situation of the community media sector in Germany, however, differs significantly in each of the federal states (“Länder”) because the political competence for media policy and legal regulation belongs to 14 Medienanstalten (regional media authorities). Most community media initiatives are allocated a share of the license fee received by each regional media regulator. Depending on the situation, the regulators dedicate between 0 - 50% of their budget to support community media. The public service requirements, which each community media initiative has to fulfil, are stipulated in regional laws passed by regional parliaments, making it very difficult to achieve an adequate and fair framework. The regions themselves can decide whether they want to allow non-commercial broadcasting at all. Depending on the federal state, there are either non-profit, local associations responsible for the open channels, or the regional media authorities themselves act as responsible bodies.

¹⁵ BürgerInnenjournalismus 2.0 - Perspektiven und Strategien von Community-TV
Eine Studie von Medienhaus Wien im Auftrag von Okto Community TV-GmbH (2014)

¹⁶ Helmut Peissl u. Otto Tremetzberger, Nichtkommerzieller Rundfunk, In: Krone u. Pellegrini (ed.) Handbuch Medienökonomie. Springer VS. forthcoming

Under the broad category “Bürgermedien” (citizens’ media) the regional media authorities include open channels, non-commercial radio, citizen radio, campus radio, education and training channels and school radio. According to Carsten Rose, co-founder of one of the oldest German free radios (Radio F.R.E.I. in Erfurt), this terminology is outdated, and community radios should position themselves as part of a European third media sector. (*«Nichtkommerzielles Lokalradio und Offener Kanal – beides klingt in meinen Ohren nach den siebziger Jahren. Wir als Radio F.R.E.I. sehen uns vielmehr in der Tradition der Freien Radios in ganz Europa, was sozusagen die dritte Säule der Bürgermedien darstellt.»*)¹⁷

In any case, Bürgermedien in Germany are clearly seen as an emancipatory ‘corrective measure’, meant to provide spaces for expression and self-representation to underrepresented groups or minorities and to counter-balance deficits of other media sectors. They are described as fulfilling:¹⁸

- the right to articulate free, uncensored expressions of opinion;
- the right to participate in political processes and make statements on societal issues;
- a complementary and balancing function through the treatment of topics and positions that are not or only insufficiently covered by professional media, achieved by involving groups whose viewpoints are rarely taken into account in public discourse;
- the provision of media education/media literacy, not limited to the ability to design and produce media, but rather to critically reflect on the entire media system and its environment and actively help to shape it.

Further, according to Jeffrey Wimmer, through multilingual programming, community media enable social and intercultural dialogue, especially, but not only, in areas characterised by migration. Besides their traditional role of ‘giving a voice to the voiceless’, they also constitute important dialogue-oriented learning places for developing multiple competencies. The acquired skills can help disadvantaged groups and individuals in their quest for empowerment and self-determination¹⁹. Community media thus address contemporary social challenges and fulfil the function of a bottom-up public service on their own terms.

Being embedded in civil society and based on participatory structures also enables open and discrimination-free access, even if there are differences in how this is laid out in practice. The non-profit nature and ad-free programming are shared fundamental principles. A non-hierarchical organisation and frameworks for collective production and feedback are other desirable features which can be used as quality indicators in evaluation processes.

¹⁷ Förster, S. (2016) Vom Urknall zur Vielfalt - 30 Jahre Bürgermedien in Deutschland. Berlin: die medienanstalten – ALM GbR

¹⁸ Krotz, Friedrich (2010) Medienentwicklung und der Bürgerfunk. In: Thüringer Landesmedienanstalt (ed.): Chancen lokaler Medien, Vistas. Berlin

¹⁹ Wimmer, J. (2009): Henry A. Giroux: Kritische Medienpädagogik und Medienaktivismus.

In: Hepp, Andreas/Krotz, Friedrich/Thomas, Tanja (ed.): Schlüsselwerke der Cultural Studies. Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

2. Exchange and dialogue across generations

According to youth surveys quoted by Jeffrey Wimmer in “Vom Urknall zur Vielfalt”, less than a third of respondents indicated social engagement and political awareness as their guiding attitudes. In a context where young people are routinely described as being ‘active participants through digital channels as never before’, it seems necessary to rethink the concept of participation. It will be up to future media policies to address this apparent status of ‘digital meaninglessness’.

German community radios, TVs and multimedia projects are, in any case, actively engaging youth in their activities. Social cohesion can be strengthened by providing a framework for social groups to construct identity and build new networks and relationships.

Radio F.R.E.I. in Erfurt has an extensive child- and youth radio program production embedded in specific projects in cooperation with schools. The topics addressed cover a broad spectrum: developing trust and motivation for school and learning (for example ‘EULE - Eigeninitiative, Unterstützung, Lernfreude und Erfolg - drei Projekte zum Thema Bildung und Schule’ and the campaign ‘Schools of trust’), drug abuse prevention, climate-awareness days and intercultural events are just some examples.

TIDE TV in Hamburg is a community media and training channel with radio, TV and online streaming operating in cooperation with the Hamburg Media School (HMS). Its programming addresses a young audience through a variety of music programs. The TIDE Academy offers affordable training for all in journalism, TV/video production, digital competencies, and media literacy courses for teachers.

ALEX is the Open Channel of the German capital Berlin and describes itself as a ‘crossmediale Community-Sender’. Its programs are distributed via radio, TV and online platforms, supported by a comprehensive social media strategy. It experiments with cross-media formats, for example, with the music show ‘Popsession’, which is available on all channels and promoted on Facebook. The cross-media approach is a feature of the media training offered to volunteers, which takes place in cooperation with the media innovation centre Babelsberg (MIZ) and includes topics such as ‘transmedia storytelling’. Program exchanges take place with other community media, such as TIDE in Hamburg or Okto in Vienna. The TV program of Alex TV is directed to a young audience and includes a variety of music programs and reports about events, conferences and concerts.

3. Ongoing discussions and recent challenges

According to data from the regional media authority of Lower Saxony, a total of 25 million Euros from the license fees are available for German community media per year. Whereas in theory, this could ensure an average of 140.000 Euro for each of the 180 active community media organisations, in reality, only a few can profit from the funding. The vast majority of community media access very little, with a few high-profile projects receiving generous financing. As already mentioned, as the media policy competencies are in the hands of the regional parliaments, achieving an adequate and fair framework is difficult. Also, the fact that,

in some cases, the media authorities themselves act as responsible bodies for community media is problematic, as it does not fulfil the requirement of independence guaranteed by non-profit, local associations. It is also questionable whether community media can function as 'top-down' exercises, with infrastructure and staff managed directly by state authorities rather than developed and managed by the concerned communities. An example of this is the initiative of the Bavarian media authority 'Mach Dein Radio' (<https://www.machdeinradio.de>), which doesn't seem to succeed in motivating new or existing projects to identify with its platform.

According to Carsten Rose of Radio F.R.E.I., community media's peculiarity and added value remain the meeting place, the space where 'more than just radio' can take place, where people meet and engage in dialogue with one another. The program is almost of secondary importance, and he observes how in Erfurt, the meeting-place function of Radio F.R.E.I. has gained enormous importance over its 27-year history.

He sees the remit of community radio to be open to all whilst broadcasting a compelling program of journalistic quality and offering media literacy competencies. The only way to achieve this – keeping standards high without creating insurmountable access barriers – is through media training. Volunteers should be free to experiment, have fun in producing media content, and engage and test themselves. A constructive feedback culture encourages beginners to go on air and improve. And, he says, it's remarkable that the vision of creating change through radio work is also shared by newcomers²⁰.

In the current context, it seems fundamental to secure infrastructure and funding for community media to meet the challenges of digitalisation, confront the changed habits in listening and viewing and the increased participation demands of the audience²¹.

4. Further potential of community media at the local and regional level

During a Skype interview in December 2018, Erich Benesch of Freies Radio Potsdam gave a comprehensive overview of the challenges and potential of developing a community radio in the Brandenburg region. Erich is a media educator and radio journalist who moved to Potsdam from Hessen after having lived in Africa and experienced first-hand the power of community radio.

Potsdam is the regional capital of Brandenburg. It is a mid-sized town that has developed into a sort of 'outer district' of Berlin after Berlin became the national capital. This boom-town effect has led to a population growth from 120.000 to 180.000 within a relatively short timeframe. The town encompasses many facets of Germany –metropolitan and provincial, East and West.

The competent media authority is MABB, jointly responsible for the Berlin region (almost 4 million people) and the Brandenburg region (2 million people). Community media has traditionally been underdeveloped, technically and in terms of human resources, in

²⁰ Förster, S. (2016) Vom Urknall zur Vielfalt - 30 Jahre Bürgermedien in Deutschland. Berlin: die medienanstalten – ALM GbR

²¹ Helmut Peissl u. Otto Tremetzberger, Nichtkommerzieller Rundfunk, forthcoming

Brandenburg, due to being on the 'outskirts' of Berlin. The tradition of the Babelsberg film studios, the oldest in the world and the largest in Europe, has historically meant that film, video and digital developments got the most attention in Potsdam rather than radio.

The process of requesting a license for a community radio in Potsdam was, on the one hand, an 'emancipation process' from the capital city of Berlin. At the same time, it was only possible through support and collaboration with Berlin-based community radios like Pi Radio, who provided technical expertise and mentoring. After a cumbersome and lengthy application process, an FM license has finally been granted for another three years, but it only allows shared broadcasting for four community radios. On 90,7 FM in Potsdam and 88,4 FM in Berlin, Freies Radio Potsdam, CoLaBoRadio Berlin, Studio Ansage Berlin and PiRadio Berlin divide the airtime amongst themselves and also integrate programming content from other free radios like Radio Slubfurt in Frankfurt/Oder, RadioPax in the city of Brandenburg, Radio Woltersdorf in Erkner and Radio Corax in Halle. In addition, there is also shared streaming via a Linux air-time platform.

Freies Radio Potsdam is embedded in the autonomous youth cultural centre, an important actor in the local democratic debate, which has itself always faced struggles for existence. The presence of a community radio is regarded with suspicion and does not seem to be welcomed by local and regional institutions. An interesting anecdote is about a local journalist who was eager to join the radio production team to finally be free in his reporting work but wanted to remain incognito.

Many artists and left-wing activists were in the core group of volunteers who started a festival radio in 2010/2011 and managed to have a temporary license for their project. It was a cultural initiative with deficits and talents, which had to face many difficulties to organise itself, but it also allowed to position and strengthen east-German culture. Afterwards, different people got involved in radio-making, and the circle of volunteers expanded. It encompasses pretty much everything from a well-known punk music program active also on social media to radio programs made by school children.

There are many examples of youth and intergenerational radio programs on Freies Radio Potsdam:

- SPROEZL-Funk was a local history series where the 'children of today' did interviews with older witnesses from Babelsberg about their childhood and youth in the DDR or before. They mainly spoke with shopkeepers, artisans, teachers, priests, and tram drivers. The children often still go to the same modernised village school (Hort-Villa), which used to stand in the shade of the wall - it was a dead end where the tram and the world stopped.
- JuJu is a broadcast from a socially engaged youth group between the age of 12-16 who carry out relief actions for older people, refugees and other disadvantaged groups and report about their work.
- Until 2016 the gerontologist Gisela Gehrman was regularly on-air with her popular program SilberFunk for 'People in their Best Age'. She brought in voices and

perspectives of senior citizens, also from residential areas like Potsdamer Mitte and Altstadt. Her project was an important meeting point and a chance to overcome mistrust towards the media, an attitude still shared by older people based on their experiences before the fall of the wall. Talking about their life, their families, life in Potsdam, normal day-to-day problems of young, not-so-young and older people was, in fact, ground-breaking. Her program was all the more interesting, as Gisela sometimes coordinated the children's radio. Children, especially of newly arrived families, benefit from intergenerational dialogue as they often don't know what it was like 'before'.

- The Network of Migrants Organisations in Brandenburg, which encompasses 13 different associations, uses the radio as a platform for visibility, self-organisation and empowerment. Their initiative was nominated for the Integration Prize Brandenburg, although the state government had not even recognised the radio yet.

Erich himself says that he integrated much faster in Potsdam thanks to his work in community radio. As a 'Wessie', he got a chance to know the local culture and the people.

From a technology perspective, Erich sees DAB+ as an opportunity, as it would allow the radio to be heard in all of the Brandenburg region and not just in the periphery of Berlin. Free radios are, however, not currently part of the DAB+ debate.

But, he says, at least local cable networks have been conquered – “through internet streaming, you are not perceived as a local media, whereas through FM and cable, you receive more recognition”. Also in the city of Brandenburg, a local artist collective is trying to found a radio association and access the cable network. It's an emancipation process for which access to open-source software is crucial, including open-source learning solutions in schools. The open-source streaming air-time platform developed by the community radios in Berlin-Brandenburg has allowed them to potentially reach an audience of 4 million listeners. The Chaos Computer Club is on-air with its program, and FabLab - Freifunk organises workshops with children who can build their own radios.

“Whereas the media authorities have adopted digitalisation as a fashion debate, the free radios have the technology under control!”

Funding is still a major issue for the further development and sustainability of Freies Radio Potsdam. “We are fighting for self-evident fundamentals, and that in the middle of the commercial media city of Babelsberg.”

Switzerland

1. Status and development of community media

The community media sector is defined by Swiss media law as ‘complementary’ to public service and private broadcasting. Its main tasks are to provide open access to media production facilities and training, to produce local, diverse and complementary cultural content and to operate on a non-profit basis. The first community radio to go on-air was Radio LoRa in Zurich in 1983.

Today 17 non-commercial radios in Switzerland are members of the national federation UNIKOM, 9 of which have an FM license and are co-funded by the government through a portion of the license fees. The remaining 8, which started as Internet-based projects, have been able to access financial support for distribution via small-scale DAB+ channels. Thanks to the migration to DAB+, 77 niche local radio stations are currently operating, including UNIKOM members and other community radios from the French and Italian Cantons who have not joined the Federation.

Training activities, mainly organised in cooperation with the radio school klipp+klang, are supported additionally, recognising community radios as places of learning. Thousands of volunteers, including citizens with a migrant background or with disabilities, are actively involved in program production and in the management of UNIKOM radio stations. Programs are aired in more than 25 languages, with specific intercultural, multilingual training formats in place.

The Swiss media law of 2007 reconfirmed the recognition of community radios as a distinct and complementary third media sector, necessary for cultural and linguistic diversity, pluralism and freedom of information. However, FM licenses are no longer assigned since 2007. A new media law is now being developed, and it is unclear which criteria will guide the co-funding of community radios in the future. Indeed, local and non-commercial broadcasting would not survive without the financial contributions it receives via the license fee. This was a significant factor in civil society mobilisation against the populist ‘No Billag’ initiative in 2018, which aimed to abolish public service broadcasting by scrapping the annual media license fee.

2. Community media in rural and peripheral areas

Kanal K – ‘Radiovielfalt’ since 1988 in Aargau

Since its foundation more than 30 years ago, Kanal K has been operating as a complementary, non-commercial radio for the region of Aargau and the neighbouring areas. The content aired around the clock is produced by over 120 volunteers, who broadcast a diverse radio program based on the three pillars of training, community and music.

- **Training**
Radio Kanal K acknowledges the relevance of journalism for society and the increasing difficulties of entering a media profession. It enables young, interested people access to radio journalism through a six-month training period, in which they learn to work as radio journalists, receive practical insight into the professional field, and take their first steps in a media career. With the weekly background programs on local culture and news, 'K Punkt Kultur' and 'Brennpunkt Aargau', the trainees can put the acquired specialist knowledge into practice and develop it further through well-structured feedback.
- **Community**
By the listeners for the listeners - Kanal K is a hands-on radio. People from all segments of the population in the region are welcome to broadcast their program on Kanal K, provided that the content meets the ethical criteria of the radio. Integration is actively lived at Kanal K, with different languages and cultures on air daily. Producers with a migration background provide information in their native languages about events in their countries of origin, news from Switzerland, cultural events and local topics. Up to 14 languages, from Farsi to French to Amharic, can be heard daily on Kanal K.
- **Music**
Kanal K sets itself apart from other radio stations with its unique non-stop music program 'K-Tracks'. The carefully curated music runs up to 18 hours a day. Every year a good 900 new songs will be on rotation. Kanal K plays non-commercial music out of the mainstream, focusing on creative work by young regional and up-and-coming national artists. Kanal K also works closely with local labels, agencies, organisers and festivals.

According to Jürg Morgenegg, managing director of Kanal K, the radio is a highly relevant presence in the region. Aargau's region (Canton) is known as the 'Canton of the regions', with two small towns (Aarau and Olten) but no real centre. Some sub-regions are quite isolated, like Fricktal, and the 3 FM frequencies of the radio don't manage to cover the whole Canton. Thanks to DAB+, the coverage has now expanded to the entire German-speaking part of Switzerland.

The population in Aargau is growing, including people with a migration background. Around half of the 120 volunteer producers have a migration background, reflected in the 13 multilingual programs aired between 19:00 and 21:00 daily.

Most volunteers have been involved for a longer period, between 15 and 20 years. The average age is between 30 and 40 years of age. The challenges of involving new volunteers are similar to the ones of other associations or NGOs: many young people tend to work in a project-oriented manner and are reluctant to remain permanently involved.

The training program of the radio is a counterbalance to this. Through its six trainee places in radio journalism, music editorial work and administration, new young people join the radio every six months as a first step in experimenting with a media career. Many then move on to commercial media projects but remain involved or connected to Kanal K as volunteers.

Regional topics, as well as global topics declined in their regional components, are embedded in the program. The radio cooperates with regional cultural institutions and local media and owns a 'broadcast bus' for live reporting.

Monthly topics are identified and guide the editorial work. Some examples for 2019 are:

- Sustainability and 'sufficiency' in the kitchen. The topic is integrated into school lessons and developed in radio programs with local students.
- Action month against racism, developed in programs cooperating with the regional integration office.
- Dialogue across generations ('Generationengespräche') as part of the 30-year archiving project. Selected programs are re-created involving the same producers 20 years later, and the contents are discussed with new radio volunteers. What has changed? What can we learn from one another?

Another feature of Kanal K is its monthly program by people with impairments called 'Happy Radio' and realised in cooperation with the radio school klipp+klang. The empowerment success of the project is demonstrated by the fact that several people have then gone on to produce their radio programs.

3. Exchange and dialogue across generations

Radio 3FACH - Youth Radio in Lucerne

Radio 3FACH celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2018. Since 1998 several generations of young people have had their first journalistic experiences at the Lucerne youth community radio. The radio remains true to its mission: an ad-free, unconventional radio promoting innovative music away from the mainstream, creating programs by and for a young target audience, and acting as an organiser of musical and cultural events.

The peculiarity of 3FACH is its 'Alters Guillotine': all moderators are younger than 25 years, in the management team younger than 30 years. Once they reach their 'retirement age', new volunteers take over. This ensures that ideas and motivation are always fresh and that the radio is in a constant state of change. Around 40 young people work at 3FACH, putting much idealism into their tasks.

Radio 3FACH broadcasts for a young target group interested in music and culture. On average, 31.700 people listen to Radio 3FACH every day. The website of 3FACH records 40.000 hits per month, and via social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), 3FACH reaches over 16.000 followers. 3FACH broadcasts via FM in the Lucerne area and reaches all of German-speaking Switzerland via DAB+ and beyond via web stream and App.

An essential radio activity is its live broadcasting from local, independent music festivals, taking place over six months all over Switzerland. The audience can experience the work of young musicians, the atmosphere and the inspiration even if they cannot attend live. 3FACH produces a comprehensive festival report in sound and vision, documenting the rich alternative in music and content coming from regional, national and international musicians.

Currently, 37 people work at Radio 3FACH, producing 21 programs per week. All producers are between 19 and 25 years of age and active in the radio association. Many volunteers are involved during the festival season – between two and ten producers work on each festival live stream, learning the basics of streaming technology and moderating live interviews with musicians, audiences and open-air organisers. The producers document the music festivals not only through the microphone but also through the camera, creating video contributions and content for social media.

In conversation with Alice Reinhard, Radio 3FACH's 25-year-old station manager, the radio's age policy is mentioned various times as one of its success factors, alongside the ambition to produce good quality programs that "people will want to listen to". In this respect, 3FACH is different from other Swiss community radios – it's not open-access but works with a compact team of around 40 producers, who receive symbolic compensation for their work, and six full-time employees in charge of the management. All are involved as association members and as volunteers beyond their paid assignments. In addition, there is also a training department with four trainees working 60% in program production, in cooperation with the Swiss professional journalism school MAZ, based in Lucerne.

The radio's producers reflect the profile of its audience – young, urban, interested in culture and music, and engaged in local topics and politics. The radio has local media partnerships with print media, cultural institutions and music festivals.

3FACH also invests time and energy in experimenting with new formats to identify the best 'packaging' for various contents. It has started an 'online first' podcast series where specific topics are presented more in-depth online and later picked up on air. DAB+ has 'broadened the horizon', allowing it to reach a much broader audience. The radio also developed its own mobile App to stay close to its listeners – 'It's unlikely that they own a radio at home', says Alice.

It's therefore 'crucial to keep on thinking about future developments and integrate cross-media approaches in our work' - video and social media content production is a natural component of 3FACH's work and are also part of the journalistic radio training.

As challenges for the future, Alice mentions:

- the changing role of radio in the digital media landscape;
- the importance of high-quality training so that people can then move on to other professional radios;
- keeping the balance between the high standards the radio is setting itself and an 'experimental openness' enabled by its not-for-profit nature;
- remaining a regional incubator for youth and local culture in a digital, interconnected world.

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Allgemeine Bedingungen für die Gewährung von Förderungen durch den Fonds zur Förderung des Nichtkommerziellen Rundfunks (NKRF-ABF)

Projektbericht Radio auf Grätzltour, Radio Orange