Impact case study (REF3b)

REF2014
Research Excellence Framework

Institution:
London Metropolitan University
Unit of Assessment:
UoA36
Title of case study:
The campaign for community radio in Europe
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)
Two documents, a *Resolution of the European Parliament* (September 2008) and a *Declaration of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers* (February 2009), both encouraging Member States to support community media, have been used at national and European level to persuade governments to support such media initiatives. The key researcher, Peter Lewis, was commissioned by the Council of Europe to write a report, *Promoting Social Cohesion: The Role of Community Media*, which provided the basis for the Council of Europe's Declaration. Lewis was also consulted by the European Parliament's rapporteur in the preparation of the Resolution.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

Lewis's research for UNESCO, published as *Alternative Media: Linking Global and Local* (1993), originally established his work at the heart of debates about community media, and 'influenced heavily the way UNESCO has developed its community radio advocacy policy' (Source: Testimonial from Director (2003-2011) of Communication Development Division, UNESCO). Lewis subsequently wrote five reports dealing with aspects of community media for the Council of Europe and four for UNESCO. This was in a period when a small but growing community of European academics and activists strove to open a discursive space in which the claims of community media to be recognised as part of the media landscape could be debated with mainstream media, funding agencies and policy-makers. Research was directed towards the identification of best practice in the delivery of what is now called 'social gain' at the level of local projects and, at national level, of supportive funding and regulatory environments within which community, alternative or third sector media could contribute to diversity and pluralism. Much of the work originated in the IAMCR's Community Communications Section, of which Lewis was a founding member in 1982.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, it was the IAMCR which first made efforts to discuss Western experience of community media with the new democracies. In relation to this, Lewis contributed to international colloquia in Belarus (1991) and Kiev (1993). AMARC-Europe (the European division of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters) was also active in Eastern Europe. Its Ljubljana conference in 1994, to which Lewis contributed, adopted the Community Radio Charter for Europe. For AMARC-Europe Lewis also undertook a survey of employment trends and training needs in the third sectors of five European countries (Lewis, 1994) and in 1995 organised a series of seminars in Estonia, Russia, Poland and Slovenia on media law and regulation, training and democratic practice in radio journalism. In 1995 Lewis's contribution to the University of Leicester's MA in Mass Communications – a unit he authored that dealt with 'Alternative Media' – achieved global reach through the course's Distance Learning mode. In the same year *The Invisible Medium* (Lewis and Booth, 1989; translated into Spanish in 1992), one of the first books to discuss community media and its various forms across the world, was reprinted and continues to be widely cited.

'Ethnographic Monitoring and Evaluation of Community Multimedia Centres' (Slater, Tacchi and Lewis, 2002) was the outcome of research funded by DFID, which tested an evaluation methodology – 'ethnographic action research' – for UNESCO in Sri Lanka. The recommendations made were 'very influential' (Source: Testimonial from Director (2003-2011) of Communication Development Division, UNESCO) and enabled UNESCO to assess the impact of new communication technologies in rural communities in South Asia.

In 2004-06, Lewis was the Scientific Coordinator of the IREN project, funded under the EU's FP6 programme, which brought together European academics specialising in radio and radio

broadcasters. His paper at the final conference underlined the importance of the work the project had identified in the field of community media (Lewis 2006).

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3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- Lewis, P.M. & Booth, J. (1989, reprinted 1995) *The Invisible Medium: Public, Commercial and Community Radio*, London, Macmillan. Translated into Spanish as *El Medio Invisible: Radio Pública, Privada, Comercial y Comunitaria,* Barcelona, ediciones Paidos, 1992.

- Lewis, P.M. (1993) (ed.) *Alternative Media: Linking Global and Local*, Reports and Papers in Mass Communication, No.107. Paris, UNESCO.

- Lewis, P.M. (1994) *Community Radio - Employment Trends and Training Needs: Report of a Transnational Survey*, Sheffield, AMARC-Europe, November 1994.

- Lewis, P.M. (1995) *Alternative Media*. Module 4: Unit 24. Centre for Mass Communication Research, University of Leicester, MA by Distance Learning. ISBN 0-903507-29-3

- Slater, D., Tacchi, J. & Lewis, P. (2002) 'Ethnographic Monitoring and Evaluation of Community Multimedia Centres: a Study of Kothmale Community Radio Internet Project, Sri Lanka'. Report of a research project funded by Department for International Development, UK (DFID), in collaboration with UNESCO. Available at http://eprints.qut.edu.au/8701/1/8701.pdf. [Accessed 09/12/11].

- Lewis, P.M. (2006) Report on IREN Project, *Recherches en Communication*, No.26, *Nouvelles Voies de la Radio /The Way Ahead for Radio Research*, Louvain-le-Neuve, Département de Communication, Université Catholique de Louvain, pp.157-163.

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4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Lewis's work has been central in attempts to strengthen advocacy for community media at both national and European levels. During the 1970s the Council of Europe had an interest in community media, as did AMARC-Europe during the 1990s, but this had no discernible effect on policy. It was left to the Community Media Forum for Europe (CMFE), formed in 2004, to take up the campaign. The sequence of events leading to the publication of the two documents cited in Section 1 (above) began at a joint meeting in July 2006 of the CMFE and AMARC-Europe in Brussels attended by community media practitioners from 15 European countries, to which Lewis was invited. The meeting presented the case for community media to representatives from the European Commission, the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Parliament (EP). In May 2007 Lewis spoke at a meeting in Budapest about the growing importance of community media at both national and European levels. Present was the Austrian MEP, Karin Resetarits, whom the EP's Culture & Education Committee had nominated to research the issue. She commissioned a report from a Brussels consultant, Kern European Affairs (KEA), which names Lewis in the list of academics consulted (para 3.1.5 and p.60, accessible at http://www.cmfe.eu/docs/1166366638_The%20state%20of%20community%20media.pdf).

While the KEA report was still being written, Lewis invited its author, Jan Runge, to an international colloquium that he (with Salvatore Scifo) organised at London Metropolitan University in September 2007 – *Finding and Funding Voices: the Inner City Experience*, accessible at http://www.communitymedia.eu/events/finding-and-funding-voices/Finding_and_Funding_Voices-Report.pdf). At this event invited representatives of UK government departments, of the London Mayor's office and of Ofcom heard examples of best practice discussed by practitioners and academics from the UK, Austria, France, Ireland and the Netherlands.

The MEP Karin Resetarits came to London in February 2008 to consult Lewis. Her report ((accessible at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A6-

2008-0263&language=EN) was the basis for the EP Resolution in September 25, 2008 (accessible at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2008-0456&language=EN&ring=A6-2008-0263). During the same period, Lewis was commissioned by the CoE's Group of Specialists on Media Diversity (MC-S-MD) to write a report – *Promoting Social Cohesion: The Role of Community Media* – which was published in July 2008 (accessible at http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/media/Doc/H-Inf(2008)013_en.pdf). The report reviewed academic studies and conceptual frameworks dealing with community media, surveyed characteristics of European third sector media (enabling legislation, regulation policies, ownership, funding, content and relevance for lifelong learning), discussed the sector's contribution to social cohesion, and summarised measures to support third sector media. Key to the claim for impact made in this case study was the recommendation in the Conclusions (p.32) for CMFE and AMARC representatives to have observer status at MC-S-MD meetings. As a result, the CMFE was invited to assist Council of Europe staff in drafting the Declaration which was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11 February 2009 (accessible at https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1409919). Other recommendations of Lewis's report are reproduced in the final section (numbered i-v) of the Declaration.

These two official statements have become important markers for community media campaigns across Europe and further afield. The CMFE says of Lewis's Council of Europe report: 'the study was very important for us and our members to show to European and national policymakers a piece of independent study and concrete examples of the everyday work of our sector' (Source: Testimonial from Chair of CMFE)

Of UNESCO's work in South Asia, the Director (2003-2011) of the Communication Development Division, UNESCO testifies that the 'convincing arguments we were able to provide to state and non-state actors [were] based on some of the key research-based recommendations' of the report and Lewis's other publications (Source: Testimonial from Director (2003-2011) of Communication Development Division, UNESCO).

Academic comment in *Telematics and Informatics* (Vol. 27, No. 2, May 2010, accessible at http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/07365853/27/2) discusses community media policy and refers to the Resolution and Declaration, together with Lewis's report (see articles by Hallett and Hintz, Jakubowitz, Kupfer, Reguero Jimenez and Scifo, and Santana and Carpentier). Kupfer commented that the report 'has become a very important reference in the discourses on community media within the Council'.

When the CoE's MC-S-MD Group was phased out, the CMFE was granted observer status on both the Steering Committee on the Media and New Communications Services (CDMC, accessible at http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/media/CDMC/default_en.asp) and the newly formed Committee of Experts on new Media (NC-NM, accessible at http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/media/MC-NM/default_en.asp) of the Council of Europe(CoE, accessible at http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/media/CDMC/CDMC%282009%29020Rev%20Abridged%20Report%2011th%20JK.asp#TopOfPage

Forty-eight official letters to media authorities by the CMFE and presentations by CMFE officers advocating recognition of community media refer to the EP and CoE documents and are chronicled on the CMFE website (some are listed in Section 5, below).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- Council of Europe: Joint submission with AMARC-Europe to the *"1st Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Media and New Communication Services: A new notion of media?*" (12 May 2009). Accessible at http://www.cmfe.eu/docs/_CMFE-AMARC_submission_Reykjavik_CoE_Ministerial_Conference_120509.pdf .

- Letter to the Polish authorities: *Declaration of the Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE) supporting the Polish Third Media Sector* (2 April, 2009). Accessible at http://www.cmfe.eu/docs/_Declaration_Poland_ENG.pdf.

- Testimonial from Director (2003-2011) of Communication Development Division, UNESCO (June 2013) (available on request).

- Testimonial from Chair of CMFE (June 2013) (available on request).

- Letter to the UK Prime Minister: *The CMFE is Encouraging the British Government to Support the Community Media Sector with the Sums Needed to put it on a Sustainable Long Term Footing* (14 August 2009). Accessible at http://www.cmfe.eu/docs/2009_14_August_Support_CR_Fund_UK.pdf.

- European Commission: Response to the Public Consultation *Transforming the Digital Dividend Opportunity into Social Benefits and Economic Growth in Europe* (4 September 2009), citing CMFE's contribution. Accessible at http://www.cmfe.eu/docs/2009_4_%20September_EC_Digital_Dividend_Consultation.pdf; and http://www.cmfe.eu/docs/2009_4_%20September_EC_Digital_Dividend_Consultation.pdf

- European Commission: Response to *The Consultation on Radio Spectrum Policy"* (9 April 2010). Accessible at http://www.cmfe.eu/docs/2010_April_9-Radio_Spectrum_Consultation_Response.pdf.

- European Commission: Letter to the Commissioner for the Digital Agenda Neelie Kroes on *Not Leaving Behind Community Radios in the Digitization of Radio*' (19 December 2011). Accessible at http://www.cmfe.eu/docs/2011_12_19_CMFE_AMARCEUROPE_DIGITALREVOLUTION.pdf

- Letter to the Swedish authorities, *Privatisation of Community Radio in Sweden* (8 May 2011). Accessible at http://www.cmfe.eu/docs/2011_May_8-Sweden_letter_MCMS_liljeroth.pdf.

- Letter to the Danish Ministry of Culture, *Reestablishment of 'Must Carry' for Non-commercial Media in Denmark* (11 May 2012). Accessible at http://www.cmfe.eu/docs/2012_05_11_CMFE_Letter_to_The_Danish_Minister_of_Culture.pdf