

## **‘Gender sensitive’ radio stations influence listeners and gain popularity**

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Radio stations that encourage a debate on gender equality and broadcast gender sensitive programmes have become popular and are influencing the attitudes and behaviours of their listeners.

### **What was the situation before V4C’s support?**

V4C aims to reach a broad audience with compelling messages that convey the benefits of new norms around gender equality. The programmes of the radio stations V4C supports were previously largely entertainment focused, with little emphasis on young people or gender-related issues. Listeners were mostly treated as passive participants, with no real opportunities to make their voices heard in the debates being aired. If gender was raised at all, it was regarded as a ‘woman’s issue’ and discussed in programmes that targeted men and women separately.

The changes described in this case study are drawn from a lengthier case study based on interviews with radio station staff and listeners of radio stations whom V4C had supported. This summary follows the outcomes described in two previous case study summaries:

- *‘Radio station staff start to believe in gender equality’* documents how and why capacity building on gender equality has led to the transformation of the radio staff’s personal attitudes and behaviour and the ways in which they are using their influence to promote wider change;
- *‘Radio stations make organisational changes to support gender equality’* illustrates how radio stations are providing more equal opportunities to women, gender issues are now more prominent in the radio stations’ programmes and discriminatory social norms within the organisations are being challenged.

### **What did V4C do?**

Since 2014, V4C has been working with 11 radio stations in four target states to provide new ideas, perspectives and knowledge on gender. This includes providing capacity building, as well as the introduction of the radio drama series ‘Purple Tinz’. This case study summary explores the influence that V4C’s support has had on a sample<sup>1</sup> of the targeted radio stations based in Enugu and Kaduna states.

### **What happened as a result of V4C’s involvement?**

Supported by V4C, radio stations have increased their popularity by developing, broadcasting and engaging gender sensitive programmes. By applying the principles of gender equality to the content and format of their programmes they have also been able to influence listeners to adapt their own attitudes and behaviours.

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<sup>1</sup> Solid FM and Dream FM in Enugu; Karama Radio and Liberty Radio in Kaduna.

## **More people have started listening to the radio stations V4C is targeting.**

In all of the consulted radio stations, staff reported that the stations' listenership had increased as a result of introducing programmes like Purple Tinz and other gender-related programmes. At Liberty FM and Solid FM it was highlighted that listeners have provided positive feedback on gender-related programmes. At Dream FM, one of the respondents emphasised that working with V4C has helped the station to improve the content of their shows, gaining popularity as a result.

*"One good thing about V4C is that [by working with them] your content must be improved which is what attracts the audience; an example of such programmes is 'People's Parliament' where even a keke man would not want to miss it."* (Male staff, Dream FM).

At the time of this research, the radio stations were not able to provide state listenership figures through which the claim of increases in their listenerships could be verified. Yet, some of the consulted radio listeners also noted that Purple Tinz and other gender-related programmes have become very popular and that people listened to the targeted radio stations because of these programmes.

## **The radio stations' increased listenership has attracted advertisers and this has generated more revenue.**

*"I feel the adverts are heavy during my belt. That means people are listening and they want their advert to be heard at that period. I believe the organisation is making more money [...] I will say the percentage increase in revenue based on the adverts on my show 'ona a fio' is 70 per cent."* (Female staff, Dream FM)

Most of the respondents from the consulted radio stations reported that the revenue had increased due to an increase in advertisements. This was primarily associated with the popularity of Purple Tinz and other gender-related programmes. *"Yes adverts around Purple Tinz and other related programmes have had tremendous increases."* (Male staff, Liberty Radio). Although the respondents could not give clear evidence of the increase in revenue, at Karama Radio, respondents claimed that there was a request for adjacency placement to Purple Tinz. 'Requesting adjacency' means clients pay a surcharge (increased in stations' advert rates) of between 50 per cent – 100 per cent. Moreover, one advertiser stated that he was interested in Karama Radio because of the popularity of Purple Tinz. Radio listeners also noted the increase of advertisement at Dream FM.

## **The gender related programmes and discussions have affected the attitudes and behaviours of radio listeners.**

The consulted radio listeners have gained a better understanding of gender equality and see value in it. They find the evidence presented in Purple Tinz convincing and can relate to it.

*"How they organise the drama with humour in it, yet addressing very serious issues [...]. This challenges how we reason, but ends up showing value [...] Purple Tinz uses real life scenarios, sometimes describing exactly what and how we behave. [...] Some other programmes are humorous, but in Purple*

*Tinz you must learn something from every episode, which keeps you wanting more.” (Radio listeners, Kaduna).*

Women listeners reported that they have gained confidence, learnt how to accept different opinions, appreciate other women, and have taken action to influence others of gender equality. Male listeners reported that they started believing in women being as capable as men and some of them have taken action to promote women's participation in leadership.

Yet, it was reported that there are still some radio listeners who do not fully agree with gender equality, but have started adapting their behaviour and have become more respectful of gender issues and female presenters. Although they do not always agree with the presenters' opinions, they are willing to engage in the conversation about gender equality.

*“Before now male callers react to female presenters different from the way they react to male, they just play around with the female and are serious with the male [...] they [would] say ‘how can a little girl be asking me an “ofo” a question’ [...], but now they don't joke around with the female presenters they are both serious with the male and female On Air Presenters.” (Male staff member, Dream FM)*

## **What are the reasons for these changes?**

Through V4C's support, radio stations have introduced programmes and debates that resonate with their audience. Purple Tinz has had a big impact on radio listeners because it uses humour, real life situations, and is consistent in its messages. This is what made it easy for radio listeners to relate to it. Several respondents also reported that gender-related programmes were broadcasted at peak times, which must have been a significant factor in terms of reaching a wider audience. In addition, a few radio listeners reported that some people seemed to be attracted by the 'souvenirs' (i.e. promotional material) they were hoping to get from Purple Tinz.

The revenue of the radio stations is explained by the increase in adverts, which is associated with the popularity of Purple Tinz and other gender-related programmes.

Some radio listeners have changed their behaviour because programmes like Purple Tinz changed their attitudes about gender equality. Others do not yet fully agree with concepts around gender equality, but have adapted their behaviour and are more respectful of gender issues and female presenters to conform with the social norms the radio stations represent.

## **What lessons have been learned?**

1. V4C is aiming to influence how society perceives gender equality. The popularity the radio stations are gaining by broadcasting Purple Tinz and other gender-related programmes suggests that demand is being created and that there is an openness for such discussion. The increases in the radio stations' advertisement and revenue encourage them to continue broadcasting these programmes, as this is good for their businesses.
2. Radio programmes can effectively transmit messages about gender equality, if the programmes' stories directly relate to the experience of their target

group.

3. By applying principles of gender equality internally and by changing the content of their programmes, radio stations have changed the way they talk about gender equality and this has put pressure on their audience to adapt their behaviour. Because of the achievements in attracting more listeners, radio stations seem to be encouraged to continue the dialogue on gender equality. This may ensure that the more progressive, pro-gender image of the radio stations is sustained, contributing further to the social norms change V4C is aiming for.