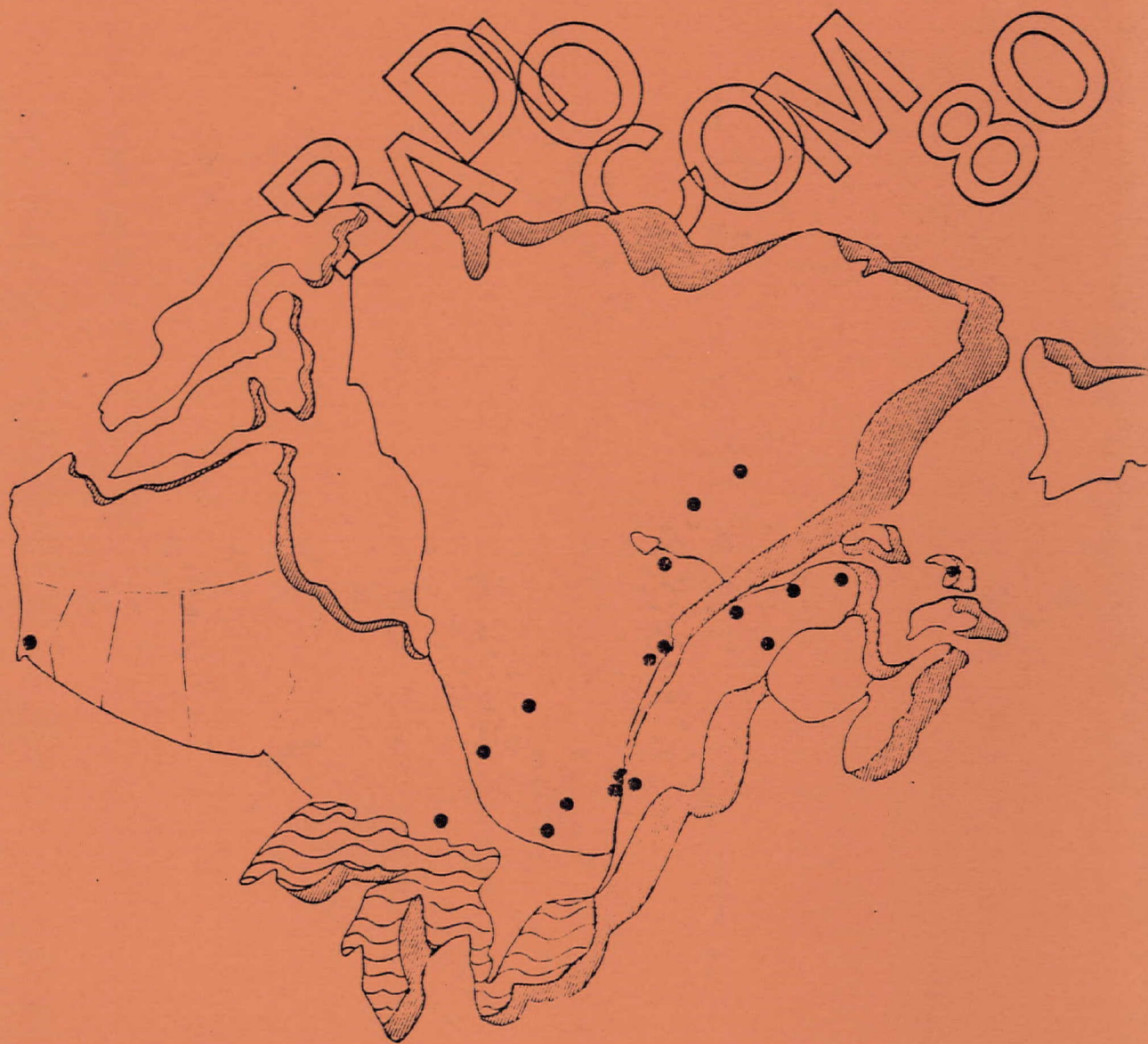


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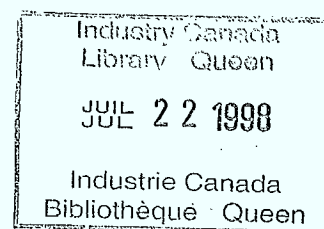
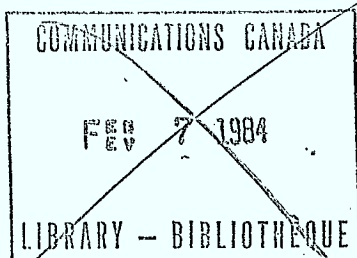
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This study was conducted under the direction
of La Pierre d'Angle enr in collaboration
with Michel Delorme and Roland Duchesne.



For the Broadcasting Policy Division
Broadcasting and Social Policy Branch
Department of Communications

June 15, 1980

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This report is the result of a study carried out for the federal Department of Communications. Messrs Denis LaChance of the Québec Regional Office and David Gillick of the Broadcasting And Social Policy Branch supervised the project.

In writing the report, we turned to a number of people who provided the necessary background information for our work. We should first mention the participation of Mr. Michel Delorme, who travelled throughout Québec in order to gather the relevant information for the report.

We also profited by the openness of the Association des Radios Communautaires du Québec which supported our activities by providing information on the community radio projects in Québec.

The ever competent André Lapointe typed the various rough drafts and Colombe Boudreau illustrated our cover page and typed the final version of the manuscript with enthusiasm and efficiency.

Throughout the territory that we covered, we always met a courteous reception and always found the considerable information provided to be useful and relevant, even though it was not possible to include all our information in the report.

We would also like to thank all the people who worked at the following community television and radio stations:

CFRO-FM, Vancouver Co-operative Radio
CHAI-MF, the community radio in Châteauguay
CHGA-MF, the community radio in the Haute Gatineau
CHIP-MF, the community radio in Pontiac
CHOC-MF, the community radio in Jonquièrre
CIBL-MF, the community radio in East Montreal
CINQ-MF, the radio in downtown Montreal
CIRC-MF, the community radio in Rouyn-Noranda
CJAL-MA, the community radio in in St-Juste, Auclair and Le Jeune
CJRE-MF, the community radio in in the Gaspé
CKLE-MF, the community radio in the Bas St-Laurent
CKRL-MF, Laval Campus FM Inc.

"Diffusion communautaire des Iles", the Magdalen Islands
Community television in Baie St-Paul
Community television in Rivière du Loup.

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1- FORWARD

1- FOREWORD

The initial aim of the authors of this study was first to prepare seven informative, instructional videotapes aimed at workers, promoters and other people active in community radio, and second to make a general interest film that would arouse an awareness of community radio and promote it among various communities as well as the general public.

While this is still our intention, in order for the first stage of our project to take shape, we undertook a written study of the status of community radio in Canada, more specifically in Quebec. This is what we have done and we now offer the results for your appraisal.

In agreeing to carry out this study, we considered certain fringe benefits involved which ultimately motivated our decision.

The decision led to our visiting most of the community radio projects in order to gather comprehensive printed, verbal and visual information. Once this material had been used in our work, it was intended to hand it over to the Association des Radios Communautaires du Québec to serve as a cornerstone for a documentation centre that would be open to any interested parties and useful in terms of any future consultation.

In addition, this approach would enable us to clarify a seemingly confused situation and bring us one step closer to a definition of the phenomenon of community radio.

Finally, it would allow us to submit a series of recommendations to the Government of Canada so as to arouse its interest and encourage it not only to recognize the phenomenon but also, we hope, to begin to identify and take in hand its responsibilities in local programming. This should be pursued, over the short term, by a serious effort to initiate a dialogue.

In our opinion, this study does not fully express the intoxicating, dynamic, sometimes grueling and often frustrating daily pattern involved in commitment to community radio and its development.

However, we believe that the study honestly explores the background, and the setting within which the will and the hopes of community radio broadcasters operate. It is also our opinion that our study reflects the vision and the analysis that these workers have developed of their reality and its attendant problems.

Finally, we wish you pleasant reading ...

2- HIGHLIGHTS

2- HIGHLIGHTS

Ten community radio projects are currently operating in Canada; eight of these are located in Quebec. In the very near future, there will be 15 and in another year perhaps 19. All these community radios broadcast local programming independently over an average of 80 hours per week. Their radio productions are diversified so as to meet the various needs of the listening audience they serve.

Increasingly, community radio is establishing its credentials as a dynamic agent of cultural development for separate neighbourhoods, districts or communities, through the unique variety of local programming such stations provide.

All these communications ventures are set up as non-profit organizations. They are administered by local residents openly and democratically. This type of media outlet is open to the general public, in terms of both production and management.

These radio projects have set up practices to encourage local participation. The approach varies from one group to the other as they must be adapted to the locality that they serve.

Their productions are often educational in nature and process; indeed, the production of radio programming is excellent media training. Community radio stations can therefore be considered as educational tools for a locality.

The small scale of the organizations has allowed a saving in both technical and financial resources. Through strict management, the directors have been able to maximize resource utilization. The high level of efficiency is the result of the high level of motivation of both regular staff and volunteers.

Despite the rapid growth of community broadcasting, provincial and federal government authorities consider it an experimental form. Many government policies, particularly those relating to financing, have yet to be adapted to this new form of airwave utilization.

3. BACKGROUND

3- BACKGROUND

In studying the history of community radio, we must examine the development both of the medium itself and of the new form of management and ownership that it emphasizes.

Radio has been with us for some sixty years. It has passed through a number of stages in its development to reach the level that we know today. Much has been said about the golden age of radio in the Forties and Fifties. The chief characteristics of radio in this period were its openness to its surroundings, its presence in the community as a dynamic, cultural element, its simplicity and its low level of automation, all of which made the medium relatively accessible to most citizens.

Since this golden age, the small stations have been consolidated to form a network. This phenomenon of concentration of the media within huge organizations accompanied by highly automated operations has resulted in the isolation of these media from local communities. At the same time, the technical quality of the AM band has never been satisfactory for isolated regions. Often Canadian daytime listeners were served by only a single station that was inaccessible outside the regional centres; by night, on the other hand, they were invaded by a host of stations from the United States.

Although technological developments in the mid-Thirties had made it possible to offer a new range of frequency modulation service, FM development did not really take off until the Fifties. In their discussions with the CRTC to establish a policy on FM radio in Canada, community groups from the start stressed the importance of assigning a clear, specific function to this band.

"In particular, we would like to see the confusion between AM and FM stations cleared up as soon as possible. You must be aware that several owners are using FM as repeaters for their AM programs. In our view, this waste of the airewaves goes against the public interest and should be stopped.

With its fine precision and weak transmission, FM radio is adapted by its technical position to a local need for radio use. In the past, the small town could not afford the luxury of a local station. The local FM station, a less expensive operation, will enable the community to conduct various experiments in communications ...¹

Thus, at a time when local AM radio became increasingly deficient in terms of content and technical quality, FM community radio was seen as a basic direction in the application of this new service.

Supported by two strong desires - to participate and to communicate - community radio broadcasters drew from experiments in democratizing communications (community television on cable, documents, films). Radio as a medium was more flexible and simpler, and was soon recognized as a tool, accessible to all, that the community could easily control.

1. Exerpt from a brief submitted to the CRTC by the Communications Council, Quebec Region, 1973.

Since the early Seventies, a number of groups have been formed to start up community radio stations.

There follows a brief chronological history of the principal stages in the establishment of a community radio broadcasting service in Quebec.

1971 - QUEBEC CITY

In May, a group of students proposed that a radio be set up on the Laval University Campus. It would broadcast on the FM band and cater to students scattered through the old capital. The students first applied for a licence to operate a university radio station and were granted this in July 1972. Radio Campus Laval FM Inc. went on the air on February 15, 1973. The body was gradually transformed into a community radio and this new direction was approved when the licence was renewed by the CRTC in August 1976.

1972 - MONTREAL

Meanwhile in Montreal, a group of organizers undertook to establish a local downtown radio. On October 21, 1974, Radio Centre-Ville, CINQ-FM, obtained a licence. It went on the air the next January 25.

1972 - KITCHENER-WATERLOO

At the same time, a group of students at the University of Waterloo and Kitchener-Waterloo residents created a non-profit, charitable corporation called Wired World Inc. This organization, concerned with social action and cultural development was frustrated in its attempts to use the community channel on cable to broadcast its videotapes. It decided to channel its efforts to apply for a broadcasting licence to operate a low-power FM station. Wired World Inc. obtained its licence in August 1973 and went on the air in March 1974. CKWR-FM, 98.7 MHz at 202 watts is currently broadcasting as a non-commercial, all volunteer, locally-financed community radio station. Its programming is chiefly multilingual, specialized, religious, news and community affairs and music.

1973 - SAGUENY

A group of teachers, administrators, journalists and businessmen seriously examined the possibility of setting up a community FM station serving the entire Saguenay region.

1973 - VANCOUVER

Two groups concerned with the problem of communications in Vancouver, Neighbourhood Radio and Community Research Service, combined in the fall of 1973 and decided to work together to obtain a broadcasting licence. The Vancouver Co-operative Radio station obtained a licence from the CRTC in May 1974. It was called CFRO-FM and was assigned a frequency of 102.7 MHz. The station began broadcasting in April 1975 and the CRTC renewed its licence in April 1978.

1974 - GASPÉ - TEMISCOUATA - SAGUENAY - JONQUIERE

Spurred on by a near-total absence of local information, the Diffusion Gaspésie group began working to establish a community radio station in the Gaspé.

In Témiscouata, three outlying parishes, St-Juste, Auclair and Le Jeune, felt it essential to acquire an effective means of communication as part of the activities of the agro-lumbering development co-operative. They began the necessary work to establish a community radio station.

In Chicoutimi, CHUT-FM was almost a reality. After numerous campaigns among organizations and individuals in Saguenay, the necessary funds were raised to set up the station.

In Jonquièrre, an offshoot of the CHUT group in Chicoutimi decided to set up a community radio that was better defined in scope and would serve a specific sector. The group wanted to create a type of radio close to the local leadership and aimed specifically at the working class so as to get it involved in programming.

JUNE 1975

CHUT-FM, Chicoutimi's regional community radio, went on the air. At the same time, CHOC-FM, another community radio project, prepared its application for a licence.

1976 - JONQUIERE - RIMOUSKI - ROUYN-NORANDA

CHOC-FM attended a hearing on April 1, 1976. CHUT-MF, Saguenay's community radio, applied to the CRTC to relax its policy on sponsors. The CRTC refused. CHUT ceased operations in early September. In Rimouski, research and experiments on cable radio began as a preliminary to real FM service.

In Rouyn, a group of communications workers conducted a study with a view to establishing a community FM service. They submitted their proposal to the general public.

In Châteauguay, a survey was conducted to ascertain the level of civic information received by citizens in the community.

1977 - A year of activity

- Diffusion Gaspésie obtained an operating licence.
- CHOC in Jonquièrre went on the air.
- Opening of CJAL in Témiscouata, first community station on the AM Band.
- Maisonneuve, Senneterre, Châteauguay, Pontiac and the Magdalen Islands initiated action to obtain a licence to operate a community radio station.
- Rouyn attended hearings.
- An initial meeting of all the representatives of community radios was organized in December at Lévis, to co-ordinate efforts.

1978

- The Rouyn-Noranda radio station obtained its licence in March and went on the air in September.
- Radio Gaspé went on the air in December.
- In Sherbrooke, a group initiated action to set up a radio.
- A second meeting among the representatives of community radios was held in December in Rimouski.

1979

- In March, the community radio group from east Montreal, Radio Maisonneuve, attended a hearing.
- Six other groups attended CRTC hearings in November (Senneterre - Rimouski - Pontiac - Fermont - Châteauguay - Haute Gatineau).
- Radio maisonneuve obtained its licence.
- Representatives of radio, meeting in October in Montreal, decided to establish the Association des radiodiffuseurs communautaires du Québec.
- The community television in Rivière-du-Loup consulted its organization for the purpose of converting to radio. It initiated action to obtain a licence.

1980

- The community radio in Sherbrooke attended hearings.
- The six groups heard in the fall obtained their operating licence.
- The community radio in east Montreal went on the air in April.
- The radios in Rimouski, Châteauguay and the Haute Gatineau expect to go on the air in September, while Fermont and Gagnon are already offering programs to their listeners.

4- SIMILAR LOCAL PROBLEMS

4- SIMILAR LOCAL PROBLEMS

The rapid development of community radio broadcasting also revealed certain deficiencies in our communications system. If citizens' groups decided to undertake tedious procedures in order to obtain the right to operate a station, this was because they were motivated by needs to which the traditional media were not responding. What then was the issue from which the community radios proceeded in developing their objectives?

CIRC, the community radio station in Rouyn, clearly identified the problems in its submission. It made three observations;

"There is no room in the traditional media for community participation or creativity, and we have no real control over these forms of communication."

"There is little local or regional in-depth news, specifically radio news, using resource persons from the community."

"Our community is ill-equipped in communication media that can generate harmonious cultural and social development and encourage exchanges between groups."

The population served by the Bas St-Laurent community radio probably suffered most from problems of print and electronic media concentration, chiefly because of the way it was spread over the vast territory.

The Haute Gatineau radio noted the glaring lack of communication among municipalities within the region. Communication to its fullest extent had never existed.

"We are pitted against a series of network end stations, none of which serve the entire Haute Gatineau region."²

There was little news either, as the newsman, who was also the disk jockey, had to spend more time playing records than covering information. There was generally no coverage of municipal councils, school boards ...

The Magdalen Islands radio still faced the task of setting up an initial service:

"Our archipelago must acquire communication tools capable of reaching the Magdalen islanders, in order to create the necessary consensus for exchanges with the outside world and to encourage local assumption of control. Without denying the importance of outside information, we regret that our area never has a chance to participate in this information and programming."³

A representative of Neighbourhood Radio in Vancouver outlined the premises underlying their application:

"We could be prepared to fill the gap and accept the challenge to do what private broadcasters say they don't want to or can't do if the

airwaves were treated like any other limited resources in this country."⁴

The issue for CJAL radio in Témiscouata was the need to have an information tool to make the public aware of local agro-lumbering development projects.

In the case of Pontiac radio, the isolation of this region from the rest of Quebec and the need to have an initial local station to provide cultural development motivated the organizers to set up a community radio.

In the case of the east Montreal community radio project, the local population had no access either to decision-making structures or to production in the commercial or the State-owned media. The information received was distorted by the interests defended by these networks and the programming offered this population did not take its cultural identity into account.

In general, community radio stations exist to meet local needs. For those communities where information and cultural broadcasts are non-existent, it is necessary to take up the challenge of local programming. These non-profit organizations are attempting to alter relations between listener and broadcaster, to develop more participatory attitudes toward radio operations. Their aim is to counter the negative effects of too great a concentration of business, a high degree of automation in broadcasts, and the attempt to achieve financial profitability as the first criterion in program development. Radio frequencies are considered public property and should accordingly be used with a view to encouraging their sound management, not merely as a tool for consumption.

5. AIMS OF COMMUNITY RADIO

5- AIMS OF COMMUNITY RADIO

Such are the concerns facing the corporations in identifying their objectives.

The objective of CKRL in Quebec City is to contribute to the development of Quebec culture through an original, dynamic concept of FM radio, and to offer critical information while ensuring community participation.

The Bas-St-Laurent community radio project is concerned with
"participating in the promotion and development of our culture identity, encouraging involvement and co-operation among the various development agents, and finally, involving the general public in an analysis of the collective stakes."

For the radio project in the Haute Gatineau, the concern is to
"broadcast a content clearly identified with the region; create a living station adapted to the needs, tastes and concerns of its listeners; encourage the greatest use of the talent, experience and imaginative, creative and productive resources of the members of the community; and finally, participate actively in the development of a regional conscience."

The Gaspé radio group has similar objectives: to promote access to, faster development of collective ownership of and encourage citizen participation in the communication media.

The community radio station in Rouyn is intended to serve as a tool of information, education and entertainment that will be accessible to all. CIRC directors identified specific objectives: to build up local resources using the radio, to encourage cultural creation and, finally, to preserve the radio from any dependence on special groups through collective management.

CHAI, Châteauguay's community radio, was born in a suburban area. It sees the medium as a tool to be used in re-appropriation and in encouraging development of a local identity.

For CHOC, the community radio station in Jonquière with its working-class population, the medium should be accessible to workers and to the underprivileged classes; it should make the population aware of the concrete problems of the area; and finally, it should offer a platform for those with rights to defend or to claim.

CINQ, the community radio in downtown Montreal, is concerned with serving as an instrument of communication that will meet the interests and needs of the multi-ethnic population that it serves. More specifically, CINQ aims to ensure that the public participate in the community radio and to inform the public of the common concerns of local citizens, to serve as an education tool, and finally, to facilitate the integration of ethnic minorities into the Francophone, Québécois majority.

In the case of CIBL radio Maisonneuve, the corporation has vowed to defend the special socio-economic and cultural interests of the local population by encouraging social, political and cultural change. By broadcasting authentic critical and analytical information, the radio hopes to give rise to action and involvement, leading to unity. The corporation expects to be continually recruiting from among its local citizens and groups, in order to ensure that it

remains dynamic and representative. Finally, the corporation sees itself as a meeting place for the channeling of expressions of popular culture.

If we were to summarize these objectives in a few words, it might be said that the object of the community radios is to serve as tools of social communication under the control of the communities that they serve.

6. DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNITY RADIO

6- DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNITY RADIO

Government authorities, the CRTC at the federal level, and the Service du développement des médias in Quebec have developed a definition of community radio.

In ruling 80-1982, the CRTC defined a community station as follows:

"A station owned and controlled by a non-profit organization whose structure allows members of the community in general to be shareholders and to participate in the management, operations and programming."

In its 1975 policy statement, the Commission considered that

"Community and student radio is an experimental form of radio".

The Quebec Department of Communications has proposed the following definition:

"A company in communications for social purposes, managed and supported by the active, formal participation of the local population."

A number of common features become apparent and may be applied to all community radios.

They are independent; they are non-profit organizations in the sense that they are more concerned with viability than with financial profitability; they are publicly or collectively owned; they share an ideal of participation and encourage volunteer work at all levels of the organization, including in production, management, financing and administration. Finally, they have a democratic structure and are open to varying degrees, that is, they are accessible to all members or only to active members.

They are still pluralistic, with a special tendency toward fringe groups. The touchstone is access to the airwaves for those who could not otherwise obtain it. They seek a critical approach to information and would like to be defined as an educational and sociocultural agent in the service of the forces of change.

7. INPUT: RESOURCES

7.1 HUMAN

7.2 TECHNICAL

7.3 FINANCIAL

To carry out their various mandates, what resources are available to community radios? This will be the subject of our study in this chapter.

7.1 Human resources and internal organization

7.2 Technical resources

7.3 Financial resources

7.1 Human resources

Community radio involves two types of human resources: volunteers and regular employees.

7.1.1 Volunteers

Volunteer participation represents the most important element in the labour organization of a community radio project. It represents both an objective, democratization, and a necessity, the need to be financially viable.

Volunteers at a community radio station perform production and management duties. The proportion of work accomplished by regular staff and by volunteers varies from one station to another, depending on local human resources and the financial resources of the station.

On the question of management, station managers (members of the board of directors and of the various committees) are always elected at a general meeting of members. These officials are not paid for their work. Membership is open to the public but may involve certain conditions, such as a paying a fee or actually signing up as an active volunteer in the corporation, before recognition as a member is granted.

There is another area of participation on the production side. Here again, the proportion of programs prepared by volunteers varies from one station to another. In certain cases, volunteers prepare all the programs (CFRO, CKRL, CINQ); the regular employees then perform the clerical work and provide training. In other cases, the volunteers are responsible for a significant part of the broadcasting; they may produce musical and feature programs, and news and educational broadcasts.

Finally, especially in the case of the top stations, volunteers play a minor role as the revenues from advertising are enough to pay for a larger staff.

7.1.2. Regular Staff

Community radio stations generally employ between three and eight regular staff members. Certain stations, radio CJAL and CHOC included, can only count on one or two permanent employees. They work in administration, technical operations, production and training. The salaries they receive are generally lower than those paid by private or State-owned radios.

The permanent employees are involved in the decisions made and directions taken by the directors. They generally elect representatives to a board of directors.

7.1.3. Organizations

Some radio stations have made space for community organizations in their management and production.

In such cases, they are automatically members of the radio and delegate representatives to the board. They may also assume responsibility for special programs.

7.1.4. Internal Organization

Community radio licensees are small, collectively owned businesses. Three features of the internal organization of these businesses may be identified:

- all users, listeners, producers and organizations are responsible for managing the business.
- management methods are flexible and can be adapted to special local conditions to encourage the emergence of a creative climate.
- the organizations are committed to staying small in size and to preserving their independence in managing the medium.

The community radio stations have members who meet at a general meeting in which a board of directors and sometimes finance, programming, information and technical committees are elected.

All the projects have adopted similar internal regulations. In Quebec, they are all governed by Part Three of the Companies Act as a non-profit organization.

7.2 Technical resources

Most of the radio stations have managed to produce continuous local programming on a limited budget. Ever anxious to operate modestly but to acquire reliable tools, the community radios have done a good job of administering the limited financial resources available.

Generally, the community radios have a broadcasting studio, a recording studio and a production room, to meet FM broadcasting standards. As a rule, the boards of directors have chosen to make a modest investment in equipment, as various acquisitions become necessary.

7.3 Financial resources

The community radios have managed to get by with surprisingly limited financial resources, which come from one of the three following sources:

- from the local community, through subscriptions, donations and fund-raising activities;

- from the sale of advertising spots;
- from the State through job creation programs or through assistance in developing and producing educational programs. In Quebec, the Department of Communications has established a support program for the community media.

The board of directors have tried to develop various sources of financing in order to maintain balance and independence. But after several years experience, it is clear to all that the quest for financial viability combined with the pursuit of lofty social goals has produced a number of dilemmas and apparent contradictions. This contributes to heavy additional burdens imposed on the administrative structures.

The majority of the financial resources (80 to 90 per cent) go to pay the regular staff. The rest is allocated for purchasing production material and paying general administration expenses.

It is difficult to compare the various annual radio budgets. The smaller stations broadcasting between 50 and 70 hours weekly have a budget of \$40,000 to \$50,000, while those that broadcast over 100 hours generally have a budget between \$100,000 and \$140,000.

Community radio stations are searching for stable sources of financing. The CRTC has stated that radios must survive essentially on local resources, prestige sponsors and provincial government support. On the other hand, the Government of Quebec has stated on several occasions that the community radios must quickly become self-financing from local resources and from advertising. After their initial starting-up and consolidation period, they must stop depending on government support. From past experience in selling prestige advertising, it is clear that restrictive policies in broadcasting advertising represent a nearly insurmountable handicap for radios, especially for those in small communities. The CRTC policy is openly criticized by the community radios which have on more than one occasion demanded that it be relaxed. It is difficult to accept the concept of placing the entire burden on the community and depending on volunteer and financial participation.

The financial problem facing community radio stations is at the core of the concerns of everyone involved in local programming.

8- OUTPUT: RESULTS

8- OUTPUT: RESULTS

At this point, it is important to study the results obtained after so much effort. What is the output? This is what we will attempt to assess in the following chapter. We will consider four aspects:

8.1 Local involvement

8.2 Local programming

8.3 Information

8.4 Cultural and education productions

8.1 Local involvement

At present, the community radio stations have high priority and enjoy the highest rate of citizen participation in the media sector. Nearly 10,000 persons are members of a community group. Over 1,200 are active members and share responsibilities for programming, management and orientation. An in-depth study of the composition of the boards of directors clearly shows that communities have taken charge of their radio. By the same token, the presence of mere citizens on the programming committee, the finance committee or the technical committee has had the effect of giving community radio a broad popular base. In most cases, programming is carried out chiefly by local people who volunteer their services, depending on their interests and commitments in the community.

This openness to the community has had an immediate impact. It has favoured the emergence of resource persons capable of managing a station and presenting diversified programming. Unlike the State-owned or private, profit-making radio under the control of small groups of government officials or private owners, community radio has opened broadcasting doors to the general public. It has chosen to share responsibilities among local citizens and organizations. It attempts to deprofessionalize and deprivatize a highly social and public activity: communication.

Community radio, through its operations, has created a new cultural vitality in the small communities. In point of fact, having to share programming involves exchanges and consideration of needs; a consensus must be established. These radio stations have therefore rapidly become meeting places where ideas can be exchanged and solidarity expressed. They have also become a tool for training and development. They leave a space for personal initiative and imagination, leading to a collective creativity that is constantly being renewed.

This new contribution also has a secondary effect. It has produced competition in communities where there was previously only one basic service. Private radio, when it was the only broadcaster, answered the general needs of its audience. It always tried to reach the broadest sector of the public and never singled out the special needs of any one group.

By inviting special groups within the community (young people, senior citizens, women, workers, Indians, ethnic minorities) to produce programs, the community radios have created special publics. They have developed a radio style whose basic aim is to satisfy the needs of a particular audience. At the same time, the community radios invite other groups to pay attention to the news and tastes of these specific audiences, thereby encouraging a horizontal system of communications within the community between individuals and groups. This system is essential for a community that wants to take responsibility for itself.

Accordingly, community radio stations have had the immediate effect of training resource persons, arousing competition among the other radio services, and finally, provoking or encouraging a new sociocultural vitality.

8.2 Local programming

Community stations give their listeners abundant, diversified programming. Broadcasting an average of 80 hours per week, the radios try to meet the various needs of their audiences.

We lack the means to provide an account of all the productions presented along with an overall statistical view. But in general, the radio programming provided is produced 100 per cent locally. There may be at most one or two hours of non-local programming as a result of exchanges with other radios. This local programming generally contains 10 to 30 per cent of feature broadcasting (news, public affairs, documentaries, etc). Musical programs contain a majority (over 70 per cent) of Canadian content. Increasingly, the radios are broadcasting local or regional musical productions, which may account for up to five per cent of their programming.

All the community radio stations have a programming committee whose duties include planning the station's program schedule. The following is a long excerpt from a report by one such committee. It gives an idea of the scope and complexity of the work done and identifies the considerable ramifications of the overall process in which such a committee is involved.

"Since the last meeting, the programming committee has held an average of one meeting per week - we say "an average" because there were many weeks in which we met twice.

The chief functions of the programming committee are: 1) to develop programs based on the objectives of the station; 2) to receive broadcasting projects; 3) to broadcast the program; 4) to ensure that the policy of prestige sponsorship is respected; and to be responsible for the material broadcast. These functions may be grouped under three headings: technical activities, discussions of theory, and the Programming Committee as a Jack-of-all-trades.

At first sight, one might think that preparing a program schedule was a simple exercise in filling in spaces. Certainly, this is what we thought when we first served on a Programming Committee a year ago. However, when we started to work we soon realized that things were not so simple and that, because our radio was

a democratic organization based on the participation of its members, we had to go beyond simply blocking in spaces. We had to know how to cook, as it were, and learned by trial and error how to mix the various ingredients, such as the regular employees, the organizations, the listener-producers, time constraints, the persons available, the problem of operating within the often restrictive definitions of the CRTC, advertising, sundry needs, etc.

Four programs were developed during this period of activity. Each required that the committee become involved in advertising, circulate proposed schedules, conduct surveys, interview those concerned, select projects, receive projects from the regular employees, study the program schedule of the regular employees, draw up a program schedule for the listener-producers, send out notices of acceptance and rejection, follow up the programs, evaluate the programs under probation, take action.

A total of over 75 program proposals were studied. Few of them were rejected outright; it was often a conflict in time-slots or resources available that prevented them from being included in the program schedule. The Programming Committee, by its nature, is at the heart of any discussion of the aims of the radio. The explanation for this is simple: in considering a program proposal, essential questions such as "does this proposal ultimately respect the station's objectives?" arise. From the start, the Programming Committee realized that it had to assume the role of watchdog. Long hours were spent in meetings discussing ways of applying the educational, information and entertainment objectives of the radio. Accordingly, six months after its formation, the Programming Committee asked the following question: should community radio operations measure their success in terms of total broadcasting hours, or should they be more concerned with the quality of programming whose value lies in giving concrete form to the genuine contribution of the volunteers and regular staff in achieving the objectives of the station.

The answer showed that our concern was with transforming the following overall objectives into action: promotion of local, Québécois and Francophone culture, promotion of creative local initiatives and concern with participation in local cultural and social leadership.

On the question of information, our aim was to offer a critical overview of local events and to help improve the information media available to the community.

In terms of education, we set out to demystify radio broadcasting; to offer training in using the medium and to offer educational programming. In our view, entertainment was less important and should be developed with an educational slant. Having established our priorities, we do not yet have the means to set in motion the practical ways of achieving our aims. We hope to organize a discussion of these priorities in which all forms of radio involvement can be expressed.

We also considered the role of the volunteers. We believe that they are the source of energy necessary to carry on radio activities. We accordingly thought it essential to define a mechanism for involving volunteers in stations. There is a long road to travel from their apparent role as a stopgap to one as an active member in building up the radio station. It was necessary to change our

attitudes, to abolish distinctions between the regular employees' and the volunteers' schedules, to define accurately a framework within which they could learn their work more effectively, to find time in the Policy Committee's schedule for meetings with all the listener-producers. We are just beginning to achieve these aims. We believe that it is important to develop this sector of radio to the fullest, as it is the source of future ideas, projects, new forces to ensure that the quality of our radio continues to improve."*

Only after studying the balance sheet of a programming committee does one realize how much energy is required to set up a local program. This exercise can only have beneficial effects on the radio services offered in small communities.

8.3 Information

Local and community news is one important aspect of programming. At the beginning of our report, we examined the deficiencies of other radio stations in this regard. Community radios, however, devote a large part of their energies to meeting the information needs of their locality.

One concern common to all radio stations is how to increase the number of programmers so that the programming is fully developed. A number of radio stations are continually training volunteer local programmers and news reporters (from neighbourhood parishes or community groups). This network of programmers and reporters should become the chief component of the news services organization over the medium term.

Community radio projects have generally developed an information policy adapted to their surroundings.

"Whether their concern is "to provide complete information, illustrating it with events from local, everyday life" or "to offer critical information to improve the quality of local life" the stations have become dynamic tools, sources of information for the communities. They also provide community news, a real community service, documentaries and analyses prepared with the help of resource persons from the community and referring to local reality, and finally, local news treated in an original manner.

Community groups have found a tool with which they can finally take charge and broadcast their information. They are exercising a basic right to complete, diversified, pluralistic information".*

Through the news services that they have established, the community radios have shown themselves to be an important element within the community.

* Report to the CIRC-MF programming committee, Nov. 79

* CKRL Quebec City

8.4 Cultural and educational production

One other significant activity sector is that of culture and educational production.

The stations regularly schedule cultural programs produced in cooperation with local authors and composers. In so doing, they reveal to the entire community resources previously totally ignored by the so-called "cultural industry". The radios have introduced singers, poets, dramatists and writers through their recordings. The community stations are an important aspect of culture. Recently they have begun exchanging local productions with one another in order to enhance the significance of this type of broadcast in their programming.

At the same time, the community stations see themselves as an educational tool for the community, a sort of "open school with several thousand students sitting in on lectures". This educational role is strengthened through the presentation of "educational" broadcasts which may be designed for specific audiences or simply aimed at the general listening public. The broadcasts, which are often produced with the co-operation of particular organizations, touch on all aspects of community life: health, consumer affairs, economics, labour, housing, and so forth. Further, the radios have clarified their educational orientation in a paper submitted by the community radio in East Montreal. The following educational objectives were identified:

1. To promote the social, economic and cultural cohesion and organization of our community;
2. To provide a valid alternative to the monopoly on news and education;
3. To transform the audience's relationship with the medium, from an instrument of entertainment or propaganda to a tool of communication.*

CIBL has demonstrated the self-education methods suitable for community radio. These mechanisms include the involvement of the audience in the broadcasts themselves, their production and the station management, the training of radio users in technical procedures and animation, and, finally, the use of trainees.

The radios have given considerable thought to the problem of defining educational policy, not only in the production of educational programs but also in the information and entertainment sectors.

This completes our sketch of community radio. In the final section of our report, we will examine the action that should be taken by the federal government to support the efforts of community groups in local programming.

* CIBL paper on educational radio, Nov 79

9- ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:
RECOMMENDATIONS

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RECOMMENDATIONS

In this document we have concentrated on the state of community radio; we have excluded from our study northern, institutional and student radio and have focussed only on independent, community-operated radio stations.

Community radio projects are multiplying faster in Quebec than elsewhere. There are only two urban community radio stations in the rest of Canada - one in Kitchener, Ontario and the other in Vancouver, British Columbia. The latter is in considerable difficulty; in our opinion, it is in greater trouble than are the Quebec stations. It operates with a minimal staff (2-1/2 salaries) and now must move its antenna and acquire new technical equipment. It receives no special support from the provincial government and has no time to give serious attention to programming, as it is torn between day-to-day administration, the need to train its volunteers and the constant search for financing.

Although the Quebec stations have been encouraged by a support program from the Quebec Department of Communications, they also must struggle from one day to the next to stay on the air. In short, all the Canadian community radio stations are plagued by financial concerns; their energy and effort, their imagination and will are constantly being diverted to financing, often to the detriment of programming and local information. Nevertheless, in our opinion community radio provides relief and represents the only hope for local programming* which is presently losing momentum.

For, as everyone knows, state and private radios have moved away from local programming through a concern for quality and specialization or savings and profit.

In our view, local programming needs new blood and community radios can provide this, through their roots, their open democratic structure, their participatory approach and their energy.

We therefore conclude with the following recommendations:

1. As has been done in Australia, Canada should grant special recognition to a third sector in the over-all broadcasting system. Developing both separate from - and parallel to - private and state radio, it would be called community radio. By definition, it would be a local, independent, non-profit, publicly or collectively owned organization.

* "Local" should mean prepared right in the studio by the station itself; "local" may also mean, produced by members of the community; "local" can also mean produced on the subject of people and events within the community. In short, any programming, the greater part of which the local station has not produced, should not be considered local, even though it may be of general interest**.

** By general interest, we mean general local interest, as experience has shown that general interest is diluted somewhat when it is regional or national rather than local.

2. Canada should first formally guarantee all Canadian communities access to a non-commercial radio frequency. It is essential that these communities be given the benefit of such potential, just as they are already enjoying the right to water.
3. Canada should take the necessary action to have the CRTC change its requirements for community radio licensees in the matter of prestige sponsorship. These stations should have access to advertising sales, not to make them profitable, but to ensure that they are financially viable.
4. Canada should co-ordinate the efforts of the various government departments to encourage the rapid expansion and development of local programming and production. As an example, the federal Department of Communications could provide support on the technical side and for research and information; the Secretary of State could support for public participation; the Canada Council could support local creative efforts. The departments of Immigration, Manpower and Regional and Economic Expansion could provide assistance for job creation and vocational training.

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