

Institution: University of Sheffield		
Unit of Assessment: D-34 Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management		
Title of case study: Empowering Women through Radio in the Sahel, Africa		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2015–2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Emma Heywood	Lecturer in Journalism, Politics and Communication	2017–now
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2018–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Widespread gender inequality is one of the prevailing issues affecting Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso. Through a novel mixed-methods approach, Sheffield research into female voice and representation in radio programming has demonstrated how radio can improve women's rights and empowerment. Dozens of radio stations in Niger have implemented Heywood's research-based recommendations, changing the policies and practices of radio studios, professionals, media experts, and women's associations. As a result, female listeners now have access to accurate and targeted gender-related information and to newly created listening associations with saving clubs, resulting in financial empowerment and education opportunities for themselves and their daughters. The success of this project has led to its expansion into Mali and the methodology has most recently been applied to tackle the spread of COVID-related misinformation in Burkina Faso.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>In Niger, one of the world's poorest countries, women suffer from widespread gender inequality with child marriage, low literacy rates, polygamy, and gender-based violence. Unaffordable transportation costs, early marriage (76%), domestic chores, and the prioritisation of male siblings' education make secondary school inaccessible for most girls (only 15.9% complete). This further perpetuates disempowerment amongst future generations of women. Radio, which shapes cultural narratives and behaviours, is a particularly important source of information in Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso as it is cheap, reaches marginalised communities, those with low literacy, no access to electricity and can be broadcast in local languages.</p> <p>Existing socio-cultural constraints mean that not only are certain topics not discussed, be it in society or via radio because they are considered taboo, but many women are not permitted to attend mixed local radio listening groups meaning their access to information is severely restricted [R1]. Broadcasts contain unintentional biases (terms used, stereotypes, representations of women, geographical biases) and the few women-related subjects that are approached in radio are frequently not mainstreamed [R2]. Heywood's research showed that radio can exert significant influence on behaviour and thinking in society [R3 and R4], with the potential to allow women a greater voice in the prevailing patriarchal and traditional society in Niger.</p> <p>Heywood's research questions the alignment, if any, between the information provided by radios, and that desired by listeners, advised by civil society, and contained within actual broadcasts. The research adopts a novel, holistic, mixed-methods approach with strong participatory engagement from international and in-country stakeholders at all levels, including strategic partners, media organisations, civil society leaders, radio listeners, communities,</p>		

donors, and academics. This approach includes listener focus groups before and after a series of women-related programmes, a content analysis of the broadcasts, and a series of knowledge exchange workshops with civil society and media experts. Recommendations for improvements are then provided through direct interventions with women's groups, via workshops on-site and through general end-of-project reports [R5].

Heywood identified significant non-alignment in the definitions of female empowerment in Niger [R4] amongst listeners, CSOs and broadcasters. The research highlighted topics to be covered by radio to bring together these groups' differing understandings of female leadership, participation in politics, education, associations, employment, and finance. Heywood's research highlights concerns around the level of production process and the lack of gender-specific training. She revealed there was scant awareness amongst radio (editors and journalists) about the manner in which they represent women or the geographical bias in their output, showing that [R2]:

- Radio is not fully responding to editorial needs of male and female listeners.
- Radio sometimes employs negative terms, images, and stereotypes to represent women.
- Male presence on broadcasts far outweighs female presence, both regarding their physical attendance and airtime.
- Geographical references in broadcasts are not equal (certain large cities, including the capital, dominate with smaller, more remote towns being side-lined along with their populations).
- Socio-cultural influences result in many women having limited access to information.
- Perceptions of female empowerment differ greatly amongst sectors in society.

They had no evidence on which to base the gender-specific training. They also do not conduct sufficiently detailed listener profiling resulting in differences in editorial priorities.

Her recommendations on how to tackle these issues include:

- Conduct regular and detailed listener profiling to close the gap in editorial priorities. This must also cover a broad spectrum of listeners (older/younger; male/female, ethnicities...).
- Increase awareness amongst journalists and presenters about the positive use and impact of certain rhetorical and lexical tools.
- Recognise the gap between both the numbers of appearances of (male/female) guests and presenters and their airtime.
- Pay greater attention to geographical references within programmes. This can be achieved by systematically checking not only location of reports, but also that geographical information is repeated or at least clearly stated.
- Encouraging presenters to ask more and better targeted, follow up-questions during debates to enable guest responses to be better structured.
- Highlight examples of women from less privileged positions and their paths to empowerment.

These issues prevail in neighbouring countries; Niger is not unique. The adoption of this methodology has led to the development and funding by UKRI GCRF/ESRC of a large-scale comparative analysis of radio and women's empowerment in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso and also an urgent-response COVID-19 project amongst internally displaced persons in Burkina Faso financed by Elhra [R6].

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

- R1.** Heywood, E., & Tomlinson, M. (2019). The contribution of citizen views to understanding women's empowerment as a process of change: the case of Niger. *Feminist Media Studies*, 20(5), 713–729. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2019.1642230>
- R2.** Heywood, E. (2020). Radio Journalism and Women's Empowerment in Niger. *Journalism Studies*, 21(10), 1344–1362. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670x.2020.1745668>
- R3.** Heywood, E. (2018). The work of women's NGOs on commercial radio in the West Bank: Frustrations and shortcomings. *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media*, 16(1), 59–75. https://doi.org/10.1386/rjao.16.1.59_1
- R4.** Heywood, E. (2018). Increasing female participation in municipal elections via the use of local radio in conflict-affected settings: The case of the West Bank Municipal elections 2017. *Journalism*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918820752>.
- R5.** Heywood, E., & Harding, S.-A. (2020). "If you've done a good job, it's as if you've never existed": Translators on translation in development projects in the Sahel. *Translation Studies*, 14(1), 18–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14781700.2020.1749122>
- R6.** Heywood, E., Ivey, B., & Meuter, S. (2020). Evaluating academic and media nongovernmental organization partnerships for participatory data gathering. *International Journal of Market Research*, 63(1), 43–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470785320948014>

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

Heywood's work has shaped the practices of Fondation Hironnelle (FH), the Swiss-based media development organisation globally known and respected for providing independent, credible and impartial information in war-affected countries, post-conflict areas, humanitarian crises, and societies in democratic transition. FH, which supports 110 partner radios in Niger and Mali, included Heywood's recommendations in their central policy documents and in the everyday work conducted by the radio studios and radios they operate globally. The impact of Heywood's research has benefited media organisations, journalists, civil society, and the lives of radio listeners and communities, particularly women and their families, in Niger and Mali.

Impact on radio output and programming - Increasing awareness of gender inequalities and women's participation in Studio Kalangou, Niger and Studio Tamani, Mali

Studio Kalangou (SK), a radio studio in Niger created and run by FH, reaches 10 million people countrywide (60% of the population) [S1] and affects many lives through local and community-based radio partnerships. Heywood's recommendations for SK's operations in April 2018 were incorporated by FH in autumn 2019, including:

- Creation of a female-only team of journalists giving voice to the women, underrepresented in broadcast media. One of the producers in the newly formed team said: "Working in the women's team has changed my way of thinking and working, and I would say that it is the same for the other members" [S2]. Another added: "My journalistic skills have improved a lot [...]. I've been able to observe that gender issues are very present and I find that since the women's team has been in existence, women's programmes have evolved a lot. I welcome this change" [S2].
- A newly scheduled weekly 'Woman's Hour' programme targeting women-related topics aimed at all of society increasing the transformative nature of broadcasts. One of its listeners said: "This initiative is a great opportunity for women to bring their opinion in the current approach of our society, especially since today women are the most vulnerable layer" [S3].

- Employment of a monitoring officer to continue monitoring SK's programmes based on the research findings, contributing to local employment [S3].

SK has committed to continue integrating Heywood's recommendations into its guidelines and the ongoing training of its 25 in-house staff and journalists and those working at its 41 partner radios throughout Niger [S3].

Community impact at two levels

1) Village level - Creating a new forum for increasing awareness, education, and financial independence amongst women and girls within the community

Through participating in Heywood's focus groups, women in Koira Tegui were inspired to create a women-only listening association at FH's partner, Radio Scout, which receives and broadcasts news from SK. In this particularly deprived district of Niamey, 43% of the local population are listeners, half of whom are women [S1]; however, Radio Scout's female listeners were not permitted by their husbands to attend the associated mixed listening groups because men were present. The radio director emphasised that after working with Heywood, the women *"understood the advantages of listening to these programmes and this encouraged them to create the listening group. The women listen to the programmes and discuss them in order to bring about changes in their local area. Once they return home, they will take what they have learned and continue their discussions with the other members of their households"* [S4], thus disseminating new information even further amongst multiple generations. The group provides a space to discuss pertinent topics such as female education and domestic violence, and has helped to connect members with NGOs specialising in these issues. In turn, the group also provides feedback to Radio Scout, encouraging these women's participation in debates on national and local issues.

In addition to functioning as a forum for the exchange of news and ideas, the membership fees from the 40-member (and growing) association are used as a micro-credit bank, allowing women to take small business loans and use the income to send their children to school, particularly their daughters [S4], thus impacting future generations of women. This association is expanding significantly and has developed nine sub-associations in local districts, extending these impacts even further.

2) Expert and policy making level - Increasing female participation in politics and focus on gender issues in media

APAC, the Women Professionals in Media Association in Niger, broadened the reach of the research's recommendations through a media assessment day in April 2019. Media and gender policy-making experts from Niger attended the workshop, which has helped Nigerien journalists ensure their output is gender-sensitive and gender-transformative. Furthermore, this is raising awareness of women and their activities throughout society. The President of APAC-Niger, confirms that: *"Since sharing Dr Heywood's research, several productions have begun to promote a greater participation of women in their communities and in the country."* As a result of this greater awareness and changes in programming, she has observed changes in:

- The reorganisation of APAC to include a monitoring and alert mission on gender issues at the Women and Media Observatory.
- Women have become more involved in politics, including a strong mobilisation in the National Assembly in December 2019.
- Debates have been 'feminised' in media productions such as Dounia TV, Niger 24, Canal 3, and RTT, and programmes such as Visage de femmes de Bonferey and Espace Femmes de Studio Kalangou talk about women's issues [S5].

The project was replicated in Mali through Studio Tamani (ST) in April 2019-March 2020. With 73 partner radio stations and two partner televisions, ST's audience covers over 13 million people, more than half of Mali's population [S1]. A workshop organised by Heywood in April

2019 engaged experts from national and local media, policy-making bodies, CSOs, NGOs, and international consulates and embassies. Feedback showed that 100% of participants found the session useful, while many male and female participants expressed that they felt enlightened regarding the issue of women's independence as a result and reinforced their position on the fact that women have the right to economic and social empowerment [S6].

Impact on COVID-related radio outputs targeting internally displaced people (IDP) in Burkina Faso

Heywood's most recent Elrha-funded project in Burkina Faso furthered the benefit of the research to different populations in different geographic areas in different contexts. There are roughly 1.2 million IDPs in Burkina Faso (approximately 5% of the total population). This project aims to tackle the spread of misinformation related to COVID-19 and provide visibility to otherwise marginalised IDPs by ensuring radio content is both factual and something people will want to listen to, while promoting IDP representation within these broadcasts. So far, Heywood has presented a series of recommendations to Le Studio Yafa, a studio launched in 2019 targeting 5.8 million listeners aged 15-64 (20% of Burkina Faso's population). Studio Yafa has taken action by:

- Alternating between male and female interviewers on their programmes, to address the imbalance in gender representation identified by Heywood.
- Producing 10 live question-and-answer programmes during which a doctor and public health specialist responds directly to IDPs' questions.
- Rebroadcasting previous programmes addressing Covid symptoms and fact-checking rumoured remedies. These programmes will eventually address other diseases commonly afflicting IDPs.
- Continuing broadcasting the sketch show 'Momo et Nafou' This programme was identified by Heywood as an opportunity to follow the widely used and proven principles of education-entertainment theory.
- Investigating the inclusion of more Burkinabe or West African scientific experts, rather than just those from the 'Global North'.

Executives at Studio Yafa have stated that *"Dr. Heywood's research insights have helped us identify mechanisms to ensure our programming is factual, entertaining, and provides a voice to marginalised groups such as women and IDPs. Coronavirus is only one small part of the problems facing IDPs... but using the recommendations from Dr Heywood we hope to provide better information to these groups in all areas of their lives beyond the pandemic."* [S7]

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

- S1.** Fondation Hirondelle website. Niger project page (<https://bit.ly/3rUANCh>); Mali project page (<https://bit.ly/3vrHepp>).
- S2.** Emails (in French) from Nigerien journalists working on Studio Kalangou's Woman's Hour Show.
- S3.** General Director of Fondation Hirondelle, testimonial letter.
- S4.** Video testimonials (3) from the director of Radio Scout to corroborate impact claims about women's listening group in Koira Tegui, Niger - <https://www.femmepowermentafrique.com/video> (2 videos) <http://bit.ly/2OS9As4>
- S5.** President of APAC-Niger, testimonial letter
- S6.** Feedback from April workshops, Niger and Mali 2019 (in French) spreadsheet + scan of the feedback forms
- S7.** Testimonial and listener figures from Studio Yafa executives