

Research Summary

Promoting good governance in Nigeria



Summary

- In Nigeria, BBC Media Action has provided ongoing technical training to local radio partner stations over a four-year period, as part of the USAID-funded Media Support For Strengthening Advocacy, Good Governance And Empowerment (MESSAGE) project.
- In the regions studied, 13 million people were estimated to have listened to partner stations working with BBC Media Action in the past 12 months.
- TV and radio stations, including partner stations working with BBC Media Action, were reported as the main source of information for elections (62%) and other major issues of concern (64%). Listeners of partner stations were more likely to report being informed about election issues (81%) and political parties (72%) in the 2011 national election than listeners of other non-partner stations (76% and 65% respectively).



However, very few listeners and viewers (8%) had phoned or sent an SMS to a programme on the radio or TV, suggesting that there is a need for stations to improve audience involvement. This area requires further development, in order for the programmes to be responsive to issues of public concern, and to provide a mechanism for listeners to ask questions of public officials.

Context

Nigeria is a country that has had difficulty ensuring public officials are held accountable for decisions they have made, and in which there have been low levels of public involvement in the political process. In part, this has occurred due to low levels of capability within the media sector to produce programmes that encourage public debate and report on government decision making. Within the regions covered by this study, 95% of Nigerians have access to radio or TV. Therefore providing training to the media sector to help them present governance related material in an accessible format is likely to be an effective method of re-engaging citizens with the political process, and to hold public officials accountable for their decisions.

The project

With funding from USAID, BBC Media Action contributed to USAID's Just And Democratic Governance program in Nigeria through the MESSAGE project. By working with a select number of partner stations to improve their capacity to report on governance matters, this project aimed to increase public involvement and knowledge of governance issues. BBC Media Action provided a number of media development activities including technical training, as well as continuing to support the production of a long-running and popular English-language radio drama called *Story Story*.

Research methodology

Repeating similar studies carried out in 2010 and 2011, a survey took place in May and June 2012 covering eight states (out of a possible 37) in Nigeria. In total, 2,015 respondents between the ages of 18 and 64 took part, covering both urban and rural regions. This survey was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the MESSAGE project and shifts in audience knowledge of key governance issues.

Findings

Local partner stations working in partnership with BBC Media Action were found to reach a large number of listeners in the eight project states, reaching approximately 13 million people in the last twelve months. For most people surveyed, the media was their most important source of information regarding political issues such as elections (62%). Importantly, listeners to partner stations were more likely to report being informed about the 2011 national elections (81%) than were listeners to non-partner stations (76%). However, very few people reported directly engaging with the media, by phoning or sending an SMS to a particular programme, and this decreased over the course of the project in terms of audience members' willingness to engage directly with the media regarding governance issues (14% in 2010 compared with 8% in 2012).

Implications



Overall, findings suggest that the media (including TV and radio) continues to serve as the main source of information regarding governance issues, and that listeners to MESSAGE partner stations felt better informed about these issues than listeners to non-partner stations.

Therefore, working in partnership with media organisations is an effective method for increasing the public's knowledge of political issues, and engaging the public in the political process..

However, one area that stations need to work on in the future is developing programmes and methods of communication which encourage

listeners to directly engage with the media. This would enable the public to use the media as a vehicle to communicate their views with the government.

Contact

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