

# **Makutano Junction mid term review – narrative report**

Prepared for DFID CRD

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## Executive summary

**Makutano Junction is a popular television drama set in a fictitious Kenyan village, shown on prime time in Kenya and Uganda. It has established a regular audience of 6 million in Kenya and 2 million in Uganda, and successfully mixes entertainment and education.** Series 7 is currently being shot.

**MJ is an extremely well run programme which represents very good value for money. Its purpose is to “enhance poor people’s livelihoods through access to, and use of, research information through an educational television drama”.** Audience research suggests that the issues covered by the show have a strong impact on its target audience.

**The media context is changing rapidly in Kenya, with a significant growth taking place in ownership of television sets** which is making television viewing much more common in urban and rural areas. This makes television an increasingly important medium for reaching peri-urban and rural people.

**Although MJ is competing against some long established entertainment-based soaps, it is very popular with viewers.** The latest audience research also indicates that MJ has the highest rating for “story” compared to other television dramas.

**MJ has covered a wide range of issues including HIV/AIDS, TB, mental health, rape, abortion, corruption, domestic violence, land rights, seed soaking, health committees, silage, family planning, child abuse, female genital mutilation and school infrastructure committees.** The audience research has demonstrated that the audience benefits most from very specific and practical information rather than general messaging which is available from other sources. However, the extent to which MJ is able to contribute to actual changes in behaviour is difficult to establish.

**The series has been praised by its research partners for dealing with difficult and challenging subjects sensitively.** Programme content comes mainly from dialogue with the research partners and other information providers. This collaboration works extremely well, and all research partners noted that their capacity for use of media for communication has been enhanced through interaction with MJ. There is also potential for the research partners to make much greater use of MJ in their communications work, and MJ could be scaled up by establishing partnerships with research organisations in a number of African countries, not just Kenya.

**One of the goals of MJ has been to build capacity within the local television industry, and a large team of Kenyans and Ugandans has now been trained** in a range of jobs. A significant proportion of the crew is female. Training continues as the project evolves. A number of UK mentors have worked with the Kenyans and Ugandans.

**Makutano Junction has a strong gender focus both in the composition of key messages and in the casting of strong female characters.** MJ has been instrumental in using characters, both men and women, to put across messages to the public which successfully challenge gender stereotypes.

**The interactive element of MJ is highly innovative and ambitious.** After each show, viewers can text requesting an information leaflet which focuses on the main theme of that particular programme. The leaflet which takes the form of a comic strip is posted to them. Viewers can also text in specific questions which the portal managers pass on to experts to answer. The experts’ answers are monitored by the team.



**The project is being increasingly successful in raising funds from donors.** Since commercial revenues will not provide sufficient income to fund the series in the future, until the economics of broadcasting in Africa change, it will remain dependent on donor funding for the foreseeable future.

**We recommend that plans are drawn up for a new phase 3 of the project which would involve rolling out the show to a number of African countries** including Zambia and Ghana. In order to achieve this, MJ will need a fully developed marketing and communications strategy. We would encourage DFID CRD to fund phase 3 of the project.



## The television series

### The series

**MJ is a popular television drama set in a fictitious Kenyan village, shown on prime time in Kenya and Uganda. It successfully mixes entertainment and education.** Each series has 13 half hour episodes. By March 2009 eight series of Makutano Junction will have been produced and by the summer of 2009 all eight series will have been broadcast. MJ is currently shown on local TV stations in two countries, Kenya and Uganda, and on Digital Satellite TV (DSTV), a pay TV channel which covers the entire African continent. In Uganda, it is broadcast on WBS Television, a private TV station which bought the broadcast rights, and in Kenya, it is shown on KBC, a government owned corporation. Both local television stations broadcast the show at prime time so it reaches a wide audience including families with children. MJ is on air after the evening news – in Uganda on Tuesdays 8.30pm, in Kenya on Thursdays at 7.45pm. WBS also repeats Makutano Junction on Sunday afternoons.

### Cost effectiveness

**MJ is an extremely well run programme which represents very good value for money.** It is produced by a small team of Kenyans and Ugandans who all work hard and effectively. With a total budget of £30,000 per episode this is significantly less than it would cost if it was made in the UK. By comparison, one of the cheapest drama series on UK television, Doctors, costs more than double at £75,000 per half hour. Many members of the team are training on the job but the speed with which each stage of the process is successfully completed is impressive. Storylines are developed as a result of meetings between the team of writers and representatives of research organisations or other information partners. The turnaround of scripts is fast. Scenes are shot quickly and efficiently. Staff multi-task – for example several writers are also actors.

**The purpose of MJ – to improve the livelihoods of rural and peri-urban people in East Africa – is still highly relevant.** In Kenya, the latest statistics suggest the poverty rate stands at 46%. Many of these are rural and peri-urban people. There is a strong likelihood that MJ can make a material difference to this group. Given that the show is regularly watched by 6 million Kenyans, it represents a relatively low cost way of reaching significant numbers of people. If MJ is successfully rolled out across East and West Africa, its potential audience and impact is huge.

### The media context

**For the first time, more Kenyans are watching television than are listening to the radio.** The media context is changing rapidly in Kenya. In particular, there is a rapid growth taking place in ownership of television sets which is making television viewing much more common in urban and rural areas. This makes television an increasingly important medium for reaching peri-urban and rural people. The local television industry is also growing, partly as a result of the capacity building which has taken place with the Makutano Junction project.

**Although MJ is competing against some long established entertainment-based soaps, it is very popular.** The latest Steadman research (A sample of 800 people, July 2008) confirms that MJ has been watched at least once in the last month by 50% of



Kenyans. It is the favourite programme of 11% of viewers. Its audience is building which validates the decision to commission a longer run of programmes as part of phase 2.

There are plans to move the show in Kenya from KBC to Citizen TV in January 2009. This is a sensible move as Citizen is growing rapidly in popularity and in particular targeting rural viewers. Its success is based on a commitment to local production including productions from other East African countries. But the producers need to be careful that MJ is given an appropriate time slot on Citizen so that it can be watched by parents and children. A later slot (currently proposed by Citizen) would exclude children who form an important part of the potential audience for the show.

**The broadcast on DSTV, on the Africa Magic Plus channel, is significant as this ensures the series is watched by an influential audience** of professionals, policy makers, civil servants and politicians, which will give MJ a much higher profile and greater potential impact.

## Programme content

### Mixing entertainment and education

**One of the strengths of MJ is the way in which it successfully mixes entertainment and educational content.** The most recent audience research conducted pre and post series 6 by Steadman (July 2008) recognises the strength of the show's storylines which are rated more highly than any other Kenyan TV drama. The educational content is welcomed by viewers. (85% of viewers say they value MJ for its educational content, Steadman, July 2008). There is no tension between the mix of entertainment and information – and the producers seem to have the balance about right. In fact, if anything, the Kenyan viewers who were interviewed by the researchers and by the Mid Term Review team appear to have an appetite for even more information.

**The audience research has demonstrated that the audience benefits most from very specific and practical information,** rather than general messaging which is available from other sources. **For example, in covering the issue of HIV/AIDS MJ has focused on how to minimise transmission from an HIV positive mother to her baby, and also on the need for health care workers to be tested for the virus.**

**One area which could benefit from greater attention is character development.** The audience research gives MJ a low score for its characters (7% compared with 27% for Vioja Mahakamani, Steadman, July 2008). This is perhaps explained by the fact that the educational content necessitates a large cast, so it is harder for the audience to get to know individual characters well. The MTR team recommends that writers and producers should look for opportunities in the future to develop some of the key characters, for example by considering whether some episodes might work well with a reduced cast.

### Educational messages

**MJ has covered a range of educational topics** including HIV/AIDS, TB, mental health, rape, abortion, consumption of paraffin, zoonotic disease, health centre charges, citizenship, corruption, education, ethnic conflict/tribalism, domestic violence, land rights, pyramid schemes, fistula, seed soaking, health committees, silage, family planning, corporal punishment, child abuse, circumcision, dangers of the internet, environmental rights, clean water, ADHD, female genital mutilation, school infrastructure committees.



**The series has been praised by its research partners for dealing sensitively with difficult and challenging issues.** From the extensive audience research which MJ has commissioned from Steadmans across the whole series, it is clear that the target audience of rural and peri-urban people has an appetite for information and the series has a good mix of 'big' issues like HIV/AIDS and other specific issues about which the audience has little detailed knowledge like fistula.

**MJ has high level and distinctive focus on the Millennium Development Goals 1 – 7,** as can be seen in the following text box.

<b>Makutano Junction's distinctive MDG focus</b>		
<b>Goal</b>	<b>MDG GOALS/TARGETS</b>	<b>FOCUS OF MESSAGES</b>
1	Eradicate Extreme Poverty and hunger	Agriculture, seed soaking, maize crop, pest management, economic activities: pyramid/ revolving savings & credit, livestock: donkey, milk trade, silage preparation social issues: mental illness,
2	Achieve Universal Primary Education	School committees/parents' rights, infrastructure, quality education, teaching storylines (maths, reading skills)
3	Promote Gender equality and Empower of women	Girl child education, promotion of child education, girl child hygiene, leadership, FGM, sexual & reproductive rights
4	Reduce Child Mortality	Malaria prevention & treatment, clean water, support to orphans, paraffin poisoning
5	Improve Maternal Health	Vulnerability to malaria & prevention, fistula, health committees, delivery services – antenatal,
6	Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases	HIV/AIDS, prevention & care & counselling, health workers' HIV status, symptoms, treatment, mosquito nets,
7	Ensure Environmental Sustainability	Access to justice, environmental education, awareness, advocacy and land rights
8	Global Partnerships for Development.	No particular focus

## Working with research partners

**The programme content comes mainly from dialogue with the research partners and other information providers.** At an initial meeting, the researchers suggest an issue which they are keen for the series to feature. At a second meeting, the researchers brainstorm with the writing team. Issues are allocated to specific episodes and writers. When the writer has a script ready the storyline is shared with the researchers who then give their feedback. Researchers' comments are then incorporated into the final script.

**The collaboration between the production team and the research partners works extremely well.** At the start of the process, researchers have little idea about how to make their subject area televisual but by the end of the process an episode of MJ successfully



encapsulates their work. Through this collaborative way of working, MJ allows researchers with their expert knowledge to set the agenda for the series.

**All the researchers interviewed acknowledge that their involvement with MJ had enabled their research findings to be disseminated to a much larger audience than would otherwise be the case.** It appears that there is no shortage of storylines – and there is a real appetite amongst researchers to collaborate with MJ. At last year's conference for researchers, a number of new issues and storylines came up which will now feature in series 7 and 8. There are still many more issues which could be featured in future series

## Achieving its purpose

**The purpose of the Makutano Junction project is to “enhance poor people’s livelihoods through access to, and use of, research information through an educational television drama”. MJ is successfully achieving its purpose in an innovative and imaginative way.** The programme set out to deliver demand led information generated by DFID and other research organisations in an educative and entertaining way. So far, it has worked with a number of UK and African-based research institutions and partners<sup>1</sup>. Most are DFID CRD partners. MJ messages are demand driven from the research institutions and MJ is contracted to produce the messages in the drama. MJ assigns first priority to dissemination of development messages which are focused on increasing knowledge and promoting behaviour change among the viewers. This commitment was cited by the research partners talked to as the reason for their interest in and collaboration with MJ.

**MJ has successfully developed story lines from technical academic research messages and delivered them in a user friendly and entertaining manner.** This is a significant achievement and owes a lot to the professionalism of the MJ team and the processes which have been developed to ensure a genuine partnership between the researchers and the production team. Credit should be given to the writers in particular, and their enthusiasm and skill at transforming educational messages into popular television.

## Audience appreciation

**MJ has invested heavily and consistently in undertaking audience research to measure the impact of the programme.** In Kenya, MJ has an audience estimated at 6 million and growing. In the most recent evaluation (July 2008) 34% of viewers rated the series as very good; 62% said it was good, and 4% said it was poor.

**Audience comments are positive on many angles,** including humorous and educative, reflects what happens in society, has educative messages, focus on teenagers, good actors, family issues, simple English, can be watched by all ages, not too westernized and good flow. The reasons why the 4% rated MJ as poor included: message not clear and the drama was too short.

**The latest audience research also indicates that MJ has the highest rating for “story”** compared to other television dramas. The messages are found to be relevant, while in other dramas, the characters and place rated relatively higher.

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<sup>1</sup> Liverpool VCT, UNFPA, DFID Nairobi, Kenya Land Alliance, ILEG, Cape Town University, APHRC, Leeds University, ANPPCAN, KEMRI/Wellcome Trust, University of Nairobi, IDS etc





**Health dominates the favourite topics amongst viewers, especially women.** For example in the women's focus group in Kenya, their favourite episodes were those with health messages, followed by election violence. The mixed focus group in Uganda rated the episodes on health and HIV/AIDS, ethnic conflict and political leadership.

**The quantitative research showed a strong and continuing audience interest in HIV/AIDS.** The Steadman Series 6 post Evaluation Survey (July 2008) rated the top four messages viewers would like to be covered as:

- HIV/AIDS and health related issues (20%)
- Social issues (16%).
- Education/civic education, (10 %)
- Women/child rights (8%)

## Creating awareness and changing behaviour

**MJ produces realistic fiction about the lives of ordinary people living in a rural community which people are able to relate to because it is based on research evidence.** The community in Makutano Junction is involved in a wide range of occupations, the setting is busy with activities, there are governance structures which show good and bad electoral practices, expose corruption, ethnic conflict and sectarianism. MJ is able to expose a range of problems, explore solutions in an entertaining manner and provide information at the end of each episode on where help can be obtained. This includes the SMS messages and the addresses and contacts of the "content partners".

**The audience research indicates that the series helps to raise awareness among viewers of key issues connected to improved livelihoods for rural and peri-urban people.** For example, on the relationship between TB and HIV, 79% of the television viewers (in the past 6 months) cited Makutano Junction as the source of awareness, while other dramas, news and advertisements were rated below 6% (Steadman, July 2008). 92% of viewers who had watched MJ said it had changed their behaviour. MJ also has a high awareness among the audience surveyed by the Steadman Group in July 2008. Awareness increased from 84% in April 2008 to 86% in July 2008. It was also the third in the awareness ratings by the sample surveyed, after two local dramas which have run for decades and are in the Kiswahili language (Vioja Mhakamani and Vitimbi).





Topic viewers would like to be covered by TV Drama	% of respondents
HIV/AIDS Health Related issues	20
Social Issues	16
Education/Civic Education	10
Women/Child Rights	8
Economic Empowerment	8
Drug Abuse	7
Morality/Sexuality	5
Corruption	5
Others included Agriculture: environment, politics and human rights, Tribalism, peace and reconciliation, and law and crime.	3 - 4

Source: Steadman Group, MJ Post Evaluation Report, July 2008

## Behaviour change

**The extent to which MJ is able to contribute to actual changes in behaviour is difficult to establish.** Steadman surveys are unable to establish a baseline at which MJ started and to make a strong connection between changes in behaviour and watching MJ. Also, attribution is complicated because there are many key players in the environment talking about the same or similar issues. 40 % of the viewers in the post evaluation survey rated MJ as an educative programme. The MTR team recommends that Mediae continue to explore ways of improving the Steadman research and its methodology so that it provides an effective means of documenting the impact of Makutano Junction on its audiences and on Kenyan society and that its analysis meets the needs of DFID CRD. The MTR team also recommends that, if MJ is to promote advocacy, it should be targeted at policy makers by engaging them more in the drama series and by tracking any policy changes which take place.

## Dissemination of audience research

**MJ now has a substantial body of audience research** which has mainly been put to internal use, to make the programme more effective. The MTR team recommends that this research should be more widely disseminated and made available to third parties in an accessible format – for example a report illustrated with images from the show. This booklet could be used in advocacy, information dissemination and the marketing of MJ.

## Capacity building

### Research partners

**All research partners noted that their capacity for use of media for communication has been enhanced through interaction with MJ** and some of them have committed to continue collaboration with MJ, by including the drama in their budgets (ILEG,



UNFPA). The content partners now understand the importance of using television for communicating information and research findings, and ensuring that their findings reach a wider population.

**There is also potential for the research partners to make much greater use of MJ in their communications work.** For example, clips from the show could be shown on their websites or at conferences, the information comics could be circulated to members and supporters, and both the programme and the comics could be used far more in their lobbying activities or contacts with policy makers. Screenings of MJ could be arranged for Parliamentarians to focus attention on specific issues. The MTR team recommends that these expanded activities are included in plans for phase 3 of the project.

**MJ could be scaled up by establishing partnerships with research organisations in a number of African countries, not just Kenya.** Since this collaborative approach between the production team and researchers is so effective, the MTR team recommends that it should be expanded to include researchers in all the potential countries in which there are plans to broadcast MJ.

## **Production team**

**A large team of Kenyans and Ugandans has now been trained in a range of jobs - and training continues as the project evolves.** Many have been offered other work in the local television industry and by the BBC and other visiting UK production companies. Within Kenya, there is widespread recognition that MJ offers the best training in the local industry. Its success has helped to encourage broadcasters to commission more local production (instead of imported shows, mostly from the United States). This is a significant change in the industry.

**Training has taken place in all departments and for all the senior roles on the production.** Several people have risen rapidly through the ranks – for example one member of the team who joined as a lighting assistant is in now a director. Another started as a boom operator and is now a sound recordist. Several actors have become writers, and many of the 14 writers who have worked on the series had not written for television before they joined the MJ writing team. MJ has trained 11 writers, 2 of whom have now left to write their own shows for Kenyan TV.

**A number of UK mentors have worked with the Kenyans and Ugandans.** These have included script editors, directors, directors of photography and editors. Whilst the Kenyans and Ugandans could produce the series on their own, the UK based mentors still play an important role. The MTR team recommends that a decision is taken about whether this mentoring should continue after March 2009.

**However, there is room to strengthen the creative leadership of the programme.** The MTR team recommends that thought is given to developing a wider range of skills within this group – for example, greater attention could be paid to character development, quality of performance, pace, energy, innovation, experimentation, use of humour and the introduction of new characters. Kenyan and Ugandan creatives need to begin to develop more of an overview of the series.

**It is clear that all members of the production team are given an equal opportunity to train for new positions and to raise their level of skills.** All the members of the crew and cast interviewed by the MTR Team made it clear that when they had asked to be given the opportunity to train for a new post, everything was done to make this possible.



Several women hold senior posts: as writers, producer, editor, production manager, trainee script editor and trainee director.

## Gender

**Makutano Junction has a strong gender focus both in the composition of key messages and in the casting of strong female characters.** The MJ project outputs and indicators do not specify the gender related targets. However, the educational key messages and storylines, the use of characters, use of gender messages, capacity building for gender awareness, and gender composition of the team all indicate a strong awareness of gender amongst the management and production teams.

### Characters

**MJ has been instrumental in using characters, both men and women, to put across messages to the public which successfully challenge gender stereotypes.** For example, people interviewed both in the Kenyan and Ugandan focus groups were able to point out that MJ has shown that both men and women have a right to become leaders through the performance of the female Chief and later Member of Parliament. The characters in MJ are not one dimensional stereotypes – in response to gender issues they are allowed to show their prejudices and beliefs about the consequences of empowering women.

**MJ has developed a reputation for having strong women characters** who are not only entertaining but are able to reason out issues and stand their ground. Hence, some of the women interviewed in our focus groups pointed out that the strong characters help to inspire them and to demonstrate that women can also be in charge.

### Use of gender messages

**MJ has concentrated attention on gender specific concerns in its educational messages.** The drama shows that women have specific problems that require individual and community support. Examples include fistula, female genital mutilation (FGM) and violence against women, including rape.

**Complex and controversial issues are dealt with sensitively by exploring a range of points of view.** Where dialogue shows people's negative attitudes towards women, it is intercepted by constructive dialogue that creates a new thinking – that is able to get support for the solutions offered. MJ has attempted to create a new paradigm that removes gender stereotypes and prejudices - for example the women are able to report rape.

**MJ is a highly gender focused drama** whose messages strategically and effectively promote gender equity and fairness, provide information and opportunities to women for their own empowerment and champions the health and reproductive rights of women.

**However, there is a danger that in some storylines women are too often portrayed as victims.** For example, the principal character in the community who is HIV positive is a woman. There is a need to bring some of these experiences to male characters so that male viewers can relate better to the issues.

## Capacity building for gender awareness

The production should consider which further measure can be taken to ensure that it continues to feature gender issues prominently and successfully in its storylines. The integration of research messages into drama and entertainment requires good knowledge of the issues and innovation by the writers, as has happened with MJ in the past. While collaboration with researchers ensures a reliable system for transfer of information, it may not be sustainable if capacity is not built at the writer/producer/director level. The MTR team recommends that, if the programme wishes to continue to focus on gender and to challenge stereotypes, consideration is given to ways of building capacity amongst the production team so that they can continue to explore these issues sensitively and creatively and push boundaries.

## Gender composition of MJ production team and crew

A significant proportion of the MJ crew is female. In an industry which is dominated by men this is an important achievement. By August 2009, at the time of shooting series 7, MJ has worked with a total of 47 individuals, 27 men and 20 women. The table below shows the distribution of men and women in the different departments over the 7 series. All the staff have received some form of on the job training and many are still being trained.

### **Cumulative gender distribution of MJ crew over the Series 1-8**

DEPARTMENT	MEN	WOMEN
Producers, Production managers	1	4
Directors, ADs	5	5
Writers	10	4
Editors, trainee editors	2	1
Technicians (camera/ lighting, continuity etc)	15	4
Runners	9	8
Art department (costume, makeup, art directors)	4	6

MJ has a good distribution of both men and women in decision making positions. For example, the producer, production manager and trainee script editor are all women. The MTR review team also noticed a high level of teamwork and collaboration, which is conducive for improved gender relations.

## **Broadcasting the series outside Kenya**

The series has been broadcast in Uganda but not yet in Zambia or Ghana as had been planned in the original project document. Audience research from Uganda will be conducted by Steadmans later in 2008. At this stage, no audience figures are available for Uganda nor is it clear why the use of SMSs is so low in Uganda, compared to Kenya. Reasons may include a lack of actual presence by Mediae on the ground in Uganda and ineffective coordination with the Ugandan broadcaster WBS.

The predominantly Kenyan storylines do appeal to audiences in other countries in the region. One possible concern has been that the storylines and characters are essentially Kenyan and may therefore lack appeal in other countries. The

focus group discussions for the MTR in Uganda confirmed that this was not the case. There was enthusiasm for the storylines and characters. There was also particular appreciation of the role of Ugandan actors in the drama. This is clearly an area which could be developed in future marketing and publicity in Uganda.

**The Kenyan success is due to a number of factors including marketing and publicity by the broadcaster and producers, and the involvement of a significant and influential network of Kenyan research and NGO partners in the project.** All this has helped to attract a large and growing audience, it has created a buzz around the show and has brought it to the attention of policy makers and politicians.

**It is likely that the show could build a bigger audience and achieve a higher profile in Uganda** if the broadcaster committed more resources to marketing and publicity, if the producers were also involved in publicity locally and if partnerships could be developed with Ugandan researchers, NGOs and policy makers. The MTR Team therefore recommend that before broadcasting the series in Zambia or Ghana or other African countries more thought is given to a marketing and communications strategy and whether or not it is feasible to develop partnerships in these countries with researchers and NGOs.

**Consideration should also be given to the feasibility of producing a version of the series dubbed into Kiswahili** to be shown in Tanzania and also aimed at a Kiswahili-speaking audience in Kenya. Dubbing of drama series is normal practice in Africa and this would simply increase the audience numbers with no adverse consequences.

## Interactive component/SMSs

**The interactive element of MJ is highly innovative and ambitious.** At the end of most shows there is a number given which viewers can text requesting an information leaflet which focuses on the main theme of that particular programme. The leaflet which takes the form of a comic strip is posted to them. Viewers can also text in specific questions which the portal managers pass on to experts to answer. The experts' answers are monitored by the team.

**There were a number of serious teething problems with the technology which have all now been resolved.** The plan to establish separate portals in each country has now been abandoned, with the agreement of DFID CRD. The present system works extremely well and demand has been high in Kenya. Demand has been low in Uganda for reasons which are not yet clear and require further investigation. However, the MTR team recommends that Mediae considers the possibility of having some local involvement in the portal management process in Uganda.

**The system is user friendly** and as a result of the high take up of this service the producers now have a database of 30,000 viewers of MJ who have requested information. This is a valuable resource for the future. These viewers can be contacted and involved in research – this has already taken place with many giving feedback for the children's show the KnowZone. The MTR team recommends that Mediae reviews the security of its data collection to avoid this information falling into the wrong hands in the future.

**The comics themselves are very impressive – well designed and accessible - and there is great potential to use them to market the series and its messages.** When The MTR Review Team asked the researchers and NGOs whether they had thought of distributing the comics themselves as part of their campaigning work, they all

said no, but agreed this could be a great idea for the future. The comics could also be used as posters or billboards or as newspaper adverts.

**Future use of the comics – and their adaptation for different countries – should be given further thought** and incorporated into the marketing strategy for Phase 3 of the project. The success of the interactive element, SMSs, comics and the development of the KnowZone (which includes a strand entitled Junction Juniors featuring characters from MJ) all demonstrate that there is great potential for building the MJ brand and for a range of spin offs. For example, extra scenes were shot on the set for a training video for health workers. All these spin offs help to get the series talked about and this in turn leads to bigger audiences and greater impact.

## Marketing

**MJ needs a fully developed marketing and communications strategy.** MJ is such a successful project but its success in the future does depend on more time and thought being devoted to marketing – particularly when the series is rolled out into other African countries. At present, marketing is an ad hoc activity and Mediae uses a PR agency to ensure press coverage in the run up to transmission of a new series.

**A number of marketing opportunities are being missed** and the project would benefit from hiring a marketing or communications professional as part of the core team, involved in the day to day brainstorming and development of the project. For example, the comics could be used more effectively as part of a wider marketing strategy. Research partners could be encouraged to run clips of MJ on their websites. Clips could also be shown at academic conferences to illustrate the way in which research findings can be disseminated to wider audiences.

**It is also worth considering the potential of making DVD sets of past episodes of MJ available.** At present, no DVDs of the show are sold in the shops. Whilst this is unlikely to raise much money, it may attract sponsorship and help to promote the series – for example, it might be possible to find a newspaper to give its readers a free DVD of the show. This is common place in the UK but has not yet reached Kenya.

**Capacity and funding for marketing is a challenge.** The MTR team recognises that there is a capacity issue here and that there are not the funds available to pay for a new full time member of staff who could focus on marketing and communications. It may be worth considering the possibility of having someone on secondment from a commercial partner like Safaricom or a donor like DFID Kenya or recruiting a UK-based mentor.

## Sustainability

**The project is being increasingly successful in raising funds from donors.** However, income from donors is not yet able to cover the running costs of making the series nor is it likely to do so in the near future. Income from broadcasters and commercial sponsors/partners is minimal. Broadcasters will only pay small sums of money – around £250 for a half hour show. Sponsorship also involves small sums – maybe £2,000 per show. These sums are very small considering that the series costs £30,000 per episode to make.



**Commercial revenues will not provide sufficient income to fund the series in the future, until the economics of broadcasting in Africa change.** MJ is therefore dependent on its income from donors. A number of measures need to be taken to secure future donor funding. Representatives from DFID Kenya have offered to help organize a donors' conference. This offer was made during the MTR Review field visit and has been welcomed by the directors of Mediae. The MTR team recommends that this is followed up as a priority.

**Plans should be drawn up for a new phase 3 of the project which would involve rolling out the show to a number of African countries** including Zambia and Ghana, but also targeting other English or Kiswahili speaking countries. The MTR team believe that this strategy would make the project even more attractive to donors. In order to do this effectively, a marketing and communications strategy should be devised and new relationships should be established with researchers and information providers in these countries. It should also be feasible to establish contact with local DFID offices – for example DFID Uganda.

**Makutano Junction would also benefit from some promotional literature.** There are plans to commission a writer/academic to produce a booklet writing up MJ as a case study. The MTR team recommends that Mediae go ahead with their plans to hire a consultant to pull all the research data together and write up a case study of the programme which would then be published as an illustrated report. The team also recommends that this report should be made as accessible as possible so that it can be distributed amongst donors and researchers and help in the fundraising effort. DFID Kenya has also raised the possibility of helping to fund a promotional video.

**The MTR Team recommend that DFID CRD fund phase 3 of the project.** One area which requires further clarification is the potential for individual CRD research partners to fund MJ. Whilst all the research organizations we spoke to have a communications budget, all said that the budget was small and had to be spread across a number of activities including organizing conferences and paying for colleagues to attend. There was an acknowledgment that in theory some of this money might be made available to MJ, but the sums mentioned – around £1,000 -2,000 - were very small and would not offer any financial security to MJ.

## Links with DFID

**Relations between the management team and DFID CRD are very good.** The MJ team considers DFID CRD to be very supportive and constructive and to have provided useful input on a number of occasions. DFID CRD considers that the management team is effective in responding to any requests for information or for clips of the show and information about the programme is circulated widely within DFID as an example of a successful project. This project is seen as a genuine partnership between the two organisations. Mediae have had access to DFID advisers in the UK when developing the KnowZone project, and with DFID advisers in Nairobi during the making of MJ. However, it has not been considered necessary to have any significant contact with DFID advisers in the UK during the making of Makutano Junction. So far, there has been no contact with DFID teams in other African countries. However, the MTR team recommends that Mediae now establish direct contact with DFID advisers in Uganda, Zambia and Ghana, which will help in planning and fundraising for phase 3 of the project with its emphasis on rolling out the show to a number of other African countries.



## Recommendations

1. The Makutano Junction programme should continue beyond the current funding period. We recommend that DFID CRD supports phase 3 of the project.
2. The experience and lessons learnt should be disseminated more widely, to other actors working in communications for development, to donors and to researchers and NGOs. This could take the form of a booklet, and should be available for distribution before March 2009.
3. As part of planning for phase 3, a communications and marketing strategy should be drawn up by December 2008, incorporating all the different elements of the Makutano Junction project – including The Know Zone, SMSs, comics and other spinoffs of the show. This should demonstrate how marketing and communications would be given a higher priority and become a much more integral part of the project as it enters phase 3.
4. Plans for a new phase 3 of the project should be drawn up by December 2008. This should involve producing further series of Makutano Junction, broadcasting the show in a number of African countries (including Zambia and Ghana), producing a version of the series dubbed into Kiswahili, developing a new network of partnerships in other African countries with research organizations, NGOs, policy makers and in country DFID offices.
5. A donors' conference should be organized with the help of DFID Kenya to secure further funding beyond March 2009.
6. Broadcast of the series in Zambia and Ghana should be delayed until after March 2009.
7. Immediate steps should be taken to broaden and strengthen the range of skills within the creative leadership of the television series so that the team can focus more on the long term. For behavioural change to take place, MJ needs to ensure that its messages are more long term, with well developed storylines from series to series.
8. Research institutions should be encouraged to follow up on MJ by focusing upwards and seeking to influence policy makers.
9. MJ should look at the feasibility of developing a different evaluation model so that behavioural change can be assessed.

## Acronyms and abbreviations

ADHD- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

AD – assistant director

ANPPCAN- African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect

APHRC- Africa Population and Health Research Centre

DFID CRD – Department for International Development Central Research Department

DSTV – Digital Satellite TV, Kenya

FGM- female genital mutilation

IDS – Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex

ILEG - Institute for Law and Environmental Governance

KBC – Kenya Broadcasting Corporation

KEMRI – Kenya Medical Research Institute

Liverpool VCT- Kenyan NGO specializing in care and treatment for HIV

MTR- mid term review

NGO – non governmental organisation

SMS – short message service (Kenyan term for a text message)

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

WBS – Wava Broadcasting Service, Uganda

