

The Role of Development Communication in Enhancing Listeners' Participation in Community Radio: A Case Study of Forte FM Radio

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ABSTRACT This paper ascertains the role of development communication in enhancing listeners' participation in community radio, drawing on Forte FM radio in Nkonkobe Municipality in Alice, Eastern Cape. The aim of the paper was to ascertain how development programmes initiated by the community members can increase and enhance listeners' participation in the programming of Forte FM radio station. This paper adopts a qualitative research approach. Convenience and purposive non-probability samplings techniques were subsequently used to select samples for this paper. In-depth interviews were conducted with the radio station manager while one focus group discussion each was held with residents of Golf Course and Ntselamanzi areas with eight participants in each focus group, making a total of sixteen participants for the focus group discussions. The findings of this paper showed the relevance of development communication as a blueprint in enhancing listeners' participation. Listeners interviewed in the course of carrying out the focus group discussion at the two sampled areas were of the views that the community radio station has been helpful in facilitating the provision of social amenities, but emphasised that a lot has to be done in order to increase listeners' participation on the part of the radio station. Hence, Forte FM radio needs to intensify more efforts by consulting community members on development initiatives programmes in order to attract listeners' participation.