Tanzanian Media Environment

*Current Access, Potential for Growth and Strategies for Information Dissemination*

**Chapter 1: Media Access and Use**

- There are close to 47 FM radio stations, 537 registered newspapers and a dozen television stations in Tanzania.

- Radio access is fairly widespread throughout the country – making it the most consistently available medium for Tanzanians across income levels and locations.

- Income levels play a substantial role in determining household access to media devices other than radio. Household access to television more than triples between income tiers 3 and 4 (highest).

- Computer and internet access at home is very limited across Tanzania. For mobile phones, 62 percent of Tanzanians reported having household access. This increases more gradually with each rising income tier.

- At the highest income tier, radio, television and mobile phone access become identical.

- Television viewership outside the home is an important factor: 27 percent have household access, 41 percent watch weekly.

- Communal watching is higher among those with lower tier incomes, and reduces as income levels increase. Rural viewers are more likely to watch TV outside their homes than urban viewers. The communal nature of TV viewing in many areas gives it wider reach than household ownership would suggest.

- Rural residents and women are less likely to use mass media than their more urban and male counterparts.
Common obstacles to television and newspaper use problems with electricity and not having a television set at home. The largest proportion of non-readers cites non-availability in their area as the prime reason for non-readership.

Chapter 2 Media Outlet Preferences in Radio, Television and Newspapers

- Few radio stations attain full national reach. Those with national reach are the state-owned TBC Taifa (also known as RTD) and TBC FM, as well as private stations such as Radio Free Africa, Radio One and Clouds FM.

- A crucial information gap is the lack of radio stations broadcasting in regional languages -- besides Kiswahili and English.

- While respondents may listen to call-in shows, radio is seen more as a medium for entertainment than as a forum for voicing one’s opinion.

- Three stations have large enough reach to be considered national stations: state-run TBC 1 (also known as Televisheni ya Taifa (TVT)), Independent Television (ITV) and Star TV.

- Tanzanian TV broadcasts very little original content, and borrows heavily from foreign broadcasters.

Chapter 3 Regional Guide

- The southeastern region of Tanzania is characterized by a particularly low concentration of television or newspaper users.

Chapter 4 News and Information Access and Sharing

- Eighty-three percent of Tanzanians said they get news and information from radio, making it the leader among both media and non-media sources. Radio is thus the most consistently available media in Tanzania – and any communication strategy to any segment of the population must feature radio dissemination prominently.

- Television is considered a credible source for information, although only people with higher incomes get information from it regularly.

- Word-of-mouth networks (among friends and family) is the second most important source of information, although Tanzanians do not trust the information they receive through it as much as that received from the radio.
• There is untapped potential for SMS to be a tool of communal information sharing, given the high penetration of mobile phones. While many have access to this medium, few are using it effectively to share information.

• **Recommendation:** If information broadcast on the radio is then further disseminated via SMS to friends and family, it has the potential to reach more people and lends the information transmitted more credibility because it is conveyed by a trusted social contact.

• As incomes rise, Tanzanians’ range of information sources expands. **To reach elites in Tanzania, especially those at the highest income tier, a combination of television broadcasts and mobile phones are possible avenues.**

• Newspapers rank at the bottom of sources of news and information used regularly by Tanzanians, mainly due to poor circulation. Their use in any communication strategy should be limited to elites.