

Jingle

Presenter: I am at Mwanedu FM where I'm meeting the station manager George Mwamodo who will qualify a few issues about the station. When was Mwanedu FM started?

G.M.: Thank you, Dixon! Mwanedu FM was initiated in the year 2007, and we were on air on 7th May of the same year.

Presenter: So how has it helped the local people?

G.M.: In terms of helping the local people, maybe we can consider the reach, because Mwanedu is covering the entire county, and we are reaching over half a million people in the Taita-Taveta county and also part of Kwale, we also touching Makueni county, also part of Kajiado county. Now in a nutshell, slightly over half a million listeners, the people that we are targeting. But now our target niche is the local people, that is now the Taita-Taveta county.

Presenter: The third question is what is the impact in terms of development?

G.M.: If you are looking at what the station has done, or at its impact in terms of development, the original idea before initiating Mwanedu was to change the thinking of the local people. How can they utilize available resources, so that they can change their livelihoods? We can see now people are getting involved in agri-business activities, we can see them moving to SMS. Everybody is trying to change his or her livelihood. Mwanedu has changed the lives of the people and that is why many people are also tuning to the station to get to know how they can move forward from there they are.

Presenter: Thank you, George, for this information.

G.M.: Thank you too, Dixon.

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Welcome to The People's Voice! Mwanedu FM is based in Voi, a fast-growing town along the Nairobi Mombasa highway in the coastal region of Kenya. The station targets grass-roots population with information on social-economic empowerment. Started in May, 2007 the radio station has taken the lead in community service in terms of programs that target lives of people in Taita-Taveta county and other surrounding counties, namely: Kwale, Kilifi and Malindi. As a local people station it has continued to broaden its reach in terms of audience population through niche identification. Agriculture is the main focus. Other programs include entertainment, current affairs, politics, development, utilization of available resources, human rights, gender and constitutionalism. This has been achieved through an open policy of allowing comments, opinions and critiques from listeners, local advertisers, government and well-wishers who are held as crucial in determining the future and strengths of the station to overcome emerging challenges in the broadcasting industry. The station has placed a huge premium on youth and empowerment of women who have suffered historical social marginalization. The youth have specific programs that are aired every week for the inclusion in leadership and development. The station broadcasts in Ki-Swahili, Kitaita and English languages. Ki-Swahili takes about 97% of the language

content, Kitaita has 2%, and the remaining 1% is in English. The idea behind this choice in communication is to realize an overall empowerment of the local communities through knowledge and information developed in the language they best understand to allow them participate in the decision-making processes. Ki-Swahili remains the dominant language especially with the youth in the target area. The station has concentrated all its energies in creating more awareness in the rural and peri-urban areas, so that the impact can move upward and affect bearings of social and economic strata. The aim is to empower the grassroots population for them to make informed choices. The station directs the thinking and opinions of people to inject an unbiased position towards lifting people's standards of living. The station provides equal opportunities to the mamamboga, the kiosk owner, the farmer, the small-scale entrepreneur and the large company out there. The station has a big heart to accommodate all in their diversity. The station is positioned in a well-endowed resource area, but over 90% of the population languishes in poverty. Access to information has been the cause. Agriculture is the station's core. This is informed by the fact that the community around is engaged in small-scale farming for livelihoods. The campaign is to promote and engage the communities in new initiatives that can give better outputs as the community farming ranges continue to wear out due to repeated all year around cultivation. The region has suffered historical land injustices, and this is always at the heartbeat of the station. The station will always advocate for dialog with the view of finding a solution to these problems. Lying along the Kenya / Tanzania geographical coordinates the station remains an important tool for multi- and inter-business links. This is indeed a big plus for the Eastern African community for purposes of cross-border trade and international relations. UNESCO's entry has been a big boost to the station. The area of training has added great value to the station. Station has undergone great changes both in program development and formatting after participating in some of the trainings by UNESCO. This has added to the station's internal capacity on management as well.

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