



Shujaaz.FM Multimedia Youth Communication Initiative

What is the Shujaaz.FM Multimedia Youth Communication Initiative?

The Emmy Award winning Shujaaz.FM is a research-driven multimedia project using radio, comic books, animation, and social media to inspire and motivate young Kenyans to influence the political and social issues that affect their future. *Shujaaz* means heroes in ‘Sheng,’ an urban slang used by youth throughout Kenya. USAID has partnered with an innovative Kenyan company in this initiative to engage youth in issues such as political violence, negative ethnicity, leadership, and peaceful elections.

Where does the Shujaaz.FM Multimedia Youth Communication Initiative work?

Nationally

What does the Shujaaz.FM Multimedia Youth Communication Initiative do?

Shujaaz dramatizes the daily challenges facing young people through compelling and realistic stories. By disseminating accurate information Shujaaz.FM helps to counter misinformation and rumors, and offers real-life examples of good decision-making that Kenyans can use to improve their own lives and their communities.

Each month, Well Told Story creates, publishes, and distributes more than 600,000 copies of the Shujaaz comic book to youth across Kenya. The comics illustrate stories of youth as change agents in governance and development issues. The same stories and themes that are featured in the comic book are broadcast in a 5-minute daily radio show on 26 FM radio stations across Kenya. The project uses social media such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as text messaging, to engage youth on the issues featured in Shujaaz comic strips and FM radio shows.

How is the Shujaaz.FM Multimedia Youth Communication Initiative making a difference?

The project has extensive reach and penetration among Kenyan youth. It is estimated that copies of Shujaaz are circulated for up to a year and read at least ten times each. This suggests that each issue reaches five million readers. The 26 FM radio stations that air Shujaaz FM radio programs reach thirty per cent of all Kenyan radio listeners nationwide.

Since the project began in July 2011, 6,750,000 comic books have been printed and distributed, free of charge, through mobile phone giant Safaricom’s M-Pesa agents in kiosks throughout Kenya. The Shujazz.FM Facebook page is lively and popular, with hundreds of comments from young people interacting with DJ Boyie, one of the Shujazz “heroes.”

What key challenges does the Shujaaz.FM Multimedia Youth Communication Initiative face?

Measuring behavior change can be difficult. While Shujaaz can count how many people it is reaching with its messages and programming, determining how many are acting differently because of those messages is more



Photo: Shujaaz

The Shujaaz.FM comic book asks readers what is appropriate behavior for political candidates, and what kind of qualities are best in a leader. Fans are asked to report cases of corruption or fraud to Kenya’s Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission.

Project Duration and Budget

June 2011 - June 2013

\$1.1 million

Who implements the Shujaaz.FM Multimedia Youth Communication Initiative?

Well Told Story

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complicated. The project is developing a tracking survey to be administered via SMS technology that will capture some of this important data starting in late 2012.

The Shujaaz.FM Multimedia Youth Communication Initiative in action

Recent episodes of Shujaaz.FM have focused on responsible leadership and politics in the run up to Kenyan general elections in 2013. Examples of program topics include:

QUALITIES & VALUES OF A GOOD LEADER:

Challenged people to examine whom they are voting for and why. Helped youth determine which leader most deserves one's vote.

In this story the fictional malicious Member of Parliament steals the spotlight from the campaign of the positive local candidate Bi Amani. DJ Boyie pleads with the people to see sense beyond the politician's empty promises.

POLITICAL MANIPULATION – SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR: Discouraged youth from accepting money / promises. Helped youth understand one's long-term future is more important than short-term cash.

DJ Boyie and his friends swear they won't be manipulated by Members of Parliament again like last time – but when the Member of Parliament arrives handing out cash and big promises DJ Boyie is dismayed to see so many of his friends falling for these tricks. When readers see the Member of Parliament and the Chief drinking together in the bar and laughing at how cheaply and easily they can get the youth on their side – readers know DJ Boyie has a tough battle on his hands.

EVIDENCED BASED LEADERSHIP: Educated youth that voters should judge political candidates by virtue of their development achievements rather than ethnic alliances/ affiliations.

Two political candidates battle it out during a Madaraka day event – the crowd challenges the existing Member of Parliament that he's making the same promises as he did four years ago but nothing has changed since then! The only people who have benefitted from his leadership have been a few from his own community – why should they vote for him again? The Member of Parliament is furious and secretly plots to 'silence' his rival Bi Amani.



Photo: USAID/Kenya

An enthusiastic Shujaaz FM reader at the Kenyatta market reads an issue of the comic book.

For more information:

<http://shujaaz.fm/>

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