

## CHAPTER 4

# Five Strategies for a New Model of Community Television: A Proposal Based on the Colombian Experience

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Colombia has led democratic processes through community media, in spite of the great internal problems that it endures, which include political and military conflict, corruption and social inequality. In fact, its third-sector radio and television models have become a point of reference for scholars and political actors around the world, thanks to the fact that they have a legal framework that protects them and encourages them to act as representative channels for social classes. The Colombian community TV experience dates back 30 years, during which time organized communities have appropriated not-for-profit media, and have used it to express their needs and projects and to develop communication and administration skills.

These advances have prompted us to study Colombian community TV - and to a lesser extent community TV in other countries - to discover its strengths and weaknesses, and to determine what its future is in a globalized context, with the greater presence of citizens demanding a more economic, caring, humane order. Embarking on this mission means going over the theoretical grounds and the origins of these systems, created by intellectuals interested in highlighting the relevance of community action in mass media. Scientific research and field work have also been important tools to reach these goals, since they have made it possible for us to gain a more thorough understanding of those who produce and manage community television.

At the end of the journey, we present five strategies for a new model of community television that, based on studies of the Colombian experience, can make for high-quality community audio-visual production and alternative views of human progress.

### **Background of community television**

Sixty years ago, it would have been unthinkable that an organized community could manage, run and produce content for its own television channel. However, advances in technology, involvement by social movements and demand for training in communication and journalism have opened this form of media to control by citizens. We are talking, of course, about community television, which has been called the third, popular, alternative sector, but has ended up adopting the term 'community' because - as has been suggested (Chaparro, 2002) - it most precisely describes the meaning of belonging to all.

If we stop and look at this type of audio-visual medium, we can see that its nature and foundations are different from state TV, private open TV channels and private subscription-based TV channels. Community TV is different from state TV<sup>29</sup> in that, as Dragon (2002) tells us, it is not the pulpit (*púlpito*) from which governments launch propaganda or justify their political action. Nor does it wish to become an octopus (*pulpo*), like commercial stations, which are more interested in

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<sup>29</sup> For Zabeleta *et al.* (1998) community television is similar to state television in that both deal with issues from the public sphere, but community television represents a heterogeneous public sphere, with many agents, and without one dominating group defining what is rational in public opinion. State TV, on the other hand, makes standardized television, using idealized public opinion, which is represented as uniform, homogeneous and rational.

concentrating the media in few hands and getting ratings at any cost, for profit. As Dragon emphasizes, community TV aims to pay attention to local voices and its objective is not to reach a large area or mercilessly fight for viewers, but rather recover the feeling (*pálpito*) of the community, the pulse (*pulso*) of everyday life. The author includes other elements that have shaped the background and nature of community TV and we put them into context, based on our analysis.

Community participation: this type of TV should not be born out of commercial or political interest but rather a need detected in the community. This type of media is, therefore, not imposed on the collective but it is rather the collective that runs the entire process of creation, installation and management. This type of television has real value because it is able to integrate and speak for community concerns and facilitate processes for people to fight for better levels of well-being, like overcoming poverty, political exclusion and cultural dominance. However, our experience shows us that the community tends to take part in different ways: some of its members get involved by producing programs or ethically assessing content, and others merely propose changes to broadcast times or suggest coverage for a particular news story. Only those communities that have reached an advanced level of political maturity make their concepts clear in the production, management and control process.

Local content: what distinguishes community television from commercial television is that it broadcasts local content, developing its own form of expression, that is, a particular way of seeing and recounting facts. That is why community journalists establish committed relationships with the community, which is hard for a commercial station to manage. If community television fills its programming schedules with films, sport and entertainment, it does not include education and cultural work. In our view, its content should be focused on topics related to human development, such as health, education, popular culture, recovering peoples' historical memory, democracy and citizenship, peaceful coexistence, the environment, public spirit and social organization, with active participation by the community, so that the community itself can develop expression and administration skills.

Cultural belonging and language: this medium is committed to creating its own aesthetic, televisual and cultural direction, one that pleases a critical audience and brings improvements to its productions. The important thing is to highlight local culture, as long as this does not mean failing to show others as well. In addition, the essence of its programming should focus on transmitting the values of the area, which should be reflected in its presentation, decoration and the journalists' discourse, without ever reaching tacky or grotesque levels.

Convergence: thanks to technological advances (the internet and digital TV, among others), it does not make sense, nor is it necessary for community television to remain isolated. The elimination of physical barriers allows community television stations to show their achievements and advances to the outside world. We believe that, in order to transcend barriers, these types of television stations need to have discussions with similar organizations and establish links with the many institutions that can bring growth, without losing their participatory nature.

Our research in this area shows us that there is another aspect that makes up the essence of community television and its close relationship with human development. Social economy can be conceived as the creation, strengthening and fostering of human skills in an atmosphere of freedom (Sen, 2000) or the generation of professional, personal, artistic and work opportunities in human beings so that they are recognized and recognize themselves as valuable subjects. Community television applies these principles from two points of view. The first deals with the ability of members of the community to administrate, plan and manage (organizational skills) and to produce content for (communication skills) a TV system of this kind. The second is linked to the ability to have a direct impact on the situation in order to effect social change, by creating content that points out accomplishments in indicators of human development: education, health, culture of citizenship, security and recovering historical memory, among others.

## Origins

The exponential growth that community television has seen in Colombia is the product of a silent fight to place the media at the service of citizens. The increase in these types of systems, which have increased from 106 in 2006 to 749 in 2012, can be seen as a victory for technology, as well as some community endeavors and some government desires to make the airwaves more democratic.

The origins of community television, not only Colombia but in the world, and above all in the western world, have to be found at the beginning of what was called the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). This order derived from the MacBride Report in 1976 on experiences with Community Radio Stations<sup>30</sup>, in Latin American theorists' academic work dealing with communication and the reactivation of democracy in American countries. The members of the NWICO - which included the Colombia's García Márquez and the Chilean Juan Somavía – helped produce the report, in which they favored an end to communication monopolies and concentration of the media, instead looking to democratically spread ideas and develop the skills of nations in the 'South' to provide better a recording and broadcasting infrastructure (Angulo, 2012).

Jesús Martín-Barbero (1987), like other intellectuals in Latin America, had already claimed the importance of communities in recovering the old forms of solidarity that were found in the shanty towns (*barriadas*) and grass-roots sectors, in his renowned book 'Communication, Culture and Hegemony: From the Media to Mediations'. A later piece, written together by Jesús Martín-Barbero, Germán Rey and Omar Rincón (2000), establishes the criteria needed for public, educational and cultural public television to improve its quality. With the arrival of democracy to most Latin American countries<sup>31</sup> in the 1980s, the state framework was extended to popularly elected leaders and the creation of spaces for free thought. In the same decade, the television stations that had initially belonged to the state and which had become, according to Dragon (2002), the *pulpit* from which governments preached, began to be slowly eroded, and ended up allowing private and community ventures to make their way into the sector.

In Colombia's case, some technological, legal, communicative and sociological reasons can be cited, although it should be made clear that the first experiences appeared in the 1980s with the aim of encouraging alternative channels of communication that promoted participation, identity, harmonious coexistence and reflected community interests. The technological side undoubtedly played a fundamental role too, since it was in the 1980s that Colombia benefitted from the spread of satellites around the world to broadcast information and lower costs for video production equipment. This last factor stimulated television content production by members of the community, who would later be the main producers of programming.

Sociological and communication aspects serve as explanatory factors in the start of community television, in that (1) the channels emerged as places of expression for communities; (2) this situation, in part, came about because of the sudden deterioration of state television, which did not show the real situation of small populations far from the metropolis; (3) satellite dishes - through which the signal is received - became a new strategy for politics in municipalities; (4) businesspeople saw extremely profitable business opportunities in these systems, because they gave them the chance to supply international channels at low cost and (5) media faculties pushed these forms of media so that their graduates would have job opportunities.

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<sup>30</sup> Before the MacBride Report, the experiences of *Radio Sutatenza* in Colombia in 1947 and the *Rádios Libres* in Bolivia in 1949 stand out, among others (Dragon, 2001). Afterwards, many community radio practices meant that, according to Alfaro (2000), communication could be turned into a vital organ that collected people's views and initiatives, so they could get to know their own situation and stimulate their actions to produce deep changes in economic, political and social aspects.

<sup>31</sup> According to the United Nations Development Programme (2004), over 30 years ago there were only three democracies in Latin America: Colombia, Costa Rica and Venezuela.

The legal aspects are the result of this background, with the decentralization process in the Colombian government, dating back to the 1980s, and the enactment of the Political Constitution in 1991, which authorized people not only to receive information but also to produce it (Article 20) and created an independent body to control television (Article 76). The result was the formation of the National Television Commission<sup>32</sup>, today known as the National Television Authority, ANTV. The Commission issued Agreements 029 on 19 December 1997 and 006 in 1999, which remained in force until Agreements 009 of 24 October 2006 and 002 and 005 of 2007. These later agreements created the legal basis for community TV and, subsequently, established a specific model for operations recognized in the western world.

### **The Colombian Community Television Model Compared with American and European Models**

Zabaleta et al (1998), Chaparro (2002) and Krohling (2003), together with the regulations of the National Telecommunications Commission of Venezuela, Conatel (2002), lead us to deduce that the most developed models of community television are those in Canada (where community TV was born), the United States, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, the Netherlands and Belgium, since they all have legislation that protects them from the commercial media, which would prefer community initiatives to disappear. This legislation gives them strategies to support themselves financially and establishes mechanisms so that they operate under the standards of democratic participation.

The Canadian model emerged at the end of the 1960s, with the aim of valuing and projecting the cultural identity of the native people in the country (Chaparro, 2002), while the United States model, which emerged at the beginning of the 1970s, sought to speak in favor of free expression (Zabaleta *et al.*, 1998). Both systems, however, share the fact that they oblige cable operators to provide two or three channels for community and public access purposes. Something similar happens in Brazil, in that private cable companies are supposed to provide six channels, one of which should be of a community nature and dedicated for free use by non-governmental and not-for-profit bodies (Krohling, 2003). The Dutch and Belgian models have more state protection, although the physical means of broadcasting is still cable, operated by private companies. The difference between the models found in the United States, Canada, Brazil and Holland and the Colombian model lies in the fact that the latter does not depend on private cable operators to broadcast its content, because the state allows organized communities to have their own system, through which they broadcast supplementary (open, free) channels, encoded channels (that pay royalties) and community channels to their members, who pay to see them. A more detailed summary of how these models work in the world can be found in the following table.

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<sup>32</sup> In 2012, it was turned into the National Television Authority (*Autoridad Nacional de Televisión - ANTV*). This is, therefore, the name we shall use in this article.

Table 1. How community television models work<sup>33</sup>

Model	Year of foundation <sup>34</sup>	Broadcast system	Funding
Canada	1966	Cable operators assign channels for community use.	Government support, and cable operators hand over 5% of their revenue to produce community content.
USA	1971	Cable operators assign a channel for community use.	20% federal funds, donations, institutional contributions and cable operators.
Brazil	1995	Cable operator assigns a channel for community use free of charge.	Contributions from partner bodies, sponsors and service provision.
Venezuela	2001	Open community television.	Contributions, donations or (state) grants and advertising.
Colombia	1996	The community operates its closed cable community system.	The money from its subscribers, advertising and additional services it provides (internet, special broadcasts).
Belgium	1976	Open community television.	Public and local authority support. Advertising.
The Netherlands	1974	Cable operators assign channels for community use, or open community TV.	Public funds. They can spread to cable TV, online press and services provided by other forms of technology.

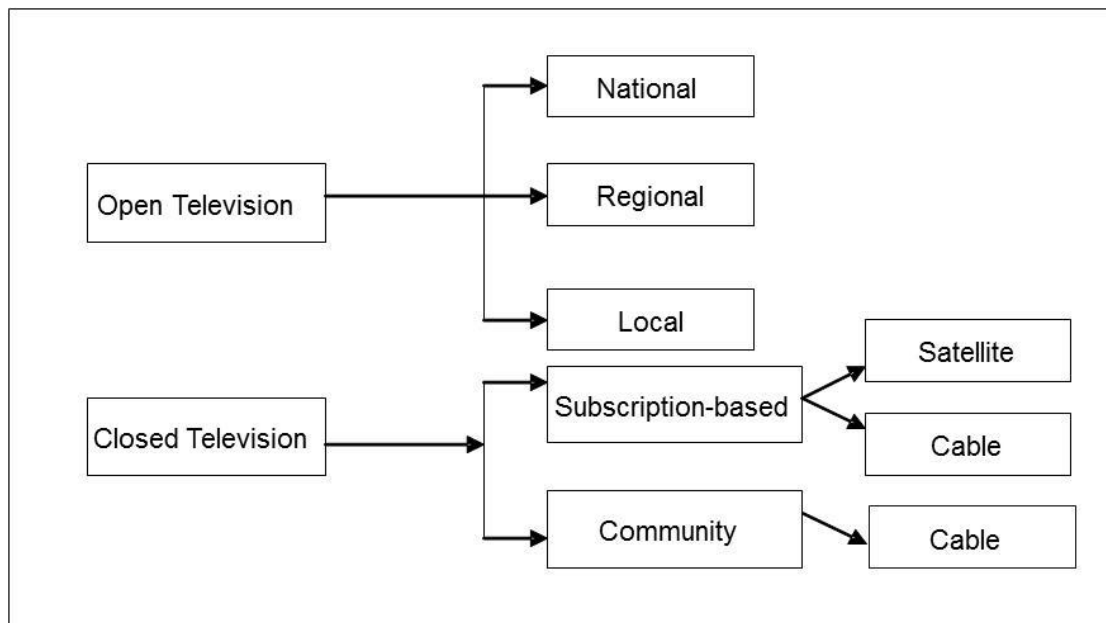
The advantage of community TV in Colombia is that the communities (1) take on the entire process of production, administration, and control of the television system and (2) they receive monthly or bimonthly payments to buy equipment, pay employees and journalists - with which reporters receive a relatively decent salary and do not need to rely on advertising campaigns and public funds - and for handing over economic contributions to the national TV fund, which is used to finance the country's public television (see figure 1).<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Angulo, 2012.

<sup>34</sup> We used the year in which the first known experience of community television started or the year in which the law regulating community television services was enacted.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Figure 1 in this chapter.

Figure 1. Structure of the Colombian television service<sup>36</sup>



In this figure, we can see that community TV is supplied in closed form, via cable, to subscribers who can pay a monthly or two-monthly fee. This is, precisely, one of the differences compared with local television that is broadcast openly and can be received free of charge. What is different about paid television, compared with community television, is that the former has wider coverage, which can extend to a country, region, etc., and offers more added services, and the subscribers pay a higher charge for it. Agreement 009 which entered into force in 2006<sup>37</sup> is the code that currently regulates community TV in Colombia and it leaves a different mark. The Agreement establishes how the system should work, based on the following items:

**Definition and types of content:** Community television is defined as a closed, not-for-profit TV service provided by organized communities, which aims to satisfy education, leisure and culture needs, with a focus on producing social and community-based content.

**Coverage:** Community television coverage is put in place over unified geographical areas, such as condominiums, residential complexes, sets of neighborhoods, neighboring rural communities in the same area or municipalities that are linked by relationships of mutual solidarity and cooperation, for which cable systems are used so that the signal reaches its target group. The Agreement also indicates that the coverage of a community operator cannot be more than 15,000 members. Nevertheless, the Board of Directors of the National Television Authority (ANTV) may authorize a higher number of users depending on special circumstances related to social, community and public interest uses.

**Community participation:** This type of television is developed in a participatory framework, within which members of the community can choose and be chosen, using democratic methods. Furthermore, organized communities should have accountability procedures, since there is an overriding common interest in providing the service.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Foundation for Higher Education and Development, 2005.

<sup>37</sup> Effectively, this code merges Agreements 029 of 1997 and 006 of 1999, which regulated not-for-profit TV services, with legislation on the distribution of supplementary frequencies (Angulo, 2012).

Not-for-profit status: No-one may make a profit by providing an organized community television service.

Granting licenses: The ANTV grants a single license to organized communities that broadcast national, regional or local frequencies on open television, and that receive and broadcast supplementary frequencies and broadcast their own productions, in accordance with what is laid down by the Agreement. Furthermore, they may broadcast up to seven (7) encoded signals, as long as they inform the National TV Authority in good time and comply with the minimum amount of in-house production. The code stipulates that organized communities who have valid licenses granted according to Agreements 006 of 1996<sup>38</sup> and 006 of 1999, shall keep their licenses and do not need to submit a new application for a license or approval for the proposed in-house production.

In-house programme production: The organized communities are obliged to make in-house production and the number of hours for it depends on the number of members the community operator has, and the number of encoded channels it broadcasts, so: (1) organised communities with coverage reported to the ANTV of less than or equal to 2,000 members, 1 hour of in-house production per week; (2) organized communities with a coverage of more than 2,000 members but fewer than 8,000 members, 2 hours of in-house production per work, and half an hour more per week for each encoded frequency it broadcasts; (3) organized communities with a coverage of more than 8,000 members, 2 hours of in-house production per week, and 1 extra hour for each 1,000 members above this number, with half an hour of additional production per week for each encoded signal it broadcasts up to a total of 10.5 hours each week.

Determining contributions and amounts: The ordinary contributions by members cannot be more than 0.0368<sup>39</sup> times the minimum monthly salary in force. Also, the money raised by this means, as well as going to the ANTV, should be reinvested in improving the television service. Both codes also determine that a free television service may be provided to public bodies, institutions that work with education or family well-being, and not-for-profit organizations in their coverage area.

Compensation payments: It is stipulated that compensation payments of 7% of gross monthly revenue<sup>40</sup> should be made to the National Television Authority, varying 1% for each encoded channel broadcast. If there are no encoded channels, then 1% of revenue should be paid anyway.

Prohibitions: Community television stations are prohibited from, among other actions: (1) interrupting supplementary or encoded signals with commercials broadcast from Colombian territory or with in-house programming, unless it is a special broadcast ordered by the national government; (2) broadcasting, using a character generator, civic messages under any conditions other than those established in Article 17 of the Agreement or attempting to convert viewers, either politically or religiously, with these messages; (3) broadcasting programmes with pornographic content or programmes that ignore the provisions of Agreement 017 of 1997, or the rules which add to or modify them, which contain violent and sexual content, or which ignore the principles and objectives of the television service.

Marketing: Community television may also raise funds through advertising and this is governed by the same parameters as open television, that is, by Agreements 2 of 2003 and 1 of 2005, which establish, among other provisions, that information about one or several products, names, brands or services can be shown, with a duration of more than three minutes for each half an hour of television programme, on all public service channels shown on open, national, regional or local television.

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<sup>38</sup> This Agreement regulated the provision of supplementary frequency services.

<sup>39</sup> This is worth more or less 9 American dollars or 6 euros per month. This is the maximum amount that members can pay for ordinary contributions.

<sup>40</sup> This money, together with the private national TV contributions and subscription TV contributions, funds public television in Colombia.

Value-added services: Agreement 009 of 2006 authorizes community television license holders to use the network to provide value-added and ICT services - internet, for example - provided that they are operated within the law.

The spirit of the Agreement is coherent - at least in theory - with what Dragon (2006, 2007) states, in that (1) it preserves and develops participation and dialogue in community media and (2) it achieves social sustainability, that is, it encourages the audience not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of the quality of its commitment; its institutional sustainability, which involves having a legal framework that regulates and establishes national policies directed at guaranteeing the existence and advancement of community audio-visual organizations; and its economic sustainability, which entails creating sources of funds from payments made by the community to watch it, voluntary contributions of money and work and/or finding advertisers.

After looking at its formal operations, it is worth asking what has happened in the practice of community TV in Colombia beyond the attempt to regulate with Agreement 009 of 2006. In other words, are these community media outlets really participatory, not-for-profit and self-sustaining? What does their future hold? What opportunities and threats lie in the years ahead? Next, we will examine these questions.

### **The debate about the future of Colombian community TV**

The way community TV is run in Colombia varies, since in some departments, like Santander, Antioquia and North Santander<sup>41</sup>, there has been significant work to try to bring democracy to the airwaves, to boost community participation in the entire process of managing and producing the programme schedule and efficiently administrating the economic resources from member payments and advertising, as well as providing extra services (internet and special broadcasts<sup>42</sup>). In other areas, economic and content production instability is the rule, due to the weakness that communities and civic and social movements have in appropriating these systems. It is also common for some people to be in charge of operating them, following strictly economic criteria, so that they may lose their 'not-for-profit' nature and, sometimes, they use politics to influence public decisions on local regulations.

Another important matter is the content of the programmes. Our research has indicated that the content is not normally what might be considered alternative or challenging discourse. This is in part because of the Colombian political and military conflict and the lack of institutional guarantees that impede the practice of free and independent journalism. Instead, the content commonly includes topics linked to recovering historical memory, recording political and cultural events, supporting social campaigns and creating an area to convey claims and community projects. Some of the stations do not make timely reports on their programming, revenue or the number of members, which makes it difficult for the National Television Authority to monitor them as they should.

This situation, added to the interest shown by multinational capital in appropriating local markets, has led the national government to present a proposed piece of legislation to amend Agreement 009 of 2006 that, in our view, is damaging to community TV's interests.<sup>43</sup> This is based on the fact that

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<sup>41</sup> This does not mean that there have not been positive experiences in other departments. There are some examples, but fewer of them. The word 'department' is the same as 'autonomous community' in Spain or 'state' in the United States.

<sup>42</sup> An important achievement made in 2012 was the authorization to broadcast some Colombian Professional Football games, an exclusive right that a few years ago was only held by the multinational *Claro*, owned by Carlos Slim, a telecommunications millionaire. Cf. Major Division of Colombian Football, 2012.

<sup>43</sup> The observations on this proposed legislation can be found on the National Television Authority website. Cf. National Television Authority, 2012.



Article 14 limits the signal coverage to one commune or group of neighborhoods and will not allow it to reach the entire municipality, which means reducing the number of members to a maximum of 6,000, whereas Agreement 009 of 2006 establishes that there could be up to 15,000. The option given in the proposed reform is for stations to bid for a license that allows them to cover a larger geographical area, but as a subscription-based TV station<sup>44</sup>, which detracts from its community, not-for-profit nature.

Additionally, it makes it compulsory for them to renew their operating license every ten years (Article 7), even if they have been granted a license indefinitely, as established by Agreement 009 of 2006, so their right to legal security is weakened in comparison to many Colombian and foreign investors.

Another affront to community television stations is found in Article 17 of the proposed reform legislation, referring to 'compensation payments'. The National Television Authority (ANTV) currently demands that these systems pay 7% of their gross monthly revenue, based on 1% for each encoded channel broadcast, but with the amendments foreseen, contributions to the authority would become 'the result of multiplying the number of members by a monthly per member tariff of \$1,202.55, to be adjusted based on inflation each year.' Economic contributions also increase, as they should give 10% of their monthly gross revenue from advertising to the ANTV. It is clear that with these contributions, it is intended that community TV stations' incomes are significantly reduced<sup>45</sup> for finding encoded channels and for acquiring the infrastructure, equipment and human resources that are fundamental to producing programmes.<sup>46</sup>

What can be deduced from all this is that there is a desire to legislate in favor of subscription TV stations, whose sponsors hope that community television disappears so that they can take hold of the market left behind in the wake of restrictions imposed by the national government in the new Agreement. In fact, subscription-based TV had already demanded that community TV stations be banned from broadcasting encoded channels, which are usually better quality and which – together with local programming and value-added services – entice new members.

We studied community television in Colombia from 2004 until 2012, using different types of quantitative (analyzing content and surveys) and qualitative (in-depth interviews and observational field work) methods. With this research, we intend to show the academic and policy communities the steps forward and steps back that have taken place in the Colombian model, so that this diagnosis can be the base for creating policies that support community TV, protecting it from transnational capital and giving it guidelines to operate in keeping with current social challenges, such as globalization, the influence of information and communication technologies (ICTs), and the emergence of renewed social activism. The following section will briefly present some aspects related to the method of the study and its main results.

### **Community TV in Colombia: steps forwards and steps backwards**

The study was carried out in two stages: in 2004-2008 and in 2010-2012. In both stages, different variables were measured and linked to three objectives: (1) finding out if Colombian community

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<sup>44</sup> However, to access subscription-based TV status, they will have to compete with transnational subscription TV networks, such as DirecTV and Claro, under unequal economic and administrative conditions.

<sup>45</sup> The option left by the ANTV to avoid diminishing revenue is to increase the rate that TV viewers have to pay each month or two-month period. This is detrimental for the TV viewers because they have to pay more to watch community channels and for the channels themselves because it makes them less competitive compared to subscription-based TV.

<sup>46</sup> It is worth noting that the proposed reform obliges stations to increase in-house programme production to 4 hours per week in the first two years of operation, and 14 hours per week following that, which means greater investment in infrastructure, staff and equipment.

television had an alternative, participatory nature, which spoke using its own language, as suggested by the academics cited here; (2) identifying whether this type of media complies with Agreement 009 of 2006 from the National Television Authority, in terms of producing in-house programmes focused on education and culture and (3) determining if this type of media really helps to develop its communities and if it has created any organizational and communication skills.

In the 2004-2008 period<sup>47</sup>, we were interested in understanding what types of programme dominated schedules. The cultural type was produced most often (43.2%), and includes education, scientific production, art and popular culture. This high percentage suggests that these stations comply, partly, with what is laid down in Agreement 009 of 2006 by creating spaces aimed at education and culture. However, we believe, as do Martín-Barbero, Rey and Rincón (2000), that the educational and cultural focus should not be limited to producing programmes of those types. That focus should rather be transversal to all programming, its sphere of expression, regardless of whether the content is about music, information, etc. Following that train of thought, we can also find relevant figures about information programmes (news, magazine programmes, interviews), which are so called because, according to Zabaleta (2005), they deal with news and reports, dialogue-based programmes such as interviews and debates, and mixed programmes that include both of these genres. In fact, these types have significant numbers: magazines (14.4%), interview programmes (9.6%) and news (7.2%). This trend has been present since 1998, according to Rodríguez (1998).

But according to what journalistic and organizational criteria are those programmes produced? Observational field work and interviews carried out lead us to conclude that the skills to produce them are there, because they are broadcast regularly and show improvements in their technical structure, in spite of the limitations in teams and qualified personnel. Nonetheless, much of their content is produced following successful national and regional television models and the stations do not explore a new expression of their own to see and relate facts. Furthermore, the daily information agenda seems to be defined by whatever is broadcast on local radio.

We also analyzed segments of news programmes, magazines and interview programmes to discover what the themes, journalistic genres, values and countervalues were present, both in terms of journalism and human development, as well as determining the protagonists who appeared most often. These things call attention to the most representative topics, politics (41.4%) and culture (26.8%), but if we look further at how politics is presented, we find that government issues dominate (28.9% of the segments studied), more than community issues (17.9%), implying that official and state sources take priority over community voices. Culture is distributed evenly among the topics of art (5.8%), education (12.6%) and the human environment (8.4%).

Another aspect we studied was the influence of journalistic genres on the existence of values and countervalues governing journalism and human development. The percentages related to journalism genres are shown in the following table.

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<sup>47</sup> This research covered the production, programming and audience sections of 10 community TV stations to understand the programme's genre. We also used four of them to determine topics, sub-topics, journalistic genres, values and countervalues, both of journalism and human development, and the protagonists of features on information programmes: news, magazines and interview programmes. It is also important to note that in 2006, the year in which many samples were taken, stratified by month and using systematic random sampling, there were only 106 television stations of this type in Colombia. In the production sector, methods like in-the-field observation were used; in the programming area, content was analyzed; in the audience area, surveys were carried out (Angulo, 2008).

**Table 2. Journalisme genres in information programmes<sup>48</sup>**

	report	news	interview	survey	edito- rial	TV class	chronicle	review	comme nt	other	total
News	4.5%	79.5%	5.0%	0.7%	2.4%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	3.1%	4.1%	100%
Magazine	7.0%	29.6%	16.9%	15.5%	0.0%	5.6%	11.3%	1.4%	2.8%	9.9%	100%
Interview prg.	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
Average Communit y TV	4.7%	68.9%	11.1%	2.7%	1.9%	0.8%	1.9%	0.2%	2.9%	4.7%	100%

Everything seems to indicate that the high prevalence of news (68.9%) within the information genre can influence the presence of journalistic countervalues<sup>49</sup> as well as general matters, superficiality (22.4%), unidirectionality (19.1%) and partiality (7.8%) and human development countervalues, such as exclusion (39%), injustice (6.4%) and war (6.1%). This is due to the short amount of time dedicated to news, which does not allow stories to be dealt with in depth, and the absence of contrasting sources, an essential principal of high-quality journalism. It is presumed that greater presence of journalistic values could be achieved (analysis, contextualization, etc.) and better human development values (participation, justice, etc.) reached in information programmes by using a flexible structure of informative segments; a balance between information, opinion and education; and more participation by sources and a greater variety of topics.

This means, of course, that genres like interviews (11.1%), reports (4.7%) and chronicles (1.9%), all of which are interpreting genres that allow for breadth of detail, commentaries (2.9%) and surveys (2.7%), both in the opinion category, and TV classes<sup>50</sup>, in the education genre, increase their presence. To achieve this, community TV needs more training for its journalists and leaders, more time, more economic resources and equipment, and improvements in the organization of its work. Similarly, the high percentage of the exclusion countervalue (39%) may have an influence on the low proportion of on-screen appearances by children (1.6%), young people (13%), the elderly (4.2%) and women (29.2%). In contrast, men (45.1%) and adults (74%) are the most visible in information programme sections.

Through these studies, we have discovered that magazines are the programme genre that, thanks to its flexibility and the way it deals with information, can best help form high-quality community television and journalism. To support this idea, we include the following data.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Angulo, 2008.

<sup>49</sup> When we define the 'countervalues' category, we are referring to the segments of information programmes that compromise high-quality journalism or achievement of human development indicators.

<sup>50</sup> We recorded the educational genre on television (TV classes and courses for TV) based on studies by Cebrián (2003).

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Table 3 in this chapter.

**Table 3. Strengths of community magazine programmes<sup>52</sup>**

	topic		journalism genre			Journalism countervalue	Human dev. countervalue	gender	age
	politics	culture	news	TV clas s	repor t	Partiality	Exclusion	women	adul t
News	46.8%	17.9%	79.5%	0.0 %	4.5%	8.8%	38.4%	20.1%	84.1 %
Magazine	14.1%	74.6%	29.6%	5.6 %	7.0%	2.8%	35.9%	42.9%	57%
Interview prg.	29.2%	41.7%	0.0%	0.0 %	0.0	4.2%	66.7%	34.8%	87%

What this shows is that magazine programmes, although they do not include the newness and immediacy of news programmes or the depth of interview programmes, lend themselves to positive values in the way they deal with information that come close to the nature of community television stations and focus on human development. There is, for example, a tendency towards culture topics (74.6%) rather than politics (14.1%) - as happens in other programme genres - they have more reports (7%) than news programmes (4.5%), the journalism countervalue percentages for partiality (2.8%) and exclusion (35.9%) are lower than those for news and interview programmes, and they take care to ensure that women have more on-screen presence (42.9%). This leads us to believe that the magazine format could be adequate for the principles of community TV because it is more inclusive in terms of topics, people, journalism values and human development. Moreover, the sections usually last longer, and include more community voices, and reveal a calmer journalism, as suggested by Just, Levine and Regan (2001).

Another aspect dealt with in the research was the audience. A relationship was found between the high frequency of news programmes (68.9%) and the concepts mentioned by viewers as the main contributions that community TV makes to their area. Their contribution focuses on information, since 45.8% of people stated that it contributed to community development by keeping it informed about the situation in the local area and the community and that it delivered useful information (14.6%). Perhaps a greater presence of interpretation, opinion and education genres, and a greater commitment to producing the values of human development in the different types of information programmes would mean that areas such as appeals to free expression, criticism and debate (14.6%), providing education (2.1%), establishing dialogues to resolve conflict (0%) and supporting safety and citizenship awareness programmes (2.1%) would have higher percentages than those shown here.

In the 2010-2012<sup>53</sup> period, other variables linked to the number of channels, hours of stable programming, number of permanent, direct workers and their remuneration, and difficulties in content production were also measured. As regards the first variable, the number of encoded channels, most broadcast between 41 and 50 (20%), 61 and 70 (20%) or 70 and 80 (20%), which implies that they have the equipment necessary to receive and broadcast a range of content to their

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Angulo, 2008.

<sup>53</sup> To gain the results, 30 surveys were performed in Sabaneta, a municipality close to Medellín, where the IV Festival of Community Television was held, organised by Comutv in September 2011. 120 stations of this type attended this event, of which 30 were surveyed. Cf. Cooperativa Multiactiva de Televisión Comunitaria, n.d.

members. The number of systems offering between 31 and 40 (16.7%) and 51 and 60 (16.7%) is also high. However, there are differences surrounding the number of encoded channels. These systems mostly broadcast seven encoded channels (66.7%), the maximum number allowed. Others broadcast four (10%) or six (10%). It is worth noting that the National Television Authority allows operators to choose the genres of encoded channel (sport, education, film...), which are the channels most in demand by viewers for their quality. Another result that justifies community TV's inclusion on the Colombian airwaves is content production. All the evidence shows that 20 years of experience have produced results, in that 100% of these stations create and broadcast content that includes participation, in some cases, by members of the community and educational, cultural and social institutions. Nevertheless, 20% do not do so regularly, that is, they only do so occasionally, respecting dates and times of the schedule, due to (1) a lack of maturity in the community to carry out audio-visual projects in a planned, organized and democratic way; (2) the need for a core group of permanent, paid journalists and equipment that can endure long-lasting work; (3) the loss of the community, not-for-profit emphasis, which is encouraged by businesspeople who run these television networks in order to make money, replacing the community and offering only supplementary and encoded channels (on some occasions they use the community channel); (4) the lack of plans for training by the ANTV for content production and managing community TV stations.

In spite of these weaknesses, community television stations strive to schedule more time for local content over the week. In this context, 59.3% produce more than six hours per week, 11.4% six hours, 11.1% four and 7.4% two. However, the number of hours varies depending on the number of members it has (as Article 17 of Agreement 009 of 2006 states), the organization and the quality of equipment that they have. Another measurable variable is the difficulty in producing in-house content. In that area, the representatives of community television stations indicate that the main difficulty is a lack of support from the ANTV (16.7%) because the body does not monitor its administration processes or improvements in the station's production and management. This is followed by a lack of economic resources (15.9%) and a lack of sponsors (15.2%), replies that imply that the resources they receive each month or every two months from users and advertising are not enough.<sup>54</sup>

It also interested us to see how many people work permanently and directly on producing programmes (journalists, editors, directors, and camera operators). Under this point, the results are more significant: between two and three people (56.6%) or between four and five (20%). Other systems showed one person, five or six people, seven or eight and more than eight, although there were fewer of them. Adding these values together, the 30 systems surveyed show a total of 112 people with production roles, and if we project that across the other 749 systems registered with the ANTV, community TV would create 2796 employees of this type, without considering related positions such as secretaries, fitters, managers and indirect jobs.

But what are their pay conditions and what training to they have?

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<sup>54</sup> This is another argument against the proposed reform that, precisely, aims to reduce the revenue of community TV stations, since they will be obliged to increase the number of hours of in-house programming and economic contributions to ANTV.

**Table 4. Remuneration and personnel training<sup>55</sup>**

Wage				
Minimum wage	More than minimum	Volunteers	Bonuses	Through advertising sold
52.7%	34.8%	2.7%	6.3%	3.6%
Training				
Secondary education...(1)		University studies...(2)		Technical studies...(3)
46.4%		41.1%		12.5%

(1) Secondary education courses/diplomas, experience in journalism; (2) with university and/or technical studies in journalism; (3) with technical/technological or university studies in other areas.

We can see that of those who work directly and permanently in these systems, 46.6% are people with secondary education or experience in journalism, 41.4% have university and/or technical studies in journalism and 12.5% have technical/technological studies in other areas. These studies imply that staff with technical, technological and university studies in journalism and other areas are linked to community TV production (both reach a total of 53.6%), although there is still a significant proportion of people who have fewer qualifications, that is, only secondary level education or journalism courses. Furthermore, of these workers, 52.7% earn minimum wage, with all the benefits established by law (600,000 Colombian pesos, €50 or US\$332), 34.8% earn more than minimum wage but less than twice the minimum wage in force and 2.7% do not earn any money because they work on a voluntary basis. 6.3% only receive bonuses - less than minimum wage - and 6.3% receive payments for advertising they sell to local business and institutions.<sup>56</sup> We can see from this information that 87.5% earn a salary with the benefits laid down by law, and this is possible because the closed community TV system (with paying subscribers) provides economic resources each month to improve their infrastructure, buy equipment and pay staff.

### **Five strategies for a new model of community television**

We propose a community television model that, by using five linked strategies, creates 'almost ideal' operations for this type of media, in accordance with new world challenges: globalization, influence of information and communication technology, the emergence of renewed social activism that fights for the environment, the creation of a more caring and eco-social economic and communication model (Chaparro, 2009), pacifism, gender equality and democratic participation, among other demands.

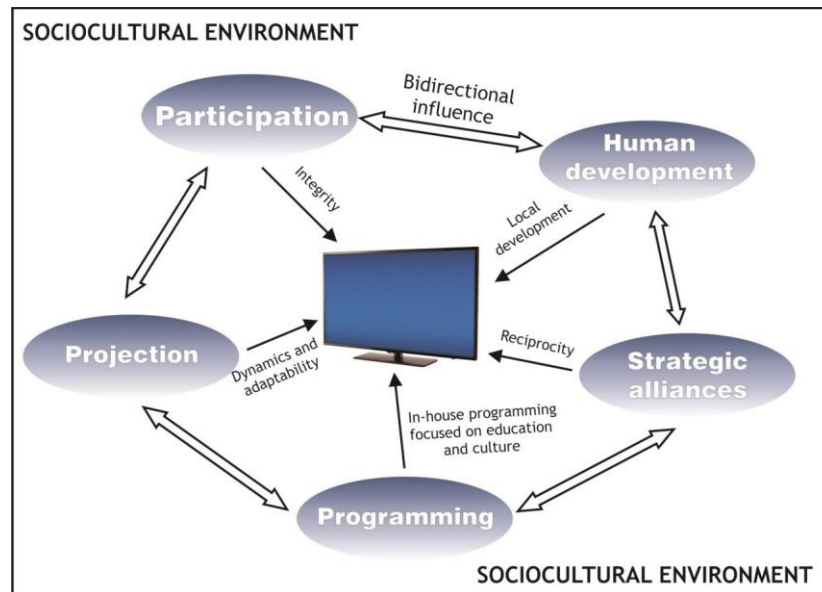
Usually, the models - as we have seen - are legal, i.e., they deal with what community television channels can and cannot do, where their signals come from, what type of content they can show and how many members can receive their services. However, the model proposed here intends for the systems to create alternatives to make high-quality community TV and journalism and to promote development with a human face.

Although these five strategies - participation, strategic alliances, programming, human development and projection arise from studying community TV in Colombia, we believe that they are universal and can, therefore, be applied to community media in other nations.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Angulo, 2012.

<sup>56</sup> This practice works against journalists' independence, since often they refrain from reporting controversial facts about local businesses and institutions from whom they have received money for advertising.

Figure 2. Five strategies for a new model of community TV



Source: created by the authors

The participation strategy is involved in the very nature of community TV, as Dragon has pointed out (2002). It means that this type of media is not imposed on the community, but it is rather the community itself that creates it so that it can speak on behalf of community needs and projects. Nevertheless, active intervention by citizens usually varies a lot in intensity and at different levels. Our proposal, therefore, is for participation to take into account stages for access, active intervention, self-management and training (Berrigan, 1981; Angulo, 2008), so that communities can carry out the entire process on their own.

Access is a stage related to the community's opportunity to get closer to information and communication systems, freely and spontaneously. This stage has to do with the options that the community has to (1) watch and listen to the programmes it wants to, selected from a wide range of areas that meet its information, education and entertainment needs; (2) request that programmes are broadcast at the times that best suit it. Yet, it means that there must be (1) productive and constant interaction between the producers and the community in defining content, so that the community may propose topics and discuss community problems and projects; (2) direct participation by the public in broadcasting the programmes, as well as in technical production or by giving opinions as guests; (3) the right to make comments, suggestions and criticisms in person or using other channels such as telephone calls, letters, etc.

Active intervention operates on three levels: in organizing or making decisions, in creating and producing television and in planning. In terms of organizing or making decisions, the community participates in managing, administering, funding and monitoring community television organizations and in controlling content, schedules and audio-visual, economic and human resources by democratically electing community committees or councils. In terms of creating and producing television, it is intended that there are opportunities without restrictions for the community to create and produce programmes, and that the station has the facilities, resources and audio-visual technical means to do so. In terms of planning, participation carries with it the right for the community to help define administration and communication plans.

Self-management is an advanced way of participating that involves the community having the chance and the ability to manage all types of resources (economic, technological, consultancy, etc.)

by establishing strategic alliances with different institutions, without compromising the philosophy and nature of public service. Training refers to the right to access professional help in order to perform programme production and creation duties, as well as monitoring, planning and self-management.

The programming strategy means mostly producing local content and maintaining focus on education and culture (Martín-Barbero; Rey & Rincón, 2000). Producing local content involves a particular way of seeing and conveying the facts that aims to encourage democracy and citizenship, to conserve and preserve the environment, to strengthen community organization, to recover peoples' historical memory, to resolve conflict, to preserve health and encourage a healthy lifestyle and healthy habits for children and young people, among others. The educational and cultural focus is understood as the code of expression that guides all programme production, not only as simple segments limited by schedules, dates and modules in which educational and cultural information is broadcast. The cultural elements are understood as (1) recovering and strengthening individual and collective values that are developed using social interaction mechanisms; (2) reflecting those values when producing television, for example, in the set decoration, without being tacky; (3) cultivating an area to create public feeling and recognition of a community with its own identity, while respecting ethnic and cultural diversity and plurality. The educational side has a wide role in community television, although it essentially aims to help train citizens and to develop autonomous, critical and proactive human beings.

The strategic alliances strategy suggests that community television can establish strategic alliances with civil society and a variety of institutions that can channel and find solutions for the community's needs and expectations in political, economic and cultural issues.

This strategy is relevant if we bear in mind that the media can only become an effective tool to bring about social change if it is accompanied by changes in the country's political, economic and social structure, harmoniously linked with a variety of projects. In other words, the isolated work of one type of media has limited impact if it is not combined with other resources. To achieve reciprocal contributions between institutions and civic movements, two conditions are needed: establishing cooperation relationships, not imposing, and encouraging commitment from agents for planning, actions and results.

The human development strategy refers to the fact that community television operates within the general framework of human development, as we mentioned in the theoretical grounds, but given its nature, philosophy and coverage, it dedicates all its efforts to promoting and strengthening local development, by creating programmes and television content that encourages skills for the community to spearhead structural changes for the common good. In other words, community TV is inspired by the principles of human development, but because its sphere of activity is restricted to one region or area, it acts fundamentally to promote and achieve local development, which is understood as a process that allows communities to lead their own development by making use of their potential and institutional, human, economic and cultural resources (Boisier, 2005).

The projection strategy means that these systems can guarantee their survival and development by becoming nationally and internationally known through the use of ICTs. With the help of ICTs, especially the internet and digital radio and television, community television can (1) let the outside get to know its programming, projects and audio-visual and community achievements, so that they can leave anonymity and geographical isolation behind; (2) make contact with other organizations to carry out collaborative work to exchange ideas and resources and create a new type of knowledge; (3) make use of types of interactivity made available by ICTs to strengthen the comprehensive participation element of the community; (4) use its network to provide value-added services and ICT services in accordance with legal requirements.



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