

GAKA FM EDITORIAL POLICY -2023



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Ntchengwa Yakuthukulila mafala anu

1. EDITORIAL POLICY SUMMARY

Gaka Community Radio Station was established in 2013 with technical support from Malawi Business of Applied Sciences. It began broadcasting in 2016 and achieved significant growth, transitioning to a Regional Commercial Sound Content License in 2020, expanding its listenership to 2.5 million in southern Malawi.

Operating at 96.3 FM, Gaka Community Radio Station covers regions like Nsanje, Chikwawa, Blantyre, and others. It offers online streaming through the A2Z Malawi FM Radio app, aiming for global accessibility.

The station upholds non-religious, non-political, and non-discriminatory values, tailoring content for diverse audiences. Thematic priorities encompass food security, democracy, education, disaster management, health, and empowerment.

The station's editorial approach emphasizes marginalized voices, anti-oppressive coverage, social justice, unrepresented perspectives, community diversity, fact-based storytelling, and editorial neutrality. It prioritizes community news and adheres to principles of balance, diversity, context, engagement, integrity, and anti-oppression.

Gaka FM also spotlights local content, with 80% of programming in local languages, reflecting the identity and aspirations of the Chikwawa and Nsanje districts. The station promotes empowerment through community involvement and prioritizes local perspectives over global matters.

Ultimately, Gaka FM serves as a conduit for the community's stories, ideals, and history, celebrating its unique voice while fostering inclusivity and positive change.

2. GAKA FM EDITORIAL POLICY

Gaka Community Radio Station was granted its broadcasting license on 11th October 2013 under the designation number 011229, and its inaugural broadcast was launched on 14th February 2016. Born out of a collaborative effort between the Foundation for Active Civic Education (FACE), a local non-governmental organization (NGO), and

technical support from (The Polytechnic College) Malawi Business of Applied Sciences - MUBAS, a constituent institution of the University of Malawi, Gaka Community Radio Station has undergone a remarkable journey of growth and development. In a significant milestone, on 22nd June 2020, the station transitioned from a community radio to obtaining a Regional Commercial Sound Content License, officially recognized by License number MACRA/DG/124/dc. This evolution has expanded its reach to encompass a substantial listenership of 2.5 million individuals who reside within the southern region of Malawi, as highlighted in the 2020 MACRA report.

Located in close proximity to the Aska Motel and nestled within the Bangula Trading Centre, Gaka Community Radio Station operates on the frequency of 96.3 FM. Its broadcast coverage extends across a diverse geographic spectrum, encompassing areas such as Nsanje, Chikwawa, Blantyre, Mwanza, Neno, Mulanje, Chiradzulu, Phalombe, Zomba, Balaka, and select regions of Machinga and Mangochi districts. Furthermore, supplementary coverage reaches Ntcheu through innovative spiral over waves. Beyond geographical boundaries, Gaka FM transcends local confines by offering global accessibility through online streaming, facilitated by the A2Z Malawi FM Radio application.

Striving to be a steadfast beacon of impartiality, Gaka Community Radio Station takes pride in its non-religious, non-political, and non-discriminatory stance, shunning any form of racial or gender bias. Driven by a commitment to inclusivity, the station tailors its content to suit diverse audiences, including farmers, mothers, children, youth, business communities, civil servants, retirees, bankers, entrepreneurs, individuals with disabilities, and local communities.

In alignment with its constitutional mandate, foundational principles and visionary aspirations, Gaka Community Radio Station directs its endeavors towards a range of thematic focal points, encompassing subjects like food and nutrition security, promotion of democracy and good governance, education, disaster risk management, health, water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS, COVID-19, youth and women empowerment, economic progress, and entrepreneurship. Through these thematic pursuits, the radio station aspires to foster human transformation and contribute to the broader advancement of society.

3. EDITORIAL PRIORITIES OF GAKA FM

The editorial thrust of Gaka Radio Station is defined by a set of priorities that underscore our commitment to responsible broadcasting. These priorities encompass a diverse range of perspectives and voices, aimed at both empowering marginalized communities and advancing the principles of social justice. Our editorial approach reflects the following key pillars:

a. Amplifying Marginalized Voices: Gaka FM is dedicated to providing a platform for marginalized individuals and groups to articulate their own narratives. By giving them the space to share their stories, we contribute to a more inclusive media landscape.

b. Promoting Anti-Oppressive Coverage: Our coverage is staunchly anti-oppressive, aimed at dismantling systemic inequalities. We actively address issues related to discrimination, bias, and prejudice, fostering a more equitable and empathetic society.

c. Rooted in Social Justice: The heart of our editorial stance lies in advocating for social justice. Our content sheds light on injustices and promotes conversations that drive positive societal change.

d. Elevating Unrepresented Perspectives: Gaka FM takes pride in bringing to the forefront viewpoints that are often overlooked by mainstream media. Our commitment to diversity extends to showcasing perspectives that challenge conventional narratives.

e. Embracing Community Diversity: With a national mandate, we recognize our responsibility to authentically represent the rich tapestry of our communities. We celebrate diversity through content that resonates with our audience's myriad of backgrounds.

f. Fact-Based Contextual Storytelling: Our storytelling is deeply rooted in factual accuracy and context. We strive to provide our listeners with content that informs, educates, and engages, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of complex issues.

g. Editorial Neutrality: Gaka FM maintains a strict editorial policy that does not accommodate editorials or commentary. Our focus is on delivering up-to-date community news, allowing our audience to form their own opinions based on balanced information.

h. Prioritizing Community News: Our primary emphasis lies in delivering timely and relevant community news. By doing so, we keep our audience well-informed about local events and developments that impact their lives.

Gaka FM remains dedicated to upholding these editorial priorities, fostering a media environment that is not only informative but also serves as a catalyst for positive societal transformation. Our commitment to inclusivity, accuracy, and social consciousness underscores every facet of our programming.

4. GAKA FM 96.3 PRIORITY BUREAUS:

At Gaka FM, our editorial priorities are a reflection of our commitment to comprehensive and equitable reporting. We center our coverage on the following areas, recognizing the importance of giving voice to each facet of our society:

a) Labor Advocacy and Worker's Rights: We delve into matters concerning labor rights, offering insightful coverage of issues that impact workers and their rights within various industries.

b) Indigenous Insights: Our platform elevates Indigenous perspectives, fostering a deep understanding of their unique experiences, cultures, and challenges.

c) Migration, Refugees, and Newcomer Affairs: We provide in-depth coverage of migration dynamics, the experiences of refugees, and the challenges faced by newcomers, aiming to raise awareness and empathy.

d) Student and Education Matters: Gaka FM is dedicated to shedding light on matters concerning students and learners, ensuring their concerns, triumphs, and challenges are brought to the forefront.

e) Environmental Responsibility and Sustainability: We emphasize environmental and agricultural topics, as well as alternative economic models that promote sustainability, contributing to a greener future.

f) Women's Equity and Equality: Our coverage tackles issues related to gender equity, amplifying the voices of women and highlighting the journey towards a more equal society.

g) Entrepreneurship and Access to Loans: We showcase entrepreneurial endeavors and explore opportunities for access to loans, contributing to economic growth and empowerment.

i) Criminal Justice and Prison Reporting: Our commitment extends to addressing prison justice matters, offering insights into the criminal justice system and advocating for fair treatment.

j) Race and Equity Focus: We engage in candid conversations about race, addressing systemic inequities and promoting a more just society.

k) Poverty and Homelessness: Through our coverage, we shed light on poverty and homelessness, aiming to raise awareness and support efforts to alleviate these issues.

l) Disability and Accessibility Advocacy: Gaka FM is dedicated to promoting awareness of disability rights and accessibility concerns, fostering a more inclusive society.

m) Advocacy for Peace: Our platform actively promotes a pro-peace narrative, facilitating discussions and initiatives that contribute to a more peaceful world.

n) Health and Well-being: We provide comprehensive coverage of health-related matters, helping our audience stay informed about issues that impact their well-being.

o) Transparency and Accountability: Gaka FM holds transparency and accountability in high regard, actively engaging in investigative reporting to ensure the public is well-informed.

p) Democracy and Good Governance: Our coverage critically examines democracy and governance, encouraging informed citizen engagement and advocating for good governance practices.

Through our commitment to these diverse editorial focus areas, Gaka FM remains steadfast in its mission to provide balanced, inclusive, and informative content that resonates with our diverse audience and contributes to positive societal change.

5. GAKA FM EDITORIAL POLICY: FOSTERING INCLUSIVE AND INFORMED DISCOURSE

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This editorial policy underscores the foundational principles that define Gaka FM's commitment to delivering community news and programming. It stands as a living document, subject to periodic review to ensure its alignment with our core values and evolving community needs. The following principles guide our approach:

1. Balance: The essence of Gaka, the resonating drum that heralds local events, epitomizes Gaka FM's role as an independent counterweight to mainstream news. We go beyond being an alternative; we stand as a reliable, unbiased option for our listeners. Gaka FM achieves balance by focusing on marginalized communities, shedding light on untold stories absent from corporate and public media. Our content is original, distinct, and shapes its news values independently.

2. Diversity: Gaka FM seeks a chorus of perspectives, with a particular emphasis on voices from underrepresented communities and identities. We foster a platform where self-representation thrives, amplifying the authenticity of our storytelling.

3. Context: Our radio lens zooms in on local issues and grassroots movements, aiming to stimulate discourse and mutual understanding among diverse communities within the Lower Shire region. We encourage analyses that extend beyond headlines, offering historical context and social justice considerations.

4. Participatory: At Gaka FM, sources and interview subjects play an integral role in crafting their narratives, ensuring their messages are conveyed authentically. We shun sound bites and sensationalism, opting for in-depth storytelling. Empowerment through media literacy is a priority; we equip communities to contribute and reflect on issues of injustice and oppression.

5. Sources: Gaka FM taps into primary sources—those most closely connected to issues—to infuse stories with authenticity. Secondary sources complement narratives driven by the voices of primary sources, enhancing our commitment to genuine representation.

6. Engagement: Our broadcast content and presentation are tailored to reach the widest possible audience in the Lower Shire region. We actively engage with our listeners, valuing their feedback as a catalyst for continuous improvement.

7. Language: Gaka FM caters to a Sena-Mang'anja-speaking audience, while encouraging contributions in other languages. Whenever feasible, interviews, narration, and actuality will be featured in languages other than English, accompanied by Sena/Mang'anja translations. Bilingual reporters are urged to convey the stories of their linguistic communities, ensuring inclusivity. Language barriers are surmounted through translation efforts.

8. Integrity and Accuracy: Gaka FM's commitment to integrity is unwavering. We hold ourselves accountable to our listeners and subjects by prioritizing accuracy in our reporting. Our journalists anchor their reporting in community-defined facts, embodying thoroughness in their research and due diligence.

9. Ads and Sponsorship: Gaka FM refrains from advertising. Sponsorship aligns with partners who share our mandate and objectives. During sponsorship periods, the sponsoring organization's staff are not featured as sources to maintain journalistic independence.

10. Anti-Oppression: Gaka FM ardently opposes all forms of discrimination. Our commitment to inclusivity is upheld both internally within our team and externally in all aspects of our production.

As Gaka FM continues to evolve, this editorial policy remains our compass, guiding us to provide responsible, empowering, and resonant community news and programming for the betterment of the Lower Shire region.

6. PROMOTION OF LOCAL CONTENT

Gaka FM stands as a powerful testament to the vibrant voices of our community, driven by a profound commitment to cultivating and amplifying our local content. With unwavering determination, we dedicate ourselves to enriching the airwaves with narratives that reflect the essence of Chikwawa and Nsanje districts, fostering an authentic and resonant connection with our listeners.

In a resounding declaration of our community's identity, nearly 80% of our programming finds its roots in the soulful rhythms of local Malawian languages. These languages are not just spoken, but lived, and they carry the stories, traditions, and aspirations of our people. We firmly believe that to be truly representative of our community, we must be in sync with its heartbeats, its intonations, and its expressions.

Our commitment doesn't just end at language; it extends to management as well. The reins of our content are held firmly by the hands that shape our communities every day – the people of Chikwawa and Nsanje districts. This isn't just about creating content; it's about empowerment. It's about entrusting the narrative to those who know it best, ensuring that the stories told are genuine and grounded in the lived experiences of our community members.

While we acknowledge the value of global perspectives, we stand steadfast in our resolve to allocate only 20% of our airtime to matters beyond our borders. This allocation, however, isn't a retreat from the world; it's an affirmation of our commitment to prioritize the voices, issues, and triumphs of Chikwawa and Nsanje districts.

Promoting local content isn't just a strategic choice; it's a resounding assertion of our identity, our pride, and our belief in the power of community-driven media. Gaka FM isn't just a radio station; it's a vessel that carries the hopes, dreams, and stories of our community, echoing through the airwaves and weaving our narrative into the fabric of our region's history. With every word spoken, every song shared, and every story told, we celebrate the spirit of Chikwawa and Nsanje districts, ensuring that our voices resonate not just within our community, but far beyond its borders.

