PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS

MAY-AUGUST 2026 EXAMS

EXAMINATION FOR DIPLOMA IN COMMUNICATION

DCM202 – RADIO PRODUCTION

FINAL PROJECT (40%)

A. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Context

Radio remains the most accessible and far-reaching medium in Kenya, particularly in rural and marginalized communities. It is a powerful tool for storytelling, cultural preservation, and social change. In recognition of this, Royal Media Services in partnership with UNESCO has launched a programme targeting to tell resilience stories in local languages through radio documentaries, along the theme **"Roots of Resilience: Culture, Sustainability & the SDGs."** Royal Media's Vernacular stations will be the target dissemination channels seeking to amplify local voices, showcase indigenous knowledge, and document how Kenyan communities are building resilience through cultural practices, traditional wisdom, and sustainable living. In response to this, you are tasked with producing a 15-minute individual radio documentary that captures a unique perspective on how culture, sustainability, and resilience intersect in a Kenyan community or context.

This project will test your skills in radio documentary production, research, interviewing, audio recording, editing, sound design, and creative storytelling, with a special emphasis on language preservation, cultural representation, and ethical storytelling.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completing this project, you should be able to:

1. Conduct thorough research on a community's cultural practices related to sustainability and resilience.
2. Plan, record, and edit a radio documentary using accessible equipment (including mobile phones).
3. Conduct **original professional interviews** in a local Kenyan dialect and integrate them into the story with translation or voiceover.
4. Combine **original recordings** with **downloaded audio clips or archival material** in a seamless manner.
5. Apply audio storytelling techniques such as sound design, pacing, and atmosphere.
6. Integrate audio elements (music, narration, ambient sound, actualities) to enhance the documentary.
7. Reflect critically on your creative process, technical choices, and ethical responsibilities when representing communities and cultures.
8. Demonstrate respect for linguistic diversity and cultural heritage through radio storytelling.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Documentary Overview

You are required to produce a 15-minute radio documentary exploring how culture, sustainability, and resilience intersect in a Kenyan context. The documentary must demonstrate how local communities are drawing on cultural practices, traditional knowledge, or indigenous wisdom to build resilience and achieve sustainability.

Thematic Focus (Choose ONE)

Theme	Description	Example SDG Link
1. Sustainable Agriculture & Food Security	Explore how traditional farming practices, indigenous crops, or local food systems promote sustainability and food security.	SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 15 (Life on Land)
2. Water Conservation & Management	Document traditional water harvesting, conservation, or management practices in a community.	SDG 6 (Clean Water & Sanitation)
3. Indigenous Knowledge & Climate Resilience	Show how communities are using indigenous knowledge to adapt to climate change.	SDG 13 (Climate Action)
4. Cultural Preservation & Sustainable Tourism	Examine how cultural preservation efforts contribute to sustainable livelihoods and tourism.	SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities)
5. Gender Equality & Community Resilience	Explore how cultural practices affect women's roles in sustainability and community resilience.	SDG 5 (Gender Equality)
6. Health & Wellbeing through Traditional Medicine	Document the role of traditional medicine and healing practices in community health.	SDG 3 (Good Health & Wellbeing)
7. Resilience Through Community Structures	Examine how traditional community structures (e.g., *harambee*, age sets, councils of elders) build social resilience.	SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 16 (Peace & Just

Production Guidelines

Your radio documentary must adhere to the following requirements:

Element	Requirement
Duration	15 minutes (maximum ±30 seconds)
Interviews	Minimum of 3 different original interview clips with community members, elders, or experts
Language	Interviews **MUST** be conducted in a local Kenyan dialect (e.g., Kikuyu, Luo, Kalenjin, Luhya, Kiswahili, Kamba, Maasai, etc.)
Accessibility	All non-English dialogue **MUST** be translated in the narration (either through voiceover translation or with an introductory English summary/context)
Voiceover Narration	The voice **MUST BE YOUR OWN** (in English or Kiswahili) – you are the guide and narrator of the documentary
Audio Material	You may integrate downloaded audio clips, music, or archival recordings alongside your own recorded material
Cultural Sensitivity	All content must be ethically produced, respecting community norms, consent, and dignity
Credits & Attribution	All sourced materials must be properly credited and attributed
Sound Design	Must include: (a) ambient sound/actuality, (b) music beds, (c) sound effects (where appropriate), and (d) professional mixing

Narrative Structure

Your radio documentary must demonstrate a clear narrative structure:

Section	Description	Approximate Duration
1. Introduction	Hook the listener; introduce the theme, community, and central question; set the scene with ambient sound	1.5–2 minutes
2. Context & Background	Provide cultural, historical, or environmental context; establish relevance to SDGs	2.5–3 minutes
3. Main Content	Present findings through interviews, narration, and ambient sound; explore the theme in depth	5–6 minutes
4. Challenges & Resilience	Show the challenges faced and how cultural practices build resilience	2–2.5 minutes
5. Conclusion & Reflection	Summarize key insights; reflect on the broader significance; call to action or hopeful note	1.5–2 minutes

DELIVERABLES

Item	Description	Format
1. Radio Documentary	15-minute radio documentary (±30 seconds)	MP3 or WAV
2. Script Outline	Detailed plan showing segments, interviews, narration, integration of external materials, and sound cues	Word
3. Interview Transcripts	Full transcripts of all interviews (original dialect + English translation)	Word
4. Source Acknowledgments	List of all sourced materials (audio clips, archival material, music) with proper credits	Word
5. Reflection Report	1–2 page reflection discussing challenges, creative choices, and lessons learned	Word

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Requirement	Specification
Audio Resolution	44.1 kHz or 48 kHz sampling rate
Audio Format	MP3 (128–192 kbps) or WAV
Bit Depth	16-bit or 24-bit (if recording in WAV)
Channels	Stereo (recommended) or Mono (acceptable)
Audio Levels	Peak levels between -6dB and -3dB; average levels around -18dB to -12dB
Duration	15 minutes (+/- 30 seconds)
File Size	Reasonable size for LMS upload (compressed appropriately; ~15–25 MB for MP3)

Audio Mixing Guidelines

Element	Recommended Level (relative to narration)
Narration	0dB (reference level)
Interviews	0dB (match narration level)
Music Bed	-18dB to -12dB (when narration/interviews are present)
Ambient Sound	-20dB to -15dB (background texture)
Sound Effects	-15dB to -10dB (depending on importance)
Fade In/Out	1–2 second fades for music and transitions

Sound Design Elements

Element	Description	Example
Ambient Sound (Actuality)	Natural, environment-specific sounds that create atmosphere	Birds singing in the forest, market chatter, children playing, rain, wind
Music Bed	Instrumental music that sets the mood and reinforces the theme	Traditional music, ambient instrumental, soft underscore
Sound Effects	Specific sounds that illustrate actions or events	Footsteps, door opening, drumming, farm tools, cooking sounds
Room Tone	Silence/mood sound from recording location (useful for editing transitions)	Background ambience from interview location

Translation & Accessibility Guidelines

Option 1: Voiceover Translation

- Introduce the interviewee and context in English (your narration)
- Play the interview clip in the local dialect
- Immediately follow with your voiceover providing a brief, clear English translation or summary

Option 2: Dubbing (Partial)

- Play the interview clip with the original dialect audio at a lower volume
- A voiceover artist (could be you) speaks the English translation slightly overlapping
- This is more complex and requires precise timing

Option 3: Contextual Narration

- Your narration before and after the interview provides the context and translation
- The interview clip is played in full in the original dialect
- Your narration afterwards explains what the interviewee said and highlights key quotes

GRADING RUBRIC (TOTAL: 40 MARKS)

Criterion	Marks	Expanded Descriptors
1. Research & Content Accuracy	**6 marks**	**0–2 marks:** Minimal research; factual gaps or inaccuracies; weak connection to theme, community, or SDGs. **3–4 marks:** Adequate research; mostly accurate facts; some depth but may lack contextual richness or SDG integration. **5–6 marks:** Excellent, rigorous research; high factual accuracy; strong relevance to culture, sustainability, and resilience; demonstrates deep understanding of community context and SDG connections.
2. Interview Quality & Integration	**6 marks**	**0–2 marks:** Poorly recorded or inaudible interviews; superficial questions; interviews feel disconnected from narrative; does not meet 3-interview requirement; does not use local dialect. **3–4 marks:** Competent interviews in local dialect; generally clear questions and responses; moderate integration into story; meets basic technical requirements; translation/narration functional but basic. **5–6 marks:** Highly engaging interviews in local dialect; well-researched, culturally sensitive questions; excellent audio quality; seamless narrative integration; creative use of interview insights to drive story; translation/narration is professional and clear.
3. Narration & Voice Delivery	**4 marks**	**0–1 marks:** Narration is unclear, monotone, or poorly delivered; difficult to understand; lacks energy or emotional connection. **2–3 marks:** Clear, competent narration; good pacing and tone; generally engaging but may have minor issues with delivery or clarity. **4 marks:** Excellent, professional narration; compelling voice delivery; perfect pacing, tone,

Criterion	Marks	Expanded Descriptors
		and clarity; demonstrates energy, emotion, and connection to the subject; your voice guides the listener effectively.
4. Sound Design & Audio Quality	**6 marks**	**0–2 marks:** Frequent audio problems; unclear dialogue; disruptive background noise; poor music choices or mixing; ambient sound missing or inappropriate. **3–4 marks:** Mostly clear audio; reasonable control of ambient sound; good but basic sound layering; some inconsistencies in mixing; music beds functional. **5–6 marks:** Professional-grade clarity; excellent ambient control; creative and appropriate use of music, sound effects, and ambient sound; polished mixing and balance throughout; rich, immersive soundscape.
5. Editing & Post-Production	**6 marks**	**0–2 marks:** Rough or choppy edits; pacing issues; weak transitions; poor audio balance; technical mistakes noticeable (clicks, pops, level changes). **3–4 marks:** Generally smooth editing; adequate pacing; proper transitions; functional mixing; basic audio processing (noise reduction, EQ). **5–6 marks:** Highly polished post-production; seamless pacing; purposeful transitions; professional mixing and mastering; flawless audio quality; excellent use of music beds, sound effects, and ambient sound.
6. Narrative Structure & Storytelling	**4 marks**	**0–1 marks:** Confusing or weak structure; lacks clear introduction or conclusion; story feels disjointed; weak connection to culture, sustainability, or resilience. **2–3 marks:** Logical and coherent story; clear intro and conclusion; flow is generally smooth but may lack emotional or thematic depth; demonstrates basic understanding of radio documentary structure. **4 marks:** Compelling, well-crafted narrative; coherent flow; strong hook and impactful

Criterion	Marks	Expanded Descriptors
		ending; story demonstrates insight, creativity, and meaningful engagement with the theme; clearly connects culture, sustainability, and resilience.
7. Cultural Sensitivity & Ethical Storytelling	**4 marks**	**0–1 marks:** Lacks cultural sensitivity; ethical concerns (e.g., no informed consent; exploitative representation); misrepresentation of community or cultural practices. **2–3 marks:** Adequate cultural sensitivity; basic ethical practices observed (consent obtained); respectful representation; some minor issues with cultural nuance or dignity. **4 marks:** Exemplary cultural sensitivity and ethical storytelling; clear informed consent; collaborative approach with community; respectful, dignified representation; demonstrates deep understanding of cultural protocols and ethical documentary practice.
8. Translation & Accessibility	**2 marks**	**0–1 mark:** Translation/accessibility is poor or missing; non-English dialogue is not clearly translated or contextualized; listener cannot understand key content. **2 marks:** Excellent translation/accessibility; all non-English dialogue is clearly translated or contextualized in the narration; listener can easily follow and understand all content; cultural concepts are explained appropriately.
9. Reflection Report & Documentation	**2 marks**	**0–1 mark:** Minimal or vague reflection; little explanation of decisions; lacks depth, honesty, or critical engagement. **2 marks:** Clear, thoughtful reflection; articulates technical, creative, and editorial choices; shows awareness of strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement; demonstrates critical engagement with the documentary process and ethical considerations.
TOTAL	**40 marks**	

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Before submission, ensure your group has:

- Radio documentary (15 minutes ±30 seconds) – MP3 or WAV format
- All non-English dialogue is clearly translated or contextualized in the narration
- Script outline (segments, interviews, narration, external materials, sound cues)
- Interview transcripts (original dialect + English translation)
- Source acknowledgments (all downloaded audio clips, archival material, music credited)
- Reflection report (1–2 pages)
- Credits included at the end of the documentary (spoken or in notes)
- Consent obtained from all interviewees and community leaders
- Audio file exported correctly and playable
- All files uploaded to LMS by the deadline

REFLECTION REPORT GUIDELINES

1. Creative Process
   - How did you choose your theme, community, and angle?
   - What was your creative vision for the radio documentary?
   - How did you approach storytelling and sound design?

2. Technical Challenges

   - What technical challenges did you face (recording, audio quality, editing, translation)?
   - How did you overcome them?
   - What would you do differently with more time or resources?

3. Ethical Considerations

   - How did you ensure informed consent and cultural sensitivity?
   - What challenges did you face in representing the community?
   - How did you approach the use of local dialects and translation?

4. Lessons Learned

- What skills did you develop or improve?
- What did you learn about radio documentary production, community engagement, or cultural representation?
- What did you learn about the theme (culture, sustainability, resilience)?

5. SDG Connection

- How does your documentary connect to the relevant SDGs?
- How does it contribute to awareness of sustainability and resilience issues in Kenya?

6. Self-Assessment

- What are the strengths of your radio documentary?
- What are its weaknesses?
- If you were to redo it, what would you improve?