DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Connecting Lives: Bridging Information and Services Through Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo: An Autoethnographic Account of Development Communication in Practice

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Abstract

This analytic autoethnographic study examines the lived praxis of a dual-role volunteer radio anchor and licensed social worker at Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo, a pioneering public service radio program in Cebu, Philippines. Grounded in Leon Anderson's (2006) framework of analytic autoethnography, the inquiry triangulates longitudinal reflexive journals, epiphany narratives, broadcast field logs, anonymized multi-platform listener interaction records, and the documented institutional perspectives of program founder and main anchor Dr. Parolita Mission. Synthesizing Amartya Sen's (1999) Development as Freedom (Capability Approach), Paulo Freire's (1970) Participatory Communication Theory, Virgilio Enriquez's (1978, 1992) indigenous Kapwa Framework (Sikolohiyang Pilipino), and United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), six-phase inductive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) yielded five overarching themes: (1) radio as a bridge between need and opportunity; (2) collective compassion through the airwaves; (3) listening as development practice; (4) transcending geographic and social barriers; and (5) adapting development communication in the digital age. Across all five themes runs a cross-cutting dynamic of emotional labor and ethical negotiation in live airtime management. The findings demonstrate that vernacular public service radio operates far beyond one-way information dissemination; it functions as an institutional conversion factor that translates public entitlements into actionable referrals, surfaces frontline policy implementation gaps through political listening, mobilizes grassroots pakikipagkapwa and electronic bayanihan, and leverages terrestrial–digital convergence to unite isolated rural listeners with transnational Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) networks. The study concludes by proposing a four-stage operational framework for service-linked converged community broadcasting in the Global South.

Keywords: analytic autoethnography; development communication; Kapwa; Philippines; public service radio

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

For more than two decades, my professional and personal life has unfolded at the intersection of social work, education, community volunteering, and development practice. Across hospital wards, barangay halls, classrooms, and disaster-affected communities, I have worked alongside individuals and families navigating the structural realities of poverty, chronic illness, social exclusion, and institutional bureaucracy. Thus far, among all the spaces where I have practiced community service,

none has reshaped my understanding of human connection and social change more profoundly than the Sunday morning broadcast booth of *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* in Cebu City, Philippines.

What initially began as an extension of my commitment to community service gradually evolved into a transformative praxis. Week after week, stepping into the broadcast studio of RGMA 7 meant entering a dynamic civic crossroads where private struggles entered the public sphere and met collective empathy. Over the airwaves—through live phone calls, short message service (SMS) texts, studio interviews, and personal testimonies—I encountered mothers pleading for pediatric oncology support, elderly residents struggling to decipher government medical assistance protocols, rural farmers seeking reachable social services, and ordinary citizens, professionals, and institutions eager to extend help. In those moments, the microphone ceased to be a mere instrument for transmitting announcements; it became a relational bridge linking acute human vulnerability to concrete institutional and community responses.

In contemporary media scholarship, rapid advancements in digital platforms, mobile connectivity, and social networking frequently cast traditional terrestrial radio as a legacy medium in decline. However, such technological determinism overlooks the lived communication realities of archipelagic regions such as the Central Visayas, Mindanao, and parts of Luzon. Across Cebu and its neighboring island provinces—including Bohol, Negros Oriental, and Siquijor—uneven broadband infrastructure, mountainous terrain, high mobile data costs, and socioeconomic disparities continue to restrict equitable access to digital information systems. Furthermore, frequent typhoons and power outages regularly disrupt internet servers and cellular networks, leaving battery-operated and solar-powered transistor radios as the most resilient lifelines for isolated communities. Within this sociogeographic landscape, terrestrial radio remains an indispensable public utility offering affordable, portable, vernacular delivery deeply embedded in the rhythms of everyday domestic life.

Since its inception in Cebu in 1992, *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* the regional radio arm of the pioneering Kapwa Ko, Mahal Ko Foundation, Inc., founded in 1975 as the Philippines' first public service television program has stood as a testament to the enduring power of development-oriented broadcasting. Operated through volunteerism and sustained by public trust, the weekly Sunday broadcast is dedicated to advancing public health, nutrition, social welfare, health literacy, and community empowerment. Over more than three decades, the program has adapted to shifting media ecologies, evolving from a strictly terrestrial AM broadcast into a converged multimedia platform that integrates live online video streaming and real-time social media interaction. Despite these technological transformations, its foundational character has remained unwavering: bridging the gap between marginalized individuals in need and the institutions, professionals, and fellow citizens capable of providing support.

What distinguishes this study, however, is not solely the institutional longevity of *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo*, but my lived, embodied experience operating within it as both a licensed social worker and a volunteer radio anchor. Existing scholarship on community and development radio predominantly examines broadcasting from the vantage point of audience reception, program impact evaluations, or macro-level media systems. Far less scholarly attention has been directed toward the subjective, day-to-day realities of the broadcasters themselves—particularly practitioner-anchors who simultaneously inhabit the roles of communicator, caseworker, empathetic listener, and institutional intermediary. Through analytic autoethnography, this inquiry turns the analytical lens inward, critically interrogating my lived experiences in the broadcast booth alongside the reflections of the

program's founder and main anchor, Dr. Parolita Mission, to illuminate how development communication is enacted in real time.

1.2 Institutional evolution of Kapwa Ko, Mahal Ko in Cebu

To appreciate the sociological weight of *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo*, it is essential to situate the program within its broader institutional lineage. Founded in December 1975 during a period of acute socioeconomic strain in the Philippines, *Kapwa Ko, Mahal Ko* emerged on national television as a groundbreaking experiment in civic solidarity, demonstrating that broadcast media could serve directly as an instrument of medical philanthropy and social protection. Recognizing that archipelagic disparities required localized, vernacular outreach beyond Metro Manila, the Foundation established its Cebu chapter and launched *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* in 1992 under the visionary leadership of Dr. Parolita Mission and a dedicated coalition of volunteer physicians, social workers, and civic advocates.

Over more than three decades of uninterrupted Sunday broadcasts, the Cebu program cultivated a long-standing support network. Unlike one-time charity drives that flare up during natural disasters and vanish once headlines fade, *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* embedded itself into the weekly moral rhythm of Visayan households across the Central Visayas, the Negros Island Region, Mindanao, and parts of Luzon. Every Sunday morning, families across urban Cebu, coastal fishing towns, and upland agricultural barangays tuned in knowing that the voices on air represented a reliable bridge to medical specialists, pediatric oncology support through initiatives such as *Panggaa Sab Ko*, and compassionate guidance through complex government welfare bureaucracies. Entering this broadcast space as both a volunteer anchor and a social worker entailed stepping into an established legacy of public trust, requiring strict adherence to the Foundation's humanitarian mandate alongside continuous adaptation to evolving community needs. On October 4, 2026, the Catholic Mass Media Awards (CMMA) recognized the program as the Best Development Radio Program across the five ecclesiastical dioceses in the Visayas. This distinction underscores that despite rapid digitalization and technological advancement, the program continues to operationalize the Filipino core value of *kapwa*, fostering sustained solidarity among Filipinos toward the marginalized, underserved, and disadvantaged sectors of society.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Despite decades of theoretical advancement in development communication and participatory media, significant empirical and methodological gaps persist in how public service broadcasting is understood and studied. First, existing media literature disproportionately emphasizes radio's didactic functions—such as public education, behavioral change campaigns, agricultural extension, and cultural preservation—while giving comparatively limited attention to how radio operates as an operational mechanism for direct social service brokerage and resource mobilization. Knowing that a government medical assistance program exists is fundamentally different from successfully navigating the bureaucratic requirements needed to secure a Guarantee Letter for life-saving treatment. How radio anchors translate broadcast dialogue into tangible service referrals remains under-documented.

Second, there is a pronounced scarcity of insider (emic) scholarship examining the lived experiences, emotional labor, and professional negotiations of development-oriented broadcasters. Broadcasters who facilitate social assistance occupy a complex liminal space between vulnerable citizens and formal bureaucratic institutions. Without practitioner-centered accounts, communication scholarship

risks overlooking the relational nuances, ethical dilemmas, and spontaneous improvisations required to sustain public trust and mobilize community solidarity on air.

Third, as local radio stations increasingly converge with digital platforms such as Facebook Live, little is known about how traditional vernacular broadcasting and transnational digital audiences intersect to support grassroots welfare in the Philippine context. Addressing these gaps requires a methodological approach capable of capturing both personal subjectivity and structural context.

Accordingly, this study seeks to examine my lived experiences as a volunteer radio anchor of *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* in Cebu, Philippines, to understand how public service radio functions as a medium of development communication in practice. Specifically, this inquiry is guided by the following research questions:

1. How have my lived experiences as a volunteer anchor and social worker in *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* shaped my understanding and praxis of people-centered development communication?
2. Through what communicative, relational, and institutional mechanisms does the program bridge marginalized individuals and geographically isolated communities to essential health, social welfare, legal, and educational services?
3. How does the broadcast foster participatory engagement, collective compassion (*pakikipagkapwa*), and grassroots solidarity among local listeners, institutional partners, and digital audiences?
4. How has the convergence of traditional terrestrial radio with digital streaming and social media transformed the reach, responsiveness, and developmental impact of the program?

Anchored in a systematic, reflective account of public service broadcasting from the inside out, this study contributes to the intersecting disciplines of development communication, social work, and community development. Specifically, the findings hold practical and theoretical value for the following stakeholders: Development Communication Practitioners and Broadcasters, Social Workers and Human Service Professionals. , Communication and Media Scholars. Government Agencies, NGOs, and Community Organizations. The findings highlight how institutional partnerships with trusted community-oriented radio programs can demystify public assistance protocols (such as PhilHealth, Malasakit Centers, and DSWD aid) and close service-delivery gaps for rural, island, and low-income populations.

1.4 Scope and delimitation of the study

This study is delimited to my multi-year lived experiences as a volunteer radio anchor and social worker for *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo*, which broadcasts weekly every Sunday in Cebu City, Philippines. The analytical focus encompasses both traditional terrestrial radio operations and the program's subsequent expansion into converged multimedia broadcasting via online livestreaming and social media platforms.

In accordance with the tenets of analytic autoethnography, the researcher serves as the primary subject and instrument of inquiry. To guard against solipsism or subjectivism and enhance analytical rigor, personal reflections, field notes, and program logs are triangulated with insights shared by the program's founder and main anchor, Dr. Parolita Mission, alongside anonymized records of listener interactions. This study does not attempt to conduct a quantitative audience survey or a statistical evaluation of beneficiary health outcomes; rather, it seeks to generate deep, contextualized

qualitative insights into the communicative processes, relational ethics, and institutional linkages that define public service broadcasting in practice.

2 Review of related literature

2.1 Development communication as a people-centered praxis

Over the past half-century, the discipline of development communication (DevCom) has undergone a profound paradigmatic transformation—shifting from linear, top-down diffusion models toward dialogic, participatory, and people-centered approaches. Early modernization theorists in the 1950s and 1960s conceptualized mass media primarily as instruments of persuasion capable of transferring Western technical innovations and behavioral norms to ostensibly traditional audiences. However, critiques from scholars in the Global South exposed the limitations of one-way transmission models, demonstrating that information alone cannot overcome structural poverty, institutional exclusion, or power asymmetries.

2.2 Community radio as a tool for participation and empowerment

Unlike state-controlled broadcasting driven by political agendas or commercial networks governed by advertising ratings, community and public service radio is defined by its civic accountability, vernacular accessibility, and responsiveness to grassroots needs (Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada, 2002; Rennie, 2006; Tabing, 2006). Pioneering Philippine community broadcaster Louie N. Tabing (2006), widely regarded as the father of Philippine community radio through the Tambuli project, emphasized that genuine community media empowers marginalized sectors by democratizing access to information and enabling ordinary citizens to participate in local governance and development planning.

Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2002) similarly contend that community-oriented radio strengthens social cohesion by creating a shared acoustic public sphere where local problems are articulated, debated, and collectively addressed. When broadcast in the local lingua franca, radio strips away the linguistic elitism often associated with official government documents and technical expertise, allowing farmers, fisherfolk, domestic workers, and urban poor residents to engage on equal footing.

2.3 Radio broadcasting and the persistent digital divide

In an era characterized by rapid smartphone adoption and social media proliferation, contemporary media discourse frequently assumes that digital platforms have rendered traditional broadcasting obsolete. However, empirical evidence regarding the digital divide—the uneven distribution of access to, use of, and impact of information and communication technologies (ICTs)—challenges this assumption. Globally, billions of people remain excluded from reliable high-speed internet due to geographic isolation, infrastructural deficits, high data costs, and disparities in digital literacy (NEXUS International Broadcasting Association, n.d.).

2.4 Philippine public service broadcasting and Sikolohiyang Pilipino

To understand why service-oriented radio resonates so deeply within Filipino society, communication scholarship must be situated within the country's distinct tradition of public service broadcasting and indigenous cultural psychology. For decades, Philippine AM radio has served as a de facto social safety net and civic grievance desk. Through dedicated public service segments, call-in

hotlines, disaster response marathons, and *panawagan* (public appeal) broadcasts, radio stations have historically stepped into institutional voids where formal state welfare delivery is slow or inaccessible.

A foundational institution within this tradition is *Kapwa Ko, Mahal Ko*, established in 1975 as the Philippines' pioneering public service television program and expanded to Cebu radio in 1992 as *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo*. Unlike sensationalist commercial broadcasting that exploits human tragedy for ratings, *Kapwa Ko, Mahal Ko* institutionalized a compassionate, dignity-centered model of media-assisted welfare—linking indigent patients, particularly children with cancer and chronic illnesses, to medical specialists, hospital subsidies, and civic philanthropy.

Crucially, the sustained mobilization of listener support in programs like *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* cannot be fully explained through Western models of individual charity alone; rather, it is rooted in *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology) and the core cultural construct of *Kapwa*. Articulated by Virgilio Enriquez (1978, 1992), *kapwa* signifies a shared inner self—a recognition of fundamental unity between the self and others. Within this worldview, extending help to a stranger in distress is an expression of *pakikipagkapwa* (shared humanity), *pagdamay* (empathetic solidarity in sorrow), and *malasakit* (deep protective care).

2.5 Media convergence and transnational civic participation

While terrestrial radio remains vital for offline and rural communities, the rapid rise of media convergence—the flow of content and audience interaction across multiple traditional and digital media platforms (Jenkins, 2006)—has reshaped contemporary Philippine broadcasting. Rather than displacing AM/FM radio, platforms such as Facebook Live, YouTube streaming, and instant messaging applications have transformed local radio stations into hybrid, transnational public spheres.

In the Philippine context, this convergence holds profound implications for development communication due to the massive global diaspora of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). Through live social media streams of Sunday broadcasts, migrants working in Hong Kong, the Middle East, Europe, and North America can listen to their hometown Cebuano broadcasts in real time, post comments, share personal testimonies, and remit financial or material assistance directly to beneficiaries featured on air. Simultaneously, local commuters and younger urban audiences engage via smartphone threads, amplifying *panawagan* appeals across digital social networks within minutes.

This hybrid ecosystem creates a powerful synergy: terrestrial radio captures the hyper-local needs of geographically isolated barangays, while digital convergence mobilizes a globalized network of *kapwa* solidarity. Documenting how practitioner-anchors navigate this dual offline–online communicative space represents an important frontier in contemporary development communication research.

2.6 Autoethnography as a methodological lens in communication practice

Historically, communication and social development research has favored positivist surveys, content analyses, or external ethnographic observations, often treating the practitioner-researcher's subjective experience as a source of bias to be eliminated. Over the past two decades, however, autoethnography has gained widespread recognition across the social sciences, health professions, and media studies as a rigorous qualitative methodology that bridges autobiographical narrative with systematic cultural and institutional analysis (Besio, 2020; Ellis et al., 2011).

2.7 Emotional labor, credibility, and the broadcaster as institutional intermediary

An emerging yet underexplored dimension of public service broadcasting scholarship concerns the emotional labor and relational responsibility shouldered by anchors who mediate acute human suffering on air. Originating in sociological inquiries into human service professions, emotional labor refers to the sustained management of feeling and affective expression required to calm distressed individuals, sustain empathy without burnout, and maintain professional composure under pressure. In commercial journalism, reporters often maintain detached objectivity when covering social crises. Conversely, practitioner-broadcasters operating within development-oriented public service programs must cultivate authentic warmth, moral presence, and active compassion while simultaneously managing live broadcast clocks, guest interviews, and complex referral logistics.

practitioner-anchors apply systematic case-management thinking—assessing immediate safety, identifying eligibility for statutory entitlements such as PhilHealth and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS), and coordinating multi-agency referrals. Documenting how these intersecting competencies operate inside a live Sunday broadcast represents a vital contribution to contemporary development communication theory.

2.8 Synthesis and research gap

A critical synthesis of the reviewed literature reveals three intersecting scholarly gaps that directly motivate this study:

1. **Overemphasis on Information Transmission Over Service Brokerage.** While extensive research examines community radio's role in agricultural education, health awareness, and civic dialogue (Melencio, 2023; Sagayo, 2025), comparatively few studies investigate the operational mechanics of social service broadcasting—specifically how radio programs translate on-air appeals into concrete medical, legal, educational, and welfare referrals.
2. **Absence of Insider (Emic) Broadcaster Perspectives.** Existing studies predominantly evaluate public service radio from the perspective of audience reception or institutional structure (James et al., 2019). The lived experiences of practitioner-broadcasters—particularly dual-role professionals such as social workers who serve as anchors—remain virtually absent from Philippine communication scholarship.
3. **Limited Documentation of Converged Vernacular Broadcasting.** Few empirical accounts examine how long-running Philippine public service radio programs integrate traditional terrestrial reach with digital livestreaming to engage both remote island communities and transnational OFW networks.

By offering an analytic autoethnography of *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* in Cebu, this study addresses these gaps directly—illuminating the relational, cultural, and institutional praxis through which public service broadcasting expands human capabilities and fosters inclusive social transformation.

3 Theoretical framework

To interrogate how *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* operates as an instrument of social inclusion and community empowerment, this study synthesizes four complementary theoretical and normative lenses: Amartya Sen's Development as Freedom (Capability Approach), Paulo Freire's Participatory

Communication Theory, Virgilio Enriquez's *Kapwa* Framework (*Sikolohiyang Pilipino*), and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

3.1 Amartya Sen's development as Freedom (the Capability Approach)

Traditional paradigms of development often equate progress with macroeconomic indicators such as gross domestic product growth, industrialization, or aggregate infrastructure expansion. Challenging this narrow economistic view, economist and philosopher Amartya Sen (1999) posits in *Development as Freedom* that genuine human development must be understood as the expansion of the real, substantive freedoms that people enjoy to lead lives they have reason to value. According to Sen, development requires the systematic removal of major sources of unfreedom—including poverty, poor economic opportunities, systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities, and institutional exclusion.

Central to Sen's framework is the distinction between commodities or resources and capabilities—the actual freedom and practical ability of an individual to convert available resources into meaningful life outcomes (functionings). Throughout my years in the broadcast booth of *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo*, I observed that many marginalized callers were not suffering solely from an absence of public programs; rather, they experienced profound capability deprivation. A destitute parent in a remote Cebu municipality might technically be eligible for government medical assistance through PhilHealth, Malasakit Centers, or the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). Yet illiteracy, intimidating bureaucratic procedures, transportation costs, and unfamiliarity with institutional protocols effectively stripped them of the capability to access those entitlements.

Viewed through Sen's Capability Approach, *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* functions as a critical conversion factor. By demystifying complex eligibility rules in the local Cebuano vernacular, inviting agency representatives on air to answer listener questions directly, and brokering step-by-step referrals through my social work training, the program transforms abstract public policies into accessible, actionable pathways. Information shared on air thus ceases to be passive data; it becomes an instrument of agency that expands listeners' substantive freedom to seek healthcare, claim legal protection, and secure social welfare.

3.2 Participatory communication theory

While Sen's Capability Approach explains what development communication must achieve—namely, the expansion of human agency and service access—Participatory Communication Theory illuminates how that process must unfold relationally. Pioneered by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970) and further developed by communication scholars such as Nora Quebral (1978), Jan Servaes (1999), and Nico Carpentier (2011), participatory communication rejects the top-down, linear banking or transmission model of media, which treats audiences as passive vessels waiting to be filled with expert knowledge. Instead, participatory theory conceptualizes communication as a horizontal, dialogic process of collective meaning-making, critical consciousness (*conscientização*), and shared problem-solving.

In the context of public service radio, participatory communication requires shifting the locus of authority away from the studio microphone and toward the lived expertise of the listening public. As documented in my reflections and reinforced by Dr. Parolita Mission's anchoring philosophy, the Sunday broadcast is structured around interactive talkback segments, live phone-ins, SMS inquiries, and social media threads. When listeners call in to report that a particular government guarantee

letter is no longer accepted by local specialists, or when an overseas domestic worker shares her lived experience of surviving intimate partner violence, they are not merely consuming media content—they are actively shaping the program's agenda and exposing systemic gaps in real time.

Furthermore, Freirean dialogue emphasizes that authentic communication is impossible without profound humility, empathy, and active listening. In *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo*, listening functions not as a passive prelude to speaking, but as a primary developmental intervention. Validating a caller's dignity on air disrupts the silencing effects of poverty and institutional neglect, transforming the broadcast booth into a democratic public sphere where marginalized citizens and service providers engage as co-creators of community solutions.

3.3 The Kapwa framework (Sikolohiyang Pilipino)

While Sen and Freire offer robust analytical tools for examining structural empowerment and dialogic participation, understanding the emotional and moral engine that drives listener generosity in *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* requires grounding the study in an indigenous Filipino theoretical lens. In *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology), Virgilio Enriquez (1978, 1992) identified *Kapwa* as the core value and foundational organizing principle of Filipino social relations. Unlike the English word *others*, which implies a separation between the self and the non-self, *kapwa* translates to shared identity or the recognition of a shared inner self (*ako at ang iba sa akin*—the other person is also yourself).

Enriquez argues that recognizing another human being as *kapwa* gives rise to *pakikipagkapwa*—treating the other with dignity, empathy, and moral solidarity as an equal human being, rather than out of transactional obligation or condescending pity. Within Filipino cultural praxis, *pakikipagkapwa* manifests through interconnected relational values such as *pagdamay* (sharing in another's grief or burden), *malasakit* (deep, protective concern for another's well-being), and *bayanihan* (communal cooperation to lift a heavy load together).

Applying the *Kapwa* framework to public service broadcasting explains why *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* consistently succeeds in mobilizing spontaneous, grassroots solidarity across socioeconomic lines. When a caller's medical crisis is shared on air during the *Panawagan* (Appeal) segment, the broadcast activates a culturally resonant moral economy. Strangers who drop loose change into mall coin banks, physicians who offer pro bono consultations, and overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) who remit funds from abroad are not acting as detached Western philanthropists dispensing charity to passive dependents. Rather, they are enacting *pakikipagkapwa*—recognizing the caller's suffering as a shared human condition requiring collective care. The radio program thus serves as an electronic *bayanihan* space that translates cultural solidarity into tangible material and psychosocial support.

3.4 Sustainable Development Goal 10: Reduced inequalities

Finally, this theoretical framework is anchored within the global normative agenda of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 10 (SDG 10): Reduce inequality within and among countries. Specifically, SDG 10 calls on nations and institutions to empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all individuals, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic status (Target 10.2), and to ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome by eliminating discriminatory practices and enhancing social protection systems (Targets 10.3 and 10.4).

In the Philippine archipelagic context, inequality is deeply spatial and communicative. Residents of remote island barangays, upland farming communities, and urban informal settlements face compounded barriers—geographic isolation, linguistic intimidation when dealing with English-dominated bureaucratic forms, and the widening digital divide. By situating *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* within SDG 10, this study evaluates public service broadcasting not merely as a local charitable endeavor, but as a vital civic infrastructure for equitable inclusion. Through free-to-air vernacular broadcasting paired with digital convergence, the program actively counters spatial and informational marginalization, ensuring that a family's geographic distance from Cebu City or lack of smartphone connectivity does not exclude them from accessing life-sustaining public services.

In operationalizing SDG 10 within the Central Visayas, communicative inclusion functions as a foundational prerequisite for material and social inclusion. Marginalized citizens cannot claim health subsidies, educational scholarships, or legal protections if those entitlements are communicated exclusively through paywalled digital portals or technical English circulars. By preserving free-to-air vernacular radio as a public commons while layering digital social media access on top of it, public service broadcasting directly reduces structural asymmetries in information access and civic voice.

3.5 Dynamic interplay of capabilities, dialogue, and Kapwa in practice

A critical strength of combining Amartya Sen's Development as Freedom, Paulo Freire's Participatory Communication, Virgilio Enriquez's *Kapwa* Framework, and Sustainable Development Goal 10 lies in how each lens compensates for the analytical blind spots of the others. Sen's capability approach provides a rigorous ethical metric for evaluating whether communication genuinely expands human agency—insisting that awareness without institutional access leaves individuals trapped in capability deprivation. However, Sen's framework is primarily philosophical and institutional; it does not prescribe the micro-level communicative ethics required to build trust with traumatized or marginalized citizens.

Freirean participatory communication fills this relational gap by specifying that authentic empowerment begins with dialogic humility, active listening, and the dismantling of expert hierarchies. Yet even Freire's dialogic model, developed within Latin American popular education, requires cultural localization to capture the specific moral motivations driving grassroots mutual aid in the Philippines. Enriquez's *Kapwa* psychology supplies this essential indigenous grounding—illuminating how *pakikipagkapwa*, *pagdamay*, and *bayanihan* transform an anonymous radio audience into an interconnected moral community willing to share scarce resources with strangers. Finally, SDG 10 situates these local broadcast interactions within global human rights commitments, reminding practitioners that reducing spatial, linguistic, and digital inequalities is both a local civic duty and a universal developmental imperative.

3.6 Conceptual synthesis

Taken together, these four pillars form a cohesive analytical lens for interpreting my autoethnographic narratives: SDG 10 establishes the overarching normative imperative of bridging geographic, socioeconomic, and digital divides so no community is left behind; Sen's Development as Freedom defines the substantive goal of the broadcast in converting information and referrals into expanded human capabilities and real access to health, nutrition, and social welfare services; Participatory Communication Theory illuminates the communicative methodology by replacing one-way top-down messaging with empathetic listening, vernacular dialogue, and co-produced problem-solving; and Enriquez's *Kapwa* Framework reveals the indigenous cultural mechanism by mobilizing

pakikipagkapwa, *malasakit*, and *bayanihan* to unite listeners, anchors, and institutions in shared moral responsibility. Inside the Sunday broadcast booth, these four dimensions converge seamlessly: empathetic dialogue (Freire) awakens shared cultural solidarity (Enriquez), enabling practical service linkages (Sen) that advance inclusive social equity (SDG 10).

4 Methodology

4.1 Research design: Analytic autoethnography

This study employs an analytic autoethnographic research design to examine my lived experiences as a volunteer radio anchor, licensed social worker, and development practitioner for *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* in Cebu, Philippines. Autoethnography is a qualitative research approach that systematically describes and analyzes personal experience (*auto*) in order to understand broader cultural, institutional, and social phenomena (*ethno*) through structured scholarly inquiry (graphy; Besio, 2020; Ellis et al., 2011).

Specifically, this inquiry follows Leon Anderson's (2006) framework of analytic autoethnography, which distinguishes itself from purely evocative or poetic autoethnography through five foundational commitments:

1. **Complete Member Researcher (CMR) Status.** Rather than entering the broadcast studio as an external observer, I occupy full, long-term insider membership within Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo as a regular volunteer Sunday anchor and practicing social worker.
2. **Analytic Reflexivity.** Throughout the inquiry, I maintain a disciplined self-awareness of how my professional socialization in social work, community development, and education shapes my interpretation of listener narratives, institutional power dynamics, and on-air interactions.
3. **Narrative Visibility of the Researcher's Self.** My own embodied presence, emotional responses, ethical dilemmas, and decision-making processes inside and outside the broadcast booth are made explicitly visible as primary empirical text.
4. **Dialogue with Informants Beyond the Self.** To prevent methodological solipsism or subjectivism and situate my personal reflections within the program's broader institutional history, my autoethnographic narratives are placed in active dialogue with the documented reflections and operational perspectives of the program's founder and main anchor, Dr. Parolita Mission, alongside records of listener interactions.
5. **Commitment to Theoretical Analysis.** Beyond recounting compelling human-interest stories from the airwaves, this study systematically interrogates lived broadcast experiences through established theoretical frameworks—namely Amartya Sen's Development as Freedom, Paulo Freire's Participatory Communication, Virgilio Enriquez's Kapwa framework, and SDG 10—to generate transferable insights for development communication scholarship.

4.2 Data analysis procedures

The assembled corpus of reflective narratives, co-anchor insights, field notes, and anonymized interaction logs was analyzed using inductive thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase analytical framework: Familiarization with the Data; Generating Initial Codes; Searching for Themes; Reviewing and Refining Themes; Defining and Naming Themes. Five overarching, analytically distinct themes were finalized and clearly defined: (1) Radio as a Bridge Between Need and Opportunity; (2) Collective Compassion Through the Airwaves; (3) Listening as Development

Practice; (4) Transcending Geographic and Social Barriers; and (5) Adapting Development Communication in the Digital Age.

And Producing the Analytic Narrative. Finally, I wove representative autoethnographic vignettes, verbatim insights from Dr. Parolita Mission, and anonymized interaction records into a cohesive theoretical discussion directly addressing the research questions.

5 Results and discussion

Through inductive thematic analysis of my reflective narratives, weekly broadcast logs, service referral records, multi-platform listener interactions, and the documented insights of program founder and main anchor Dr. Parolita Mission, five interconnected themes emerged. Together, these themes illuminate how *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* operates not as a conventional one-way broadcast outlet, but as a relational, participatory, and capability-expanding development institution

5.1 Theme 1: Radio as a bridge between need and opportunity

A central insight emerging from my years in the Sunday broadcast booth of RGMA 7 is that the developmental power of public service radio resides not merely in transmitting public announcements, but in functioning as an active institutional and social intermediary. During our weekly broadcasts, listeners routinely reached out while navigating acute life crises—urgent pediatric surgeries, catastrophic medical bills, educational disruptions, or complex legal disputes. While the radio program itself did not possess unlimited direct financial reserves to underwrite every caller's emergency, the broadcast booth operated as a vital civic convening space where pressing human needs intersected directly with institutional programs and community resources.

5.1.1 Autoethnographic vignette: Crossing the Bohol Strait for a child's survival

It was a humid Sunday morning in Cebu City, midway through our live broadcast segment focusing on the Kapwa Ko, Mahal Ko Foundation's *Panggaa Sab Ko* (Love Me Too) Children with Cancer initiative. Inside the studio, the red "ON AIR" light glowed steadily as we discussed early warning signs of pediatric oncology and the financial toll prolonged chemotherapy inflicts on low-income families. Suddenly, the studio phone line lit up, followed closely by an urgent SMS message on our dedicated program mobile phone.

The message did not come from the patient's parents, who were overwhelmed and financially paralyzed in a rural municipality in the neighboring island province of Bohol. Instead, it came from a concerned neighbor who happened to have their transistor radio tuned to our broadcast. Upon hearing our discussion about *Panggaa Sab Ko*, the neighbor immediately recognized the symptoms and plight of a young child down the road who had recently been diagnosed with cancer by local physicians. The local clinic had advised the family to bring the child across the sea to Cebu City for specialized tertiary oncology care, yet the parents were overwhelmed and terrified by the prospect of navigating a major metropolis, hospital admissions, and astronomical treatment costs, leaving them frozen in despair.

As I read the neighbor's message during the commercial break, my dual identities as radio anchor and licensed social worker immediately converged. On air, I spoke calmly and reassuringly in Cebuano, directly addressing both the neighbor and the child's family, affirming that they did not have to carry this burden alone. Off air, I immediately coordinated with the social work desk of the Kapwa Ko, Mahal Ko Foundation, mapping out the exact intake requirements, endorsement letters,

and transport logistics. Guided by the directions relayed through our broadcast team, the family boarded a ferry from Bohol to Cebu City, where they were welcomed directly by the Foundation's social worker. From that initial Sunday radio link onward, the child was enrolled in the program and was able to sustain expensive, life-saving oncology treatments that would otherwise have been entirely beyond the family's reach.

5.1.2 Institutional perspective: Empowering listeners through participatory trust

This lived experience of real-time service linkage mirrors the foundational philosophy articulated by the program's founder and main anchor, Dr. Parolita Mission, who emphasized how participatory dialogue fosters the deep trust required for vulnerable listeners to seek help:

For me, development radio programs like *Kapwa Ko, Mahal Ko sa Radyo* contribute to community empowerment as it strives to inform, educate, and empower listeners to be in control of their own health and well-being. The method where we engage the participation of the listeners in the discussion is enabling and giving them the chance to voice their questions, opinions, or insights. You can feel the trust of the listeners as they are already open to express their concerns on and off air, openly sharing sensitive and/or highly personal matters. In fact, there are instances that they will ask counsel on what to do on their current medical concerns even beyond the time of the show.

5.1.3 Theoretical analysis

Dr. Mission's emphasis on listener trust as the precondition for self-disclosure directly illuminates why the Bohol neighbor felt confident reaching out on the family's behalf—and how that relational trust unlocks structural agency. Viewed through Amartya Sen's (1999) Development as Freedom framework, the Bohol oncology referral illustrates how public service radio directly remedies capability deprivation. In Sen's formulation, poverty and marginalization cannot be measured solely by a lack of material income; rather, they manifest as the deprivation of substantive freedoms—the inability to access healthcare, navigate public institutions, and protect human life. In the case of the family from Bohol, specialized pediatric oncology services existed in Cebu City, and charitable support through *Panggaa Sab Ko* was available. However, geographic isolation, informational opacity, and institutional intimidation functioned as structural unfreedoms that prevented the parents from converting those latent resources into actual medical care.

Here, *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* operated as an indispensable institutional conversion factor. Drawing upon my clinical training as a social worker, I was able to decode complex medical and bureaucratic pathways in real time, translating a family's silent crisis into an actionable, step-by-step referral. Simultaneously, the neighbor's intervention underscores how radio activates community-level social capital: when public information is broadcast in an accessible, trustworthy format, neighbors become active agents in linking vulnerable households to institutional lifelines.

Furthermore, this service-brokerage model exposes an important institutional synergy between civil society foundations and state social protection mechanisms. While government programs such as PhilHealth, the Department of Health's Malasakit Centers, and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) hold primary statutory mandates for healthcare financing and crisis assistance, bureaucratic fragmentation often leaves families stranded between agencies. By maintaining active working relationships with hospital social service departments, volunteer physicians, and civic donors, *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* bridges these inter-agency gaps by providing immediate interim support such as diagnostic laboratory subsidies, starter medications, and transportation assistance while formal government Guarantee Letters are processed.

5.2 Theme 2: Collective compassion through the airwaves

Beyond formal institutional referrals to hospitals and government welfare agencies, my tenure in the broadcast booth repeatedly revealed radio's extraordinary capacity to mobilize spontaneous, horizontal grassroots solidarity. When personal stories of struggle were articulated on air with dignity, authenticity, and respect—rather than sensationalized pity—ordinary listeners frequently stepped forward with immediate, tangible assistance. Strangers offered essential medicines, bus and ferry fares, financial contributions, groceries, and pro bono professional services for fellow citizens with whom they shared no prior kinship or personal acquaintance, an ethic equally evident among the medical consultants who volunteered to join our broadcast team.

5.2.1 Autoethnographic vignette: The moral economy of loose change and shared humanity

During one Sunday broadcast, we discussed the mounting operational costs of sustaining free medical consultations and laboratory subsidies for indigent patients served by the Foundation. Unlike large corporate telethons that solicit massive checks from affluent philanthropists, our appeal emphasized that every single citizen—regardless of their own modest economic standing—possesses the capacity to contribute to collective healing.

Shortly after the broadcast, I crossed paths with an acquaintance who had been listening intently to our Sunday program. She shared with me how deeply moved she had been by the patient stories aired during the show. Previously, she had assumed that helping indigent patients required substantial wealth or formal institutional affiliation, believing her resources were too meager to make a meaningful difference. However, listening to our broadcast opened her eyes to an accessible, everyday avenue for participation: dropping loose coins and small bills into the official Kapwa Ko, Mahal Ko coin banks stationed inside local shopping malls and partner commercial establishments. She realized that her modest spare change, when combined with the contributions of thousands of fellow Cebuanos, directly funded medicines and diagnostic tests for neighbors in crisis. The broadcast also awakened her realization that even without clinical credentials, she could serve as an active volunteer for the Foundation.

Watching her face light up with a sense of civic agency reminded me that public service radio does not merely collect donations; it democratizes philanthropy. It transforms ordinary commuters, market vendors, students, and housewives from passive spectators of social suffering into active co-owners of community welfare, opening windows of civic involvement across all walks of life.

5.2.2 Institutional perspective: Translating knowledge into collective action

Dr. Parolita Mission reinforced how accessible, conversational broadcasting cultivates this shared sense of ownership between the studio, medical experts, and everyday listeners:

My experiences as anchor of *Kapwa Ko, Mahal Ko sa Radyo* help me understand the power of radio to help change behavior of listeners as individuals, families, and communities for better health and proper nutrition. It serves as my tool to disseminate current, correct, and relevant information to the listening public with an end in view that they will use the knowledge learned from our discussion on air to modify their unhealthy practices. As much as possible, I, together with the invited guest or resource person for the day, present the information in a simple manner, translating medical jargon to understandable terms. I use a conversational style so that an ordinary housewife, a farmer or fisherfolk, or a commuter could readily understand. The live call-ins and text messages taught me to listen to their concerns. The questions the listeners asked via phone call or via SMS serve as my indicator of the knowledge gap and topics of interest of the audience. Gauging from these gaps and

interests, we schedule the topics for the next episodes also in consideration with the health calendar of the Department of Health.

5.2.3 Theoretical analysis

This mobilization of everyday generosity is best understood through Virgilio Enriquez's (1978, 1992) *Kapwa* Framework in *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*. In Western models of charitable broadcasting, media appeals often construct a hierarchical binary between the benevolent donor and the helpless victim. By contrast, *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* operates within an indigenous Filipino moral economy grounded in *pakikipagkapwa*—the recognition of a shared inner self and fundamental human equality.

When listeners hear a fellow Visayan's (*mga Bisaya*) struggle narrated respectfully in their shared mother tongue, the broadcast awakens *pagdamay* (sharing in another's grief or burden) and *malasakit* (protective, empathetic care). The act of placing spare coins into a mall coin bank or offering transportation fare is thus experienced not as top-down charity, but as *bayanihan*—a collective lifting of a shared communal burden. Moreover, Dr. Mission's practice of designing future episodes based on listener SMS questions exemplifies Nico Carpentier's (2011) concept of substantive media participation: audiences co-determine the program's educational agenda, strengthening mutual accountability and collective efficacy.

Equally noteworthy is how this grassroots moral economy sustains itself across generational and occupational lines. Whether through small coin banks placed near supermarket checkout counters in Cebu City or pro bono medical consultations volunteered by specialist physicians between hospital rounds, *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* demonstrates that social capital is not merely an abstract sociological construct; it is actively cultivated every Sunday through transparent stewardship, respectful storytelling, and reciprocal trust between broadcasters and the listening public.

5.3 Theme 3: Listening as development practice

While institutional referrals and community generosity mobilize external resources, neither can succeed unless broadcasters first cultivate the humility to listen deeply to marginalized voices. Inside the studio, active listening serves not merely as broadcast courtesy, but as a diagnostic and emancipatory praxis that surfaces hidden policy failures and validates human dignity.

5.3.1 Autoethnographic vignette: Uncovering the hidden friction of guarantee letters

In mainstream media training, broadcasting is overwhelmingly conceptualized around the mechanics of transmission—emphasizing vocal projection, persuasive rhetoric, and message control. Yet my years seated behind the studio microphone of RGMA 7 revealed a countercultural imperative: active, empathetic listening constitutes the true foundation of effective development communication. Many of the individuals who dialed our studio hotline or sent text messages were navigating intersecting layers of chronic poverty, debilitating illness, and bureaucratic exclusion. Long before they needed a referral slip or procedural guidance, they needed an interlocutor who would bear witness to their lived reality without rushing, interrupting, or judging them.

During a Sunday episode dedicated to government healthcare subsidies and social welfare entitlements, our broadcast highlighted state assistance programs designed to mitigate catastrophic out-of-pocket hospitalization costs for indigent families. On paper, the governance architecture appeared comprehensive and compassionate. Midway through the program, however, we received incisive feedback from beneficiaries connected to our Children with Cancer project who were listening closely

to the broadcast. Speaking from painful firsthand experience, they alerted us to a critical operational gap: while state medical assistance remained officially available, the modality of disbursement had shifted exclusively to institutional Guarantee Letters (GLs) rather than direct cash augmentation. For families whose children required urgent outpatient consultations with private specialists who did not honor Guarantee Letters—or who needed immediate cash for chemotherapy drugs out of stock in public pharmacies—this procedural shift erected a severe, hidden barrier to care.

Sitting in the booth, I felt the visceral weight of their frustration. Had we relied solely on official agency press releases, we would have broadcast an incomplete, overly optimistic portrayal of service accessibility. By pausing to listen deeply to the beneficiaries' grounded feedback, we gained vital real-time intelligence into how social policies function—or falter—at the point of delivery. That insight enabled us to recalibrate our casework referrals immediately and address the exact institutional bottlenecks families were encountering in hospital corridors.

5.3.2 Autoethnographic vignette: Shared resilience beyond the broadcast

This praxis extended well beyond the studio walls. Shortly after airing a multi-week radio series on surviving childhood cancer, I had a spontaneous encounter with parents of beneficiaries from the *Panggaa Sab Ko* Children with Cancer project during a community activity at the Cebu City Health Office. Two parents approached me to share how deeply the broadcasts had resonated with them—particularly the segments addressing resource navigation and the psychosocial toll of caring for a child with leukemia.

While they valued the practical guidance on medical and financial aid, they emphasized that their heaviest burden was the emotional and psychological turmoil of caregiving—particularly when treatment side effects triggered sudden, aggressive behavioral dysregulation in their children that they struggled to comprehend or manage. Compounding this distress was the persistent threat of medical relapse, which subjected the entire household to recurring waves of acute anxiety. For these parents, listening to the on-air testimonies of fellow parents whose children had survived the most grueling stages of treatment offered something clinical brochures could not: vicarious self-efficacy, mutual validation, and a cognitive framework for cultivating resilience amid prolonged crisis.

5.3.3 Theoretical analysis

Taken together, these encounters empirically substantiate Paulo Freire's (1970) critique of the banking model of communication and his call for dialogic praxis. Freire argued that authentic development cannot occur when experts unilaterally deposit top-down information into passive recipients; rather, liberation and social transformation require horizontal dialogue grounded in humility, solidarity, and respect for the lived knowledge of marginalized communities. Within broader development communication scholarship, this shift marks a decisive departure from linear, top-down diffusion models toward a participatory paradigm in which communication operates as a relational process of mutual sense-making (Servaes, 1999; Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009).

In conventional public health and social welfare programming, aggregate administrative statistics and official policy announcements frequently obscure the everyday friction experienced by poor households. When *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* treats listener feedback as authoritative empirical data rather than anecdotal complaints, listening functions as a diagnostic and emancipatory act. Drawing on Couldry's (2010) sociology of voice and Dreher's (2009) framework of political listening, effective development media must move beyond merely granting marginalized citizens a platform to speak; it requires institutional actors to cultivate the receptive capacity to act upon what is heard. In

my dual role as broadcaster and social worker, this receptive posture enabled me to discern subtle psychosocial distress—such as parental guilt, caregiver exhaustion, and institutional alienation—alongside acute material deprivation.

Furthermore, the encounter at the Cebu City Health Office demonstrates how dialogic listening operates horizontally among beneficiaries themselves. Consistent with participatory health communication and peer-modeling theory (Singhal and Rogers, 1999), hearing peers articulate shared trauma on air legitimizes caregivers' emotional struggles and fosters collective psychological resilience. Ultimately, validating callers' voices disrupts the silencing effects of structural poverty, affirms their agency as citizens whose lived expertise must inform service delivery, and positions the foundation as an accountable intermediary for responsive social policy review.

5.4 Theme 4: Transcending geographic and social barriers

Throughout my broadcasting journey, the enduring physical and linguistic accessibility of terrestrial AM radio remained one of its most transformative strengths. Across Cebu and the broader Central Visayas, the Negros Island Region, Mindanao, and parts of Luzon, archipelagic geography, rugged mountainous interior barangays, remote island communities, and persistent socioeconomic inequities continue to limit reliable broadband internet access for thousands of rural and low-income households. For families living in isolated coastal villages or upland farming communities, the battery-operated transistor radio remains an irreplaceable lifeline connecting them to public information and institutional support.

5.4.1 Autoethnographic vignette: Voices from the islands and hinterlands

Week after week, as I reviewed the incoming SMS logs and call-in records accumulated during our Sunday broadcasts, a distinct geographic pattern stood out. A substantial proportion of our inquiries originated not from urbanized neighborhoods within metropolitan Cebu City, but from remote island municipalities and mountainous hinterland barangays scattered across the Visayas and northern Mindanao regions.

I recall reading text messages sent from areas where residents had to walk up hilly terrain simply to capture a faint cellular signal to send an SMS after hearing our AM broadcast on a small transistor radio. Often, these messages were written in hesitant, humble Cebuano, apologizing for bothering the studio before asking how an elderly parent with heart disease or a neighbor with a debilitating kidney ailment could seek help. For these callers, walking into a gleaming government office or a tertiary hospital in Cebu City felt intimidating—a world governed by English forms, unfamiliar acronyms, and unspoken class hierarchies.

Inside the broadcast booth, translating specialized medical and bureaucratic terminology into warm, everyday Cebuano became a deliberate act of democratization. When a guest physician explained hypertension or renal failure, or when an agency representative outlined PhilHealth and Malasakit Center requirements, my role as co-anchor was to ensure that every concept was stripped of intimidating jargon. No family in a distant island barangay should ever be excluded from life-saving care simply because of geography or linguistic barriers.

5.4.2 Institutional perspective: The Panawagan segment as an institutional equalizer

Dr. Parolita Mission detailed how the program's signature *Panawagan* (Appeal) segment systematically bridges geographic and bureaucratic divides by bringing state and civic institutions directly to remote listeners:

The *Panawagan* (Appeal) segment of the radio show bridges the patients to potential and available resources in the community. It puts to flesh Kapwa Ko, Mahal Ko Foundation's core strategy of bridging those in need with those who have the resources to share through the radio program. The callers are advised on how to avail of government support such as PhilHealth, DOH's Malasakit services, Medical Assistance to Indigent and Financially Incapacitated Patients (MAIFIP), the YAKAP program, DSWD's financial assistance, and House of Representatives Guarantee Letters. There are instances where representatives from these institutions are invited as resource persons on the show so they can explain their policies and procedures on how to avail of the above services. During the discussion, listeners are also encouraged to directly ask questions and relay their challenges in availing of the services of these agencies. The services of different institutions are made known in the community, especially to those who are far and have less accessibility.

5.4.3 Theoretical analysis

This systematic dismantling of spatial, linguistic, and bureaucratic barriers directly operationalizes United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities)—specifically Targets 10.2 and 10.3, which mandate universal social inclusion and equal access to public protection systems regardless of geographic location or socioeconomic status.

As documented by Philippine community media scholars such as Tabing (2006) and Sagayo (2025), vernacular broadcasting functions as a powerful communicative equalizer. By inviting representatives from PhilHealth (including its primary care *Yaman ng Kalusugan Program* [YAKAP]), the Department of Health's Malasakit Centers, MAIFIP, and DSWD into the studio to answer live questions from island and hinterland callers, *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* reverses traditional power dynamics. Instead of requiring marginalized rural citizens to expend scarce financial resources traveling to urban centers merely to ask questions about eligibility, the program brings institutional accountability directly into their homes over free-to-air radio waves.

In addition, broadcasting in Cebuano carries profound epistemic significance. In postcolonial Philippine institutions, the continued dominance of English in medical prescriptions, hospital intake forms, and legal statutes often reinforces subtle class hierarchies that intimidate rural and working-class citizens. By conducting complex medical and legal discussions entirely in conversational Bisaya, *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* affirms the intellectual dignity of vernacular speakers. Callers from remote islands and upland barangays are no longer forced to translate their pain into a second language to be taken seriously; instead, institutional experts adapt their communication to meet the linguistic reality of the community.

5.5 Theme 5: Adapting development communication in the digital age

Over the course of my involvement, *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* evolved organically from a purely terrestrial AM broadcast into a converged multimedia platform integrating live online video streaming and real-time social media engagement. Crucially, this technological evolution did not displace traditional radio; rather, digital convergence amplified the program's geographic reach, interactive speed, and resource-mobilization capacity while preserving its offline accessibility.

5.5.1 Autoethnographic vignette: A domestic worker's voice across the South China Sea

During one Sunday broadcast, our studio discussion focused on a sensitive yet urgent public health and social justice issue: intimate partner violence (IPV) and its devastating psychosocial consequences for women and children. As we discussed legal protections under Philippine law and

available psychosocial support services in Cebu, our studio phone displayed a steady stream of live comments on our social media livestream.

One comment immediately caught my attention. It came from an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) employed as a domestic worker in Hong Kong. Tuning in live via her smartphone during her Sunday day off, she bravely shared her personal testimony in the comment thread, disclosing that surviving severe intimate partner violence was the very reason she had made the painful decision to leave the Philippines and seek domestic employment abroad in order to protect herself and her children.

Reading her testimony aloud on air created an unforgettable moment of transnational solidarity. In that single Sunday hour, our broadcast connected rural Cebuano families listening via battery-operated radios with a Filipina migrant worker thousands of kilometers away in Hong Kong. Her courageous disclosure not only validated the silent suffering of local listeners enduring domestic abuse, but also demonstrated how converged development media enables diaspora communities to remain emotionally, morally, and materially woven into the civic life of their homeland.

5.5.2 *Institutional perspective: Hybrid resilience in a disaster-prone archipelago*

Dr. Parolita Mission reflected on why this hybrid model—anchoring digital innovation upon the bedrock of resilient terrestrial broadcasting—remains indispensable in the Philippine context:

My direct and on-ground experiences as a radio anchor prove that radio is still very relevant in today's digital age. The warm response and active comments or questions of listeners—especially on topics directly affecting them such as hypertension, heart disease, kidney disease, pregnancy, and vaccination—prove that radio is still one of the trusted media for development. Considering that the anchor's voice is a familiar fixture in their Sunday routine adds to the listeners' affinity and trust in the program. During disasters or when power grids and internet servers are down, the broadcast can still reach the listening public using battery-operated or solar-powered transistors. Radio programs are cheaper to produce and free to consume compared to data costs and smartphone requirements. In geographically inaccessible or remote areas where mobile connectivity is unstable, the radio station serves as the bridge linking isolated and disadvantaged populations to national or regional development goals.

5.5.3 *Theoretical analysis*

The evolution of *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* exemplifies Henry Jenkins' (2006) theory of media convergence adapted to a Global South development context. Rather than viewing old and new media as zero-sum competitors, the program leverages a hybrid communicative ecosystem. Terrestrial AM radio guarantees universal, zero-cost, disaster-resilient access for rural farmers, fisherfolk, and low-income urban households—especially during typhoons when power grids and cellular networks fail. Simultaneously, live social media streaming opens a transnational *kapwa* public sphere, enabling OFWs in Hong Kong, the Middle East, and beyond to participate in real-time dialogue, share lived testimonies, and remit financial support for *Panawagan* beneficiaries.

Ultimately, technological convergence succeeds here because it is anchored in decades of accumulated institutional credibility and human trust. Listeners engage across platforms not because of flashy digital production, but because the familiar Sunday morning voices behind the microphone have consistently demonstrated integrity, compassion, and tangible commitment to human dignity.

Looking forward, this hybrid broadcasting model also offers vital lessons for disaster risk reduction and climate resilience across the Central Visayas. Having experienced super typhoons such as Odette

(Rai) in 2021, which crippled electrical grids, cellular towers, and fiber-optic internet across Cebu and Bohol for weeks, local communities intimately understand the fragility of purely digital infrastructure. Maintaining robust terrestrial AM transmission alongside digital social media ensures that public service radio remains an unbreakable civic lifeline both during routine Sunday broadcasts and in moments of acute regional crisis.

5.6 Cross-cutting synthesis: Emotional labor and ethical negotiations in the broadcast booth

Across all five emergent themes, a unifying thread running through my autoethnographic reflections is the profound emotional labor and ethical negotiation inherent in dual-role development broadcasting. Stepping into the studio every Sunday morning meant holding two distinct yet inseparable professional responsibilities in constant tension: the communicative imperatives of a live radio anchor and the clinical, ethical obligations of a licensed social worker.

5.6.1 Autoethnographic vignette: Navigating vulnerability within the constraints of live airtime

There were Sunday mornings when the studio clock felt like both an ally and an adversary. In live broadcasting, segments are governed by strict time cues, commercial breaks, and scheduled interviews with guest physicians or agency officials. Yet human trauma does not adhere to broadcast schedules. I vividly recall moments when a caller's voice trembled on the telephone line—such as a parent recounting a child's worsening prognosis or a listener disclosing domestic distress—just as the studio technician signaled that only two minutes remained before the station break.

In those compressed seconds, my social work training anchored my response. I knew that cutting a distressed caller off abruptly to preserve broadcast pacing would inflict secondary institutional rejection, mirroring the very indifference they often faced in crowded clinics or government offices. Conversely, airing overly graphic details of a family's destitution or medical diagnosis without safeguarding their dignity risked turning human suffering into public spectacle. Learning to hold space calmly on air—validating the caller's courage in warm Cebuano (Bisaya), assuring them of immediate off-air follow-up, and seamlessly transitioning the case to our backstage social work team —became a delicate, practiced art.

This ongoing negotiation highlights an important theoretical contribution to development communication scholarship: service-linked broadcasting requires ethical guardrails rooted in social work principles of self-determination, confidentiality, and non-maleficence. By treating callers as dignified *kapwa* rather than passive objects of charity, *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* demonstrates that mass media can mobilize urgent community assistance without compromising human dignity. Ultimately, the synergy between Dr. Parolita Mission's three-decade medical and civic leadership and my social work praxis created a holistic care continuum—one where the Sunday microphone served as the compassionate front door to sustained institutional accompaniment.

6 Conclusion, limitations, and implications

6.1 Summary and synthesis of findings

This analytic autoethnographic study interrogated my lived experiences as a volunteer radio anchor, licensed social worker, and development practitioner for *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo* in Cebu, Philippines. By triangulating systematic personal reflections, field notes, broadcast logs, anonymized listener interactions, and the foundational insights of main anchor Dr. Parolita Mission, this inquiry illuminated how public service broadcasting operates as a vital mechanism of people-centered

development communication. Synthesizing the five emergent themes directly addresses the study's four guiding research questions:

1. **Shaping Development Communication Praxis (Research Question 1).** My dual immersion as a social worker and radio anchor transformed my understanding of development communication from a didactic exercise in public information into a holistic, relational praxis. Effective broadcasting requires integrating clinical social work competencies—psychosocial assessment, crisis intervention, and non-judgmental active listening—with accessible mass media storytelling.
2. **Mechanisms of Service Brokerage and Capability Expansion (Research Question 2).** Through real-time case triage, vernacular translation of medical and legal jargon, live studio dialogues with agency officials (PhilHealth, DOH Malasakit Centers, MAIFIP, DSWD), and post-broadcast coordination with the Kapwa Ko, Mahal Ko Foundation's social work desk, the program acts as a powerful conversion factor (Sen, 1999). It removes bureaucratic and informational unfreedoms, enabling marginalized families—including those from distant island provinces—to convert formal entitlements into life-saving healthcare and social protection.
3. **Mobilizing Participatory Engagement and Kapwa Solidarity (Research Question 3).** Grounded in Freirean dialogue and Virgilio Enriquez's indigenous Kapwa framework, the broadcast cultivates a shared moral economy. Through interactive talkback segments and the Panawagan appeal format, listeners co-shape program priorities, expose systemic policy bottlenecks (such as Guarantee Letter limitations), and enact pakikipagkapwa and bayanihan—mobilizing spontaneous financial, material, and pro bono support across socioeconomic lines.
4. **Impact of Media Convergence and Hybrid Resilience (Research Question 4).** Integrating live social media streaming with free-to-air terrestrial AM broadcasting has created a resilient, transnational development network. While battery-operated transistor radios continue to bridge geographic and digital divides for rural and disaster-affected communities (advancing SDG 10), digital platforms connect local needs with global OFW networks, amplifying solidarity without leaving offline populations behind.

6.2 Theoretical contributions to development communication scholarship

Beyond its practical applications for broadcasters and social workers, this study advances development communication scholarship in three distinct ways. First, it conceptualizes the dual-role practitioner-anchor as an institutional conversion factor within Amartya Sen's (1999) capability framework—demonstrating empirically how social work competencies integrated into live vernacular broadcasting dismantle informational and bureaucratic unfreedoms. Second, it enriches participatory communication theory (Carpentier, 2011; Freire, 1970) and the sociology of political listening (Couldry, 2010; Dreher, 2009) by foregrounding active, empathetic listening as a diagnostic mechanism capable of surfacing real-time policy implementation gaps, such as Guarantee Letter restrictions, directly from marginalized beneficiaries. Third, by anchoring media convergence (Jenkins, 2006) within Virgilio Enriquez's (1978, 1992) indigenous *Kapwa* psychology, the study illustrates how global digital platforms like Facebook Live can amplify culturally rooted moral economies of *pakikipagkapwa* and electronic *bayanihan* across transnational diaspora networks.

6.3 Limitations of the study

In accordance with rigorous qualitative scholarship, several methodological limitations must be acknowledged:

- **Single-Program Contextual Focus.** As an analytic autoethnography centered on Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo in Cebu, the findings are deeply rooted in the specific cultural, linguistic, and institutional ecosystem of the Central Visayas. While thick description supports conceptual transferability, operational dynamics may differ in commercial radio settings or regions lacking an established partner foundation.
- **Absence of Direct Beneficiary Outcome Metrics.** Because this study prioritized an insider (emic) practitioner perspective, it did not include longitudinal quantitative tracking of beneficiary health outcomes or structured post-referral interviews with callers. Future studies incorporating multi-stakeholder beneficiary voices would enrich these insights.
- **Inherent Subjectivity of Retrospective Reflection.** Although personal recollections were systematically triangulated against broadcast logs, social media records, and Dr. Parolita Mission's documented perspectives, retrospective narration remains inevitably filtered through the researcher's professional lens as a social worker and educator.

6.4 Implications and recommendations for practice, policy, and scholarship

Based on the empirical and theoretical insights generated by this inquiry, the following concrete recommendations are proposed:

6.4.1 For development communication practitioners and broadcasters

- **Institutionalize Service-Linked Broadcasting Models.** Community and public service radio programs should pair educational health and welfare discussions with structured, real-time referral directories and dedicated post-broadcast hotlines so information consistently translates into actionable assistance.
- **Protect Hybrid Offline–Online Accessibility.** Media managers should resist abandoning terrestrial AM/FM transmission in favor of purely digital streaming. Maintaining dual terrestrial and social media broadcasting ensures disaster resilience and equitable inclusion for low-income, rural, and elderly listeners.

6.4.2 For social workers, hospitals, and government welfare agencies

- **Establish Formal Media–Agency Referral Protocols.** Government institutions—including DSWD, PhilHealth, DOH Malasakit Centers, and Local Government Unit (LGU) social welfare offices—should formalize rapid-response liaison focal persons with credible public service radio programs to expedite urgent medical and legal cases identified on air.
- **Utilize Vernacular Radio for Policy Feedback Loops.** Social welfare administrators should actively monitor listener call-ins and feedback from public service broadcasts as an early-warning diagnostic tool to detect administrative bottlenecks (such as Guarantee Letter acceptance barriers) and streamline frontline service delivery.

6.4.3 For communication and social work educators and scholars

- **Integrate Autoethnographic Praxis into Curricula.** Graduate programs in development communication and social work should incorporate reflective autoethnographic methodologies to

train emerging practitioners in examining their own positionality, emotional labor, and ethical responsibilities in community engagement.

- **Expand Multi-Voice Practitioner Research.** Future scholarship should explore comparative autoethnographies across diverse Philippine regions and conduct mixed-methods evaluations measuring how converged public service radio impacts long-term household capability expansion.

6.5 A proposed model for service-linked converged community broadcasting

Synthesizing the lessons learned from *Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko sa Radyo*, this study proposes a four-stage operational framework for replication by community radio stations, academic extension broadcasters, and civil society media initiatives: (1) *Vernacular Agenda Co-Creation*, wherein weekly broadcast topics are continuously shaped by live listener SMS inquiries, call-in feedback, and seasonal public health priorities; (2) *Institutional Triangulation on Air*, bringing medical specialists, legal advocates, and frontline government welfare officers (such as DSWD, PhilHealth, and Malasakit Center representatives) directly into dialogic conversation with citizens; (3) *Backstage Case Brokerage and Ethical Triage*, pairing on-air communication with trained social workers or community navigators who convert listener appeals into confidential, verifiable institutional referrals; and (4) *Hybrid Terrestrial–Digital Amplification*, maintaining free-to-air AM/FM transmission for rural and disaster-vulnerable populations while leveraging live social media streaming to mobilize diaspora and urban solidarity networks. Together, these four pillars ensure that public service broadcasting remains an enduring catalyst for inclusive human development.

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