

Government to license more campus radio stations

By [Remmy Nweke](#)

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A recent four-day workshop to discuss community development principles and strategies for campus radio stations in Lokoja, capital city of Kogi State in the southern part of Nigeria, applauded the government's decision to license more radio stations for the country's tertiary institutions.

Participants in the conference who came from approved and licensed radio stations as well as those awaiting approval; all concurred that the decision indicates positive developments for access to media, communication pluralism and national development in general.

The workshop organised by the Institute of Media and Society (IMS) and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) also observed that the government policy reform in this regard, which began in 2004, is long overdue for submission.

The workshop attendees also commended the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) for its sterling work in creating a conducive environment regulatory environment for campus radio stations and for community radio stations to thrive.

Participants also pointed out that the operations of campus stations would have an immense impact in the development of Nigerian academic communities, and the demand to open more campus radio stations remains very high in Nigerian educational institutions.

According to the conference communiqué the demand is so high that current licensing measures are coming under immense scrutiny from academic institutions who want to establish more radio stations. The communiqué said: "...[T]he licence approval process is not keeping pace with demands from academic communities."

However, in line with regulatory requirements education authorities also require capacity-building training to facilitate appropriate management and optimization of benefits of campus radio.

Participants equally called for continuous regulatory reviews between NBC and stakeholders, decrying, however, that licence approvals have so far been limited to academic communities while applications for licences by other types of community such as rural, sub-urban remain inclusive before the regulatory body.

They further recommended that educational institutions who have obtained or about to obtain broadcast licences should recognise the diversity of the campus community in the management of campus radio stations.

In addition school authorities should understand and manage campus radio as non-profit and community development tools and encourage all campus radio stations to generate programmes that would be relevant to their primary and secondary communities, as well as establish mechanisms that will ensure accountability and transparency in the day-to-day running of the campus radio stations, among others.

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