



MEDIA TRAINING REPORT

RIFT VALLEY REGION

2026

Eka Hotel, Eldoret

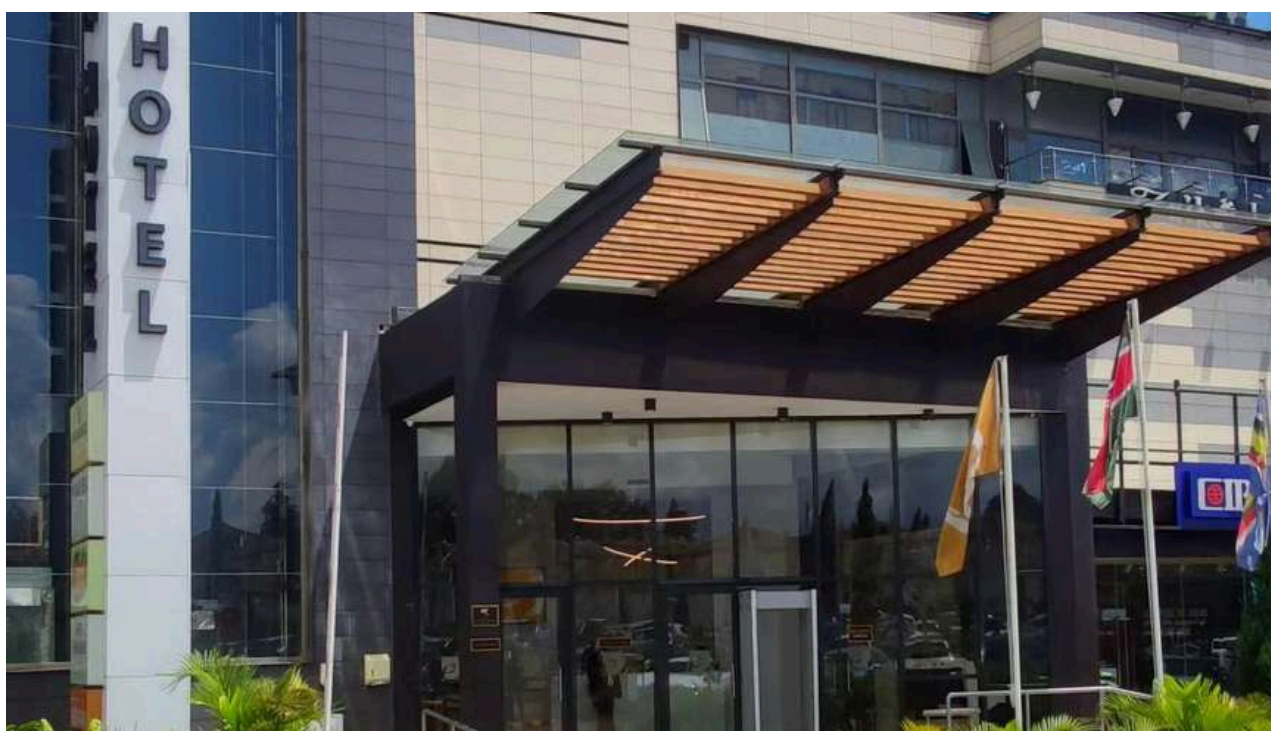
INTRODUCTION

The FELT Africa Media Training Rift Valley Region Edition was held from 5th to 8th February at EKA Hotel Eldoret, bringing together radio journalists from across the Rift Valley for a structured three-day programme focused on professional standards, legal literacy, and responsible broadcasting in polarized environments.

This training marked the final engagement in a nationwide series targeting community radio journalists across Kenya. Prior to the Eldoret session, FELT Africa had conducted similar trainings in other regions of the country, with Eldoret serving as the closing chapter. The session therefore not only addressed regional realities but also consolidated lessons drawn from engagements across diverse media environments nationwide.

The training was designed in response to the evolving pressures facing media practitioners, particularly within community and vernacular radio spaces where live broadcasting, audience interaction, and rapid information cycles heighten both influence and risk. In an environment marked by political contestation, misinformation, economic pressure within media houses, and increasing public scrutiny, the need for disciplined and ethically grounded journalism has become increasingly urgent.

Over the course of the programme, participants engaged with experienced practitioners in journalism, law, and strategic communication. The sessions interrogated the fine line between journalism and activism, examined the legal framework governing media practice, addressed misinformation and its societal consequences, and explored leadership and career development pathways within and beyond the newsroom.



Beyond technical skill-building, the training encouraged critical self-reflection on professional identity, credibility, and long-term growth. It created space for candid discussion on the realities journalists face – including political interference, safety concerns, editorial pressure, and financial vulnerability – while reinforcing that professional discipline remains the strongest safeguard for both individual journalists and their institutions.

By the conclusion of the training, participants had strengthened their understanding of ethical broadcasting, legal responsibility, and role clarity in politically sensitive contexts. The programme also fostered peer networking among journalists in the region, many of whom rarely convene collectively, reinforcing a shared commitment to responsible public discourse.



OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING

1. Strengthen Legal Literacy Among Radio Journalists

To enhance participants' understanding of the constitutional and statutory framework governing media practice in Kenya, including defamation law, privacy considerations, regulatory standards, and professional accountability mechanisms.

2. Reinforce Ethical and Professional Standards

To deepen awareness of journalism ethics, including verification discipline, fact-opinion distinction, right of reply obligations, and responsible live broadcasting practices in politically sensitive environments.

3. Clarify the Distinction Between Journalism and Activism

To help journalists critically examine the boundary between reporting, commentary, and advocacy, and to strengthen role clarity in polarized public discourse.

4. Address the Risks of Misinformation and Inflammatory Broadcasting

To equip participants with tools to identify, manage, and contain misinformation, disinformation, and coded language that may heighten community tension or undermine institutional trust.

5. Strengthen Editorial Judgment in High-Pressure Environments

To provide practical frameworks for managing live call-ins, politically sensitive interviews, and breaking news scenarios without compromising professional standards.

6. Promote Career Development and Long-Term Professional Growth

To encourage journalists to view credibility, discipline, and resilience as foundations for sustained career advancement within and beyond the newsroom.

7. Foster Peer Learning and Regional Collaboration

To create a platform for journalists from across the Rift Valley to share experiences, interrogate professional challenges collectively, and build networks that support responsible broadcasting practices.



FELT AFRICA GROUP PROFILE

FELT Africa Group is a strategic communications and public affairs firm operating at the intersection of media, law, governance, and institutional leadership. The firm works with leaders, institutions, and media practitioners whose actions shape public confidence, policy direction, and institutional legitimacy.

FELT Africa's work is grounded in the understanding that public leadership and institutional authority are not exercised only through decisions, but through how those decisions are communicated, interpreted, and trusted. In complex and politically sensitive environments, disciplined narrative management, legal awareness, and ethical communication are essential to maintaining credibility and preventing reputational or institutional erosion.

The firm combines expertise in journalism, legal advisory, crisis communication, governance engagement, and professional training to support responsible public discourse and sustainable institutional trust.



WHY FELT AFRICA WAS SELECTED TO IMPLEMENT THE TRAINING

FELT Africa was uniquely positioned to facilitate this programme due to its interdisciplinary expertise and practical experience across media, law, and governance.

First, the training team combined newsroom leadership, investigative journalism experience, and legal expertise. This ensured that discussions on ethics, misinformation, and defamation were grounded not only in theory but in real newsroom and courtroom realities.

Second, FELT Africa's experience advising leaders and institutions in high-pressure environments provided insight into how narratives influence public perception, institutional trust, and social stability. This allowed the training to move beyond technical compliance and address the broader consequences of irresponsible broadcasting.

Third, the firm's track record in professional development training for media practitioners ensured that the sessions were tailored to the realities of community and vernacular radio – including live caller management, political interference, economic pressure, and safety concerns.

Finally, FELT Africa approaches capacity building as a long-term commitment rather than a one-off engagement. The Eldoret training formed part of a broader nationwide series targeting community radio journalists, reflecting the firm's sustained investment in strengthening professional standards across Kenya's media ecosystem.

Through its blended expertise, practical orientation, and national footprint, FELT Africa was well placed to deliver a programme that combined legal literacy, ethical clarity, and career-focused professional growth.

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM



SUPPORT TEAM



Esther Nyambura
Project Manager



Fuad Abdirahman
Event MC



Anne Marie Amondi
Digital Lead



Timothy Ndung'u
Production Lead



Patricia Wayua
Attendee Coordinator



Vincent Kilonzo
Technical Assistant



James Njoroge
Rapporteur

LEAD FACILITATOR



Diana Ngao
MD, FELT Africa Group

Diana Ngao is a communications strategist and public affairs executive, and the Founder and Managing Director of FELT Africa Group.

Her work focuses on governance communication, crisis and reputation management, and strategic public affairs advisory. She has worked with public institutions, political leadership teams, and organizations navigating complex communication environments where credibility, discipline, and clarity of messaging are critical.

She opened the training by framing the importance of professional standards in journalism and the role of structured capacity building in strengthening responsible public discourse. Her experience designing media-focused training programmes and advising leaders operating under intense public scrutiny positioned her to set the context for the programme and outline how ethical journalism contributes to institutional trust and national cohesion.

TRAINERS

Chaka Sichangi,
Director of Policy, Law, & Research, FELT
Africa Group

Chaka Sichangi is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya and a policy, public affairs, and media law expert with extensive experience advising institutions on regulatory compliance, legal risk, and strategic communication in high-stakes environments.

His work combines legal advisory, governance policy engagement, and media law expertise. He facilitated sessions on media law, journalism ethics, and the legal consequences of misinformation and defamation.

Drawing from his legal practice and policy advisory experience, he guided participants through the legal framework governing journalism in Kenya, providing practical interpretation of how defamation law, responsible reporting, and editorial judgment intersect in day-to-day media practice.





Dennis Onsarigo
Chairman, FELT Africa Group

Dennis Onsarigo is a senior strategic communications advisor, governance strategist, and former investigative journalist with over two decades of experience in broadcast journalism, public affairs, and executive communications. His career spans senior newsroom leadership, investigative reporting, political campaign communications, and senior advisory roles in county government.

He led the session on leadership and career development, drawing from his professional journey from a newsroom intern to leadership roles across media, governance, and strategic communications. His experience demonstrated how discipline, resilience, and professional credibility can open opportunities beyond traditional newsroom pathways while maintaining the foundational values of journalism.

Ng'ang'a Mbugua
Consultant Trainer, FELT Africa Group

Ng'ang'a Mbugua is the Editor in Chief of Nairobi Law Monthly and a media professional with extensive experience in newsroom leadership, editorial development, and content strategy.

His work has focused on strengthening editorial judgment, guiding newsroom teams, and shaping public conversation through responsible storytelling and disciplined reporting.



He facilitated sessions examining the distinction between journalism and activism, as well as the importance of balancing facts and opinion in radio broadcasting. Drawing on newsroom experience and editorial leadership, he guided participants through the professional boundaries required to maintain credibility, especially in politically polarized environments where the line between commentary and reporting can easily blur.

SESSIONS

Session 1

Why This Training Matters and Why FELT Africa Was Best Placed to Facilitate It

Facilitator: Diana Ngao,
Managing Director, FELT Africa



Session Overview

The opening session framed the training within Kenya's evolving media, political, and social environment. Diana Ngao positioned the programme not as a routine workshop, but as a necessary professional intervention at a time when media credibility, legal exposure, and public trust are under sustained pressure.

She emphasized that radio journalists operate at the frontline of public discourse, particularly in regions where vernacular broadcasting carries deep community influence. In polarized contexts, a single broadcast can either calm tensions or escalate them. The training was therefore designed to strengthen judgment, discipline, and professional clarity before crisis moments emerge.

The session set the tone for reflective engagement and underscored that responsible journalism is central to institutional trust and national cohesion.

Key Themes Covered

a. The Current Media Environment Demands Greater Discipline

- Diana highlighted several realities shaping contemporary journalism:
- Rapid rumor cycles driven by social media.
- Heightened political polarization.
- Economic pressures within media houses.
- Increased legal and reputational risks.
- Real-time broadcasting environments that limit room for correction.
- She emphasized that these pressures make professional standards more important - not less.

b. The Strategic Importance of Ethical Broadcasting

Drawing from FELT Africa's work in strategic communications, crisis advisory, and media training, Diana explained that narratives shape public perception of institutions, leaders, and communities.

She noted that:

- Repeated allegations can erode institutional legitimacy.
- Emotionally charged framing can deepen division.
- Inconsistent editorial standards weaken audience trust.
- Journalists were reminded that their role extends beyond information delivery - they influence how governance, accountability, and reform are understood by the public.

c. Bridging Journalism, Law, and Governance Awareness

Diana outlined FELT Africa's interdisciplinary approach, which integrates:

- Legal literacy.
- Professional journalism ethics.
- Governance and public affairs awareness.
- Crisis communication sensitivity.
- Narrative discipline.
- This blended model ensures that journalists are not trained in isolation from the political and regulatory realities within which they operate.
- Participants were encouraged to see professional development not merely as skill enhancement, but as protection - both personal and institutional.

d. Long-Term Capacity Building, Not One-Off Training

- Diana emphasized that sustainable impact requires:
- Continued professional development.
- Peer learning networks.
- Strengthened editorial cultures.
- Ongoing mentorship and guidance.

She positioned FELT Africa as a long-term capacity partner, committed to strengthening professional standards across media ecosystems rather than delivering isolated interventions.

The training was presented as part of a broader effort to reinforce credibility, reduce risk, and elevate responsible broadcasting practices.

Practical Framing Provided

- Participants were encouraged to:
- Approach the sessions with openness and critical reflection.
- Interrogate their own biases and pressures.
- Engage honestly with the realities of newsroom constraints.
- View legal and ethical discipline as tools for longevity.
- Diana reinforced that credibility is cumulative and fragile - built over years and lost in moments.

Session Impact

As the opening session, it successfully grounded participants in the broader purpose of the training. Journalists demonstrated early recognition that the themes addressed - legal risk, polarization, misinformation, activism, and professional identity - reflected daily challenges in their work.

The session created a shared understanding that professional standards are not abstract ideals, but operational safeguards that protect journalists, media houses, and the communities they serve.

It also reinforced confidence in FELT Africa's expertise, particularly its ability to connect media practice with governance realities, legal frameworks, and reputational considerations.

This foundation strengthened participant engagement across subsequent sessions and set a reflective, disciplined tone for the training.



Feedback



What is your main key takeaway from Session 1: Conduct in Polarized Times?

Open text poll 13 responses 12 participants

- Anonymous

In handling sensitive topics, we radio journalists has a responsibility in nation building and promoting national values.
- Anonymous

Always be factual to build credibility
- Anonymous

Verify
- Anonymous

Rule of thumb always Verify Verify Verify
- Anonymous

I have learned how to handle sensitive topics
- Anonymous

Be factual
- Anonymous

How to handle very sensitive topics as well as controlling my audience on the same Always fact check every info no matter how small it is
- Anonymous

Having facts all time
- Anonymous

Opinion doesn't require accountability or understanding
- Anonymous

Report responsibly
- Anonymous

Kikao kimependeza kwa sana. Mwanzo mwema 🙌 Shukran kwa wote tuliochangia
- Anonymous

Opinions differ, what matters is respect
- Anonymous

Verify before taking it on air

slido

Session 2

Balancing Facts and Opinions: A Guide for Radio Presenters

Ng'ang'a Mbugua

Editor in Chief, Nairobi Law Monthly & Consultant Trainer, FELT Africa Group



Session Summary

This session focused on strengthening the ability of radio presenters to clearly distinguish between facts, opinions, and analysis while broadcasting in politically and socially polarized environments.

Recognizing that radio remains highly influential, particularly in rural and vernacular contexts, the training reinforced the responsibility of presenters to ensure accuracy, neutrality, and social sensitivity in live programming.

The session addressed how careless blending of fact and opinion can inflame tensions, erode trust, and undermine national cohesion. It emphasized disciplined verification, bias awareness, and fact-checking as essential tools for responsible broadcasting.

a. The Role of Radio in a Changing Media Landscape

Participants examined the shifting news consumption patterns in Kenya, noting the rise of social media while recognizing that radio remains powerful, especially in rural communities. This reinforced the heightened responsibility of radio presenters as trusted voices within their communities.

The core role of radio journalists was defined as:

- Telling stories accurately
- Giving balanced voice to sources
- Educating audiences

- Informing citizens in ways that enhance critical awareness
- Entertaining responsibly

The session positioned radio not merely as a communication platform, but as a civic instrument capable of shaping attitudes and promoting cohesion.

b. Distinguishing Facts, Opinions, and Analysis

A central pillar of the training was helping presenters clearly differentiate:

- **Facts:** Verifiable truths supported by evidence.
- **Opinions:** Personal judgments not necessarily grounded in evidence.
- **Analysis:** Structured examination of events or trends, ideally grounded in expertise.

Participants were guided through practical headline exercises and real-world examples to test whether statements were factual, speculative, or misleading. The facilitator emphasized the principle:

- Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not to their own facts.
- This distinction was framed as foundational in preventing misinformation and reducing polarization.

c. Verification and Fact-Checking as a Cohesion Tool

The training reinforced verification as the cornerstone of responsible journalism, using the rule of thumb:

Verify. Verify. Verify.

Participants were equipped with practical verification strategies:

- Checking the credibility of sources
- Scrutinizing images for manipulation
- Confirming whether other credible media houses have independently verified the story
- Ensuring information is current and not recycled

Fact-checking was framed not only as a professional obligation but as a method of preventing ethnic tension, rumor-driven panic, and reputational harm.

The session emphasized that as some global institutions reduce fact-checking roles, mainstream media must strengthen its internal verification mechanisms to distinguish itself from social media misinformation.

d. Managing Personal Bias

Participants explored the concept of unconscious personal bias, defined as learned beliefs or attitudes that can subtly influence reporting without awareness.

Through guided reflection, journalists were challenged to distinguish:

- What they know
- What they have verified
- What they believe
- What their audience believes
- What experts are saying

This exercise helped presenters recognize how bias can distort framing, tone, and audience interpretation - particularly during live broadcasts.

e. Handling Sensitive Topics in Polarized Environments

The session addressed responsible coverage of sensitive themes including:

- Ethnicity and integration
- Elections and politics
- Conflict
- Gender and children
- Sports rivalries
- Geopolitical issues

Radio was framed as an instrument of nation-building and a promoter of constitutional values such as national unity, human dignity, equity, non-discrimination, transparency, and accountability.

Participants were reminded that airing certain vernacular clips, jokes, or emotionally charged content can unintentionally injure social harmony, even when intended as entertainment.

The facilitator encouraged presenters to weigh public interest against potential harm before broadcasting sensitive material.

Practical Guidance Provided

Participants were provided with decision-making prompts for live broadcasting:

- Did it happen?
- Have I verified it?
- Is it fresh and accurate?
- Am I presenting fact, opinion, or analysis?
- Could airing this inflame tensions?
- Is this contributing to public education or polarization?

The importance of inviting subject matter experts for analysis - rather than offering unqualified commentary - was emphasized as a strategy to enhance authority and credibility.

Session Impact

The session generated strong self-awareness among participants regarding how easily fact and opinion can become blurred during live broadcasts.

Journalists acknowledged that many polarization risks arise not from deliberate misconduct, but from insufficient verification, emotionally driven commentary, or unexamined bias. By the end of the session, participants demonstrated greater intentionality in distinguishing personal beliefs from verified information.

There was a visible shift in how presenters viewed fact-checking - not as an administrative burden, but as a protective tool for credibility, audience trust, and community stability.

Participants also expressed renewed recognition of their influence within vernacular and rural communities. The conversation reframed radio presenters from passive narrators to active stewards of responsible discourse.

Importantly, the session reinforced that disciplined broadcasting contributes directly to national cohesion by reducing rumor propagation, minimizing inflammatory framing, and promoting informed public engagement.



Feedback



What have you learnt from this 2nd Session: Media and the Law? And how will this knowledge empower you to handle challenges that may come about?

Open text poll 20 responses 19 participants



Anonymous

Nice secession, alot to learn



Anonymous

Let's practice responsible journalism and freedom of expression does not license reckless allegations that arm reputation without justification



Anonymous

Kichango ni kuchangiza. Maarifa yanatekwa Vikaoni. Shukurani sana Wakili Sichangi. Kongole FELT AFRICA



Anonymous

Have learnt to do verification of our source before giving it to my audience, and the challenge we face as broadcast journalist..



Anonymous

Very impactful



Anonymous

The understanding of defamation and the defenses against defamation. Now I know how to handle critical information before airing.



Anonymous

Nice Session! Kudos Mwanasheria Chaka Sichangi, nimechota mengi 🙌🙌



Anonymous

The presentation was clear with live examples. This will help me tackle future professional problems that come with the weight of media law. Kazi safi!



Anonymous

The session has been has created alot of impact to me especially on how to handle stories that may run into defamation



Anonymous

That verification of any information is important for me as a journalist in order to keep away from legal trouble. I'll make sure that I verify every information I get from my sources.



Anonymous

How the law of the land blends with the media law



Anonymous

I have learnt a lot on defamation and how to verify my stories



Anonymous

Great session great knowledge in terms of law



Anonymous

To verify everything before it goes on air..



Anonymous

We have an obligation as journalists to always verify before publishing



Anonymous

Learned about defenses against defamation



Anonymous

That freedom of expression should be balanced with protection of individual's reputation. Verification is key.

Session 3

Media and the Law: Journalism Ethics & Professionalism

Facilitator: Chaka Sichangi,

**Advocate of the High Court of Kenya & Director of Policy, Law, & Research,
FELT Africa Group**



Session Overview

This session examined the legal foundations that regulate journalism practice in Kenya, helping participants understand both the protections and responsibilities that come with working in the media.

The facilitator framed media law as a balancing act - one that protects freedom of expression while safeguarding reputation, privacy, dignity, and public order. Participants were reminded that journalism operates within a constitutional democracy, and therefore within a defined legal structure. Understanding that structure is essential for professional survival and ethical reporting.

The session moved from constitutional provisions to practical newsroom realities, helping participants connect legal theory with everyday editorial decisions.

Key Themes Covered

a. Constitutional Protections and Their Limits

- Participants examined the constitutional guarantees of:
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of the media
- Access to information

These rights were contextualized within their limitations. It was emphasized that while journalists are protected in performing their watchdog role, constitutional protection does not extend to hate speech, incitement to violence, malicious falsehoods, or reckless publication.

The discussion clarified that freedom of expression carries responsibility - particularly in politically sensitive environments.

b. Defamation: Understanding Liability

A significant portion of the session focused on defamation law.

Participants examined:

- The difference between libel (written or permanent defamation) and slander (spoken defamation).
- The legal elements required to establish defamation.
- The concept of publication and republication.
- The role of malice and implication.

Kenyan case precedents were discussed to demonstrate real financial consequences faced by media houses. These examples illustrated that:

- Continued republication of unverified claims may be interpreted as malice.
- Implied associations can defame as much as direct statements.
- Apologies must be prompt and visible to mitigate damage.

Participants were reminded that defamation extends beyond individuals and may also damage institutional credibility.

c. Defenses Available to Journalists

The facilitator outlined the legal defenses that may be available in defamation cases, including:

- Truth
- Fair comment
- Qualified privilege
- Consent

Participants were guided on when these defenses may apply and the evidentiary discipline required to rely on them. It was emphasized that these defenses cannot compensate for weak verification practices.

Practical Guidance Provided

Participants were equipped with practical newsroom tools, including:

a. Pre-Publication Checklist

- Have I verified this information?
- Have I sought comment from all relevant parties?
- Is the headline proportionate to the facts?
- Am I presenting allegation as fact?

b. Defamation Risk Awareness

- Avoid suggestive language.
- Avoid implication without evidence.
- Avoid repetition of unverified claims.

c. Correction Discipline

- Correct quickly.
- Correct clearly.
- Give equal prominence to corrections.

c. Privacy Test

- Is this genuinely in public interest?
- Is disclosure necessary?
- Could harm outweigh benefit?

These tools were intended to be integrated into daily editorial routines.

Session Impact

The session strengthened participants' legal awareness and sharpened their understanding of the real consequences of negligent reporting.

Journalists demonstrated greater ability to identify potential defamation risks before publication. There was clearer appreciation of how tone, framing, and incomplete verification can expose individuals and institutions to harm.

Participants also showed improved understanding of the distinction between constitutional protection and legal liability. The discussion shifted from abstract legal fear to practical editorial discipline.

Overall, the session reinforced that legal literacy is central to professional journalism and essential to maintaining public trust.

Feedback



What is your main takeaway from the 3rd session: Journalism vs. Activism?

Open text poll 16 responses 15 participants



Anonymous

Safety of a journalist is key, same as road safety, even if you are on the right side and someone is overtaking, safety matters slow down



Anonymous

Ethic's and professionalism the way to go



Anonymous

We are the watchdogs



Anonymous

In journalism not story is worth your life unlike activism



Anonymous

Impactful



Anonymous

Very impactful , i wish tutapata cert of participation



Anonymous

Learned the difference between journalism and activism



Anonymous

Very interesting and full of take aways



Anonymous

Journalist can transit to activism



Anonymous

I can now differentiate between activism and journalism



Anonymous

It is possible to transit from journalism to activism



Anonymous

Journalism is not activism



Anonymous

There is no story worth your life



Anonymous

That the activists are ready, not journalists!



Anonymous

Great presentation and I have learned a lot



Anonymous

I have learnt alot about who is a journalist and the roles of journalist and no story is worthy your life

Session 4

Journalism vs Activism: Navigating the Fine Line in Polarized Times

Facilitator: Ng'ang'a Mbugua

Editor in Chief, Nairobi Law Monthly & Consultant Trainer, FELT Africa Group



Session Overview

This session examined the increasingly blurred boundary between journalism and activism, particularly in politically polarized environments where media professionals face pressure to take visible positions on public issues.

The facilitator challenged participants to interrogate their professional identity and examine the consequences of crossing from reporting into advocacy. The discussion acknowledged that journalists are citizens with personal convictions, but emphasized that credibility depends on disciplined role clarity.

Participants explored how activism, even when motivated by good intentions, can affect audience trust, newsroom dynamics, and long-term professional growth.

Key Themes Covered

a. Defining Journalism vs Activism

The session clarified the difference between journalism and activism:

Journalism Is Rooted In:

- Verification
- Balance
- Evidence-based reporting
- Structured inquiry
- Accountability to facts

Activism Is Rooted In:

- Advocacy
- Mobilization
- Public persuasion
- Explicit alignment with a cause

b. The Risk of Perceived Bias

The discussion emphasized that perception can shape credibility as much as action.

Participants reflected on how:

- Public political opinions shared casually may affect audience trust.
- Consistent tone or framing can signal alignment.
- Participation in demonstrations or political spaces may create perception of partiality.

The facilitator emphasized that once audiences categorize a journalist as an activist, neutrality in future reporting may be questioned - even if reporting remains factually sound.

c. Emotional Engagement vs Professional Distance

Participants examined the emotional toll of reporting in polarized communities and how frustration, anger, or moral outrage can influence tone.

The session addressed:

- The temptation to “fix” issues rather than report on them.
- The pressure to be seen as courageous or outspoken.
- The internal conflict between civic responsibility and professional restraint.

The facilitator emphasized that journalism requires controlled distance, not emotional detachment but disciplined framing.

d. Live Broadcasting and Activist Language

Special attention was given to live radio dynamics.

Participants discussed:

- Managing caller opinions without endorsing them.
- Avoiding emotive or inflammatory descriptors.
- Distinguishing clearly between analysis and personal opinion.
- Refraining from leading questions that signal personal bias.

The importance of language discipline in live contexts was reinforced.

e. Long-Term Career Consequences

The session explored how activist positioning can:

- Limit professional mobility.
- Expose journalists to political retaliation.
- Affect promotion opportunities within mainstream media.
- Complicate transitions into leadership roles.

Participants reflected on how career longevity depends on sustained credibility across political cycles.

Practical Guidance Provided

Participants were equipped with:

a. Role-Clarity Test

Am I reporting or advocating?

Would this statement stand if my personal views were unknown?

Is my framing inviting reflection or directing alignment?

b. Language Discipline Tools

Replace emotive adjectives with descriptive facts.

Avoid labels unless legally established.

Distinguish clearly between verified fact and commentary.

c. Boundary Management in Public Spaces

Exercise caution when expressing political opinions publicly.

Avoid participation in overtly partisan activities.

Maintain consistency between private conduct and public role.

d. Live Show Moderation Techniques

Neutralize polarized callers.

Avoid affirming partisan statements.

Re-center conversations around verified information.

These tools were designed to help journalists navigate high-pressure environments without compromising credibility.

Session Impact

The session prompted significant self-reflection among participants. Many acknowledged experiencing pressure to take visible positions on public matters, especially within their communities.

By the end of the discussion, participants demonstrated a clearer understanding of how activism - even when well-intentioned - can affect professional standing and public trust.

There was a noticeable shift from framing activism as courage to framing professional restraint as discipline. Participants expressed stronger appreciation for neutrality as a strategic professional asset rather than a limitation.

The session reinforced the importance of role clarity in preserving both individual credibility and institutional trust in polarized environments.



Session 5

Misinformation, Disinformation & Legal Consequences: Journalism Ethics & Professionalism

Facilitator: Chaka Sichangi,
Advocate of the High Court of Kenya & Director – Policy, Law, & Research, FELT Africa Group



Session Overview

This session focused on the mechanics and consequences of misinformation and disinformation, particularly within polarized political environments.

While the previous session addressed legal structure, this discussion examined how false or manipulated information spreads, how it is amplified through radio platforms, and how it can destabilize communities when not responsibly managed.

Participants were challenged to view misinformation not merely as inaccurate reporting, but as a catalyst for division, institutional distrust, and potential violence.

Key Themes Covered

Participants were equipped with:

a. Understanding Information Disorder

Participants distinguished between:

- Misinformation (false information shared without intent to deceive).
- Disinformation (deliberately false or manipulated information).
- The role of repetition in legitimizing false narratives.

The facilitator emphasized that journalists become legally and ethically responsible when they amplify unverified claims - even if they did not originate them.

b. Amplification and Radio's Unique Influence

The session examined how radio, especially vernacular broadcasting, can magnify the impact of misinformation.

Participants discussed how:

- Live call-ins,
- Emotional narration,
- Repetition of social media rumours, and
- Selective framing

can transform unverified content into perceived truth.

The discussion reinforced radio's power to shape community perception, particularly in rural areas.

c. Incitement, Coded Language, and Polarization

Participants examined how language can inflame tensions even when explicit incitement is absent.

Historical references were used to illustrate how:

- Coded language,
- Ethnic identifiers,
- Repeated insinuations, and
- Emotionally charged descriptors,

can deepen division.

The session underscored that journalists must be alert not only to what is said, but how it is said.

d. Election and Crisis Reporting Scenarios

Participants worked through high-risk scenarios involving:

- Circulation of unverified footage.
- Allegations during electoral contests.
- Social media-triggered panic.
- Political accusations involving personal relationships.

They were guided on maintaining neutrality, verifying digital content, and avoiding sensationalism during volatile periods.

e. Protecting Institutional Trust

The session emphasized that repeated misinformation can:

- Undermine confidence in electoral bodies.
- Damage judicial legitimacy.
- Feed public suspicion toward public institutions.
- Heighten ethnic or political tensions.

Participants were reminded that responsible journalism contributes to societal stability by preventing rumor escalation.

Practical Guidance Provided

Participants were trained on:

a. Amplification Control

Do not repeat what you have not verified.
Label unverified content clearly.
Avoid dramatizing uncertainty.

b. Live Broadcast Management

Interrupt defamatory or inflammatory statements.
Clarify that allegations are unverified.
Reframe emotionally charged caller language.

c. High-Tension Protocol

Slow down publication.
Use neutral descriptors.
Invite expert analysis instead of speculation.

d. Rumor Containment

Verify digital material before airing.
Avoid ethnic framing unless strictly necessary.
Emphasize official communication channels.

Session Impact

The session heightened participants' awareness of how quickly misinformation can escalate into social tension.

Journalists demonstrated stronger caution regarding amplification of social media claims and politically sensitive allegations. There was increased recognition that repetition alone can legitimize false narratives.

Participants expressed clearer understanding of their role as gatekeepers who can either calm or inflame public discourse.

The session reinforced disciplined broadcasting practices that reduce polarization and promote informed civic engagement.



Session 6

Leadership & Career Development: Dennis Onsarigo's Rise and Leadership Journey in the Industry

Facilitator: Dennis Onsarigo
Chairman, FELT Africa



Session Overview

In this session, Dennis Onsarigo shared his professional journey across media, political communication, and governance, illustrating how discipline, humility, and resilience shape long-term career growth.

He began with his early years after graduating from the Kenya School of Mass Communication in 2004. Attending an interview at Nation Media Group with aspirations of becoming a presenter, he instead found that only a cameraman internship was available - a role he had not trained for.

Rather than walk away, he chose to adapt.

In the days before reporting, he immersed himself in learning how to operate a camera. Once in the newsroom, he observed closely, asked deliberate questions, and mastered the craft while quietly maintaining his long-term ambition. His message was clear: excellence in small beginnings builds credibility for future opportunity.

Key Themes Covered

1. Humility and Preparation as Career Foundations

Dennis emphasized that growth in journalism often begins in unexpected roles. He highlighted:

- The importance of backing oneself even when underprepared.
- The discipline of learning quickly.
- The value of humility in competitive newsrooms.
- The power of mastering the role at hand before seeking advancement.

Participants were reminded that credibility is built through consistency, not entitlement.

2. The Douala Breakthrough: Journalism Under Pressure

Dennis described the defining moment of his early career - the disappearance of Kenya Airways Flight 507 in Douala, Cameroon.

Dispatched to cover the unfolding tragedy, he navigated:

- Language barriers in a predominantly French-speaking environment.
- Emotionally charged families searching for answers.
- Conflicting information and uncertainty.
- Physically dangerous terrain in a mangrove forest at night.

Guided by locals and relying at times on fading phone lights, he pushed forward to reach the crash site. He worked relentlessly to relay photos, video, and verified updates.

What distinguished that coverage was not simply access, but depth. He helped transform a distant aviation disaster into a human story that demanded empathy, accountability, and national reflection.

He told participants that this experience reinforced what journalism requires at its core: courage, discipline, and commitment to truth under pressure.

3. Reinvention and Professional Expansion

Dennis also traced his progression from television journalism to leadership roles:

- Rising within Nation Media Group and contributing to the re-launch of NTV Kenya.
- Moving to Standard Media Group in 2014 to lead the Investigations Desk.
- Launching Case Files, Kenya's first television crime series.
- Leading The Lead investigative series, setting standards for long-form journalism.

He explained how investigative reporting sharpened his strengths in fact-checking, risk management, editorial discipline, and navigating high-stakes environments.

His career later expanded into governance and strategic advisory:

- Director of Communications for Taita Taveta County.
- Director of Strategy at Chatter Media.
- Press Secretary for the Azimio La Umoja Presidential Campaign.
- Chief of Staff for Nyamira County.
- Group Chairman of FELT Africa Group.
- Advisor for Strategic Communications for the County Government of Nairobi.

He spoke candidly about the emotional weight of the Azimio campaign loss. Having led national messaging in a highly scrutinized political environment, the defeat was personally difficult. However, he emphasized that setbacks do not define a professional - response does.

He chose to regroup, refocus, and continue building.

4. Leadership Beyond the Studio

Dennis demonstrated how journalistic discipline translates into broader leadership roles, including:

- Strategic communication.
- Crisis navigation.
- Executive coordination.
- Public accountability.
- Institutional narrative management.

He illustrated that journalism, when practiced with integrity, equips professionals with transferable skills that extend into governance, policy, and organizational leadership.

Practical Lessons Shared

Dennis distilled his journey into clear guidance:

- Start where opportunity presents itself.
- Prepare aggressively, even in unfamiliar roles.
- Stay observant and ask informed questions.
- Guard credibility at every stage.
- Embrace reinvention when seasons change.
- Treat setbacks as learning moments, not endpoints.

He encouraged participants to view their current positions not as limits, but as foundations.

Session Impact

The session deeply resonated with participants. Many reflected on their own beginnings in community radio and recognized parallels in the humility and persistence required to grow. Dennis's story reframed success from visibility or popularity to discipline, endurance, and integrity. Participants expressed renewed motivation to strengthen their skills deliberately rather than pursue shortcuts.

His honesty about loss, reinvention, and resilience added emotional depth to the session, reinforcing that leadership is rarely linear.

Importantly, his journey connected directly to the broader purpose of the training. His career demonstrated how professional discipline, legal awareness, narrative responsibility, and credibility - the core themes of the programme - are not theoretical ideals, but practical foundations for long-term influence and leadership.

By the end of the session, participants showed greater appreciation that responsible journalism does not restrict opportunity - it expands it.



Session 7

Q&A Panel Discussion

Panelists: Chaka Sichangi & Ng'ang'a Mbugua



Session Overview

The training concluded with a moderated panel discussion featuring Chaka Sichangi and Ng'ang'a Mbugua. This session provided participants with an opportunity to seek clarification, test ideas raised during earlier sessions, and engage directly with the facilitators on practical challenges faced in their professional environments.

The discussion created space for candid engagement, allowing journalists to raise real-life dilemmas that may not always fit neatly into theoretical frameworks.

Key Themes Covered

During the session, participants posed questions touching on:

- Legal exposure in live broadcasting environments.
- Handling politically sensitive content.
- Managing pressure from media owners and political actors.
- Protecting sources.
- Distinguishing journalism from activism in practice.
- Responding to threats and intimidation.
- Navigating ethical dilemmas under financial pressure.

The facilitators responded by grounding their answers in legal principles, newsroom discipline, and professional responsibility, reinforcing the frameworks introduced in earlier sessions.

Practical Guidance Reinforced

Through direct engagement with participants, the panel:

- Clarified areas of legal uncertainty.
- Re-emphasized verification and proportionality.
- Provided guidance on managing live caller risks.
- Addressed professional boundaries in polarized contexts.
- Encouraged structured editorial decision-making under pressure.

The interactive format allowed participants to contextualize the training within their specific media environments, particularly community and vernacular radio settings.

Session Impact

The panel discussion deepened participant understanding by translating earlier theoretical content into practical newsroom scenarios.

It also revealed the complexity of pressures journalists face - from political interference to economic vulnerability - while reinforcing that professional discipline remains the strongest safeguard.

The questions raised by participants reflected strong engagement with the material and a willingness to interrogate difficult professional realities.

A detailed account of the questions raised and the discussions that followed is provided in the next section of this report.



PARTICIPANTS' QUESTIONS, REFLECTIONS, COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK



DAY 1

Comments & Reflections

1. High Enthusiasm for Learning

Participants expressed strong excitement throughout the training, noting their eagerness to learn new concepts, challenge existing practices, and sharpen their professional judgment over the course of the programme.

2. Appreciation for Regional Networking

Attendees valued the rare opportunity to convene with fellow radio journalists from across the Rift Valley. Many highlighted that such gatherings are uncommon and appreciated the platform for peer learning, exchange of experiences, and strengthening professional networks within the region.

3. Recognition of Trainers' Expertise

Participants commended the calibre and diversity of the trainers, noting that the blend of legal, ethical, and practical newsroom experience was directly relevant to their daily work. Several mentioned that they had grown in the industry admiring Dennis Onsarigo and appreciated the opportunity to engage with him in person.

4. Positive Learning Environment

The choice of venue was praised, with participants noting that the setting was comfortable, conducive to concentration, and allowed them to engage fully in the sessions without distraction.

5. Commitment to Professional Growth

Some participants reflected on their personal journeys in journalism and expressed pride in how far they have come. They noted that nothing would have prevented them from travelling to attend the training, underscoring their commitment to professional development and growth.



Questions Raised

1. Institutional Credibility and Editorial Alignment

How can journalists steward and protect their personal credibility when working for media houses that are publicly perceived as politically aligned or partisan?

2. Breaking Sensitive News

How should journalists approach breaking news that may disrupt social harmony or inflame tensions within their communities?

3. Professional Identity and On-Air Personality

How important is developing a distinct on-air personality in journalism?

Is it appropriate or necessary to conclude a bulletin or show with a personal opinion after delivering content objectively?

How can journalists clearly distinguish between their personal perspectives and institutional or pre-determined call-to-actions?

4. Managing Polarisation in Live Broadcasting

How should journalists handle callers who introduce polarising or inflammatory narratives during live broadcasts?



DAY 2

Comments & Reflections

1. Misinformation, Accountability, and Unequal Enforcement

Participants noted that misinformation on social media often goes unpunished, while radio journalists face immediate consequences for airing unverified or false information.

Journalists expressed frustration that prominent individuals are frequently declared “dead” on social media without consequence, yet mainstream media is held to higher legal and ethical standards for similar misinformation.

Concerns were raised about systemic inaction following investigative reporting, including Auditor-General reports that expose financial malpractice but do not result in accountability.

2. Editorial Pressure and Institutional Interference

Participants shared experiences where political pressure led to stories being pulled after threats of withdrawn advertising from county governments.

Some journalists reported direct interference from media house management following calls from political actors or press secretaries.

Instances were cited where editors instructed journalists not to air certain stories, even when the stories were of public interest.

3. Corruption, Bribery, and Economic Vulnerability

Journalists acknowledged that bribery is common in the field, often euphemistically referred to as “appreciation.”

Participants admitted that poor remuneration makes journalists highly vulnerable to compromise.

Several examples were shared where journalists were offered significant sums to kill stories, often far exceeding their monthly salaries.

Cases were cited where journalists accepted money to suppress stories, only for the story to later be aired by another outlet, exposing them to reputational and personal risk.

One participant recounted a case where journalists were entrapped by a politician who recorded them soliciting a bribe and threatened to report them, leading to a story being killed without payment.

4. Personal Safety and Threats

Journalists described receiving direct threats for pursuing public-interest stories, including threats of physical harm or death.

Participants shared experiences where media house management discouraged airing sensitive stories under the pretext of audience fatigue or competing national events.

An example was given of a journalist who quit the profession after only one month due to threats against their life.

Instances of physical intimidation were cited, including one being hounded out of a Jubilee party rally due to perceived political affiliation based on the colour of their clothing – orange.

5. Journalism, Activism, and Role Confusion

Participants expressed strong views that journalists cannot effectively be activists without losing credibility.

Some noted that once a journalist is perceived as an activist, audiences will interpret all subsequent reporting through that lens.

Others acknowledged moments where journalists became activists unintentionally, such as protesting after a colleague was assaulted or mobilising against government evictions that personally affected them.

Participants observed that passionate journalism can sometimes propel individuals into political office, blurring the boundary between reporting and political leadership.

6. Professional Identity and Career Challenges

Journalists raised concerns about ethnic profiling affecting career progression.

Participants observed a pattern where journalists who work closely with governors or political offices become detached from journalistic ethics and later struggle to reintegrate into newsrooms when the governors leave office.

There was a strong consensus that journalists need alternative income streams to reduce susceptibility to bribery and coercion.

7. Ethical Challenges in Reporting Sensitive Cases

Participants raised concerns about handling incest and sexual abuse cases where sources request anonymity and verification may expose victims to further risk, highlighting the ethical challenge of balancing public interest, source protection, and the safety of vulnerable individuals, especially children.

Participants highlighted the difficulty of reporting suicide cases sensitively, particularly when families object to coverage or demand disclosure of sources, underscoring the tension between public interest reporting and the need to uphold dignity, privacy, and ethical restraint.



Questions Raised

1. Ethics, Verification, and Live Broadcasting

Should journalists highlight community concerns live on air when there is no time to verify the information?

How can journalists manage live shows when guests make defamatory statements?

What safeguards can be put in place to control unverified or defamatory content during live broadcasts?

If a host challenges a guest to provide evidence for a claim and the guest defers it, who is legally liable: the host, the station, or the guest?

2. Legal Risk, Libel, and Defamation

If a journalist shares content from a credible source on social media, are they still legally liable for libel?

Is calling a public official a “goon” considered defamation if their behaviour is widely perceived as such? (Rashid Echesa vs Bernard Shiracko case)

Can a defamation case be settled out of court?

Is a public apology and a private apology sufficient to avoid financial compensation in a libel case?

If a journalist is sued for libel but cannot afford to pay damages, what legal consequences follow?

When multiple journalists are involved in a story, and one backs out in the last minute, do they still bear legal responsibility?

3. Sources, Anonymity, and Sensitive Reporting

How can journalists protect anonymous sources when they do not know the source's full identity?

How should journalists verify sensitive allegations when the source insists on anonymity for safety reasons?

How should journalists handle reporting on sexual and gender-based violence when victims request anonymity?

4. Institutional Support and Advocacy

How can legal practitioners and media advocates support journalists in influencing policy and strengthening protections for the profession?

What role can senior advocates play in shielding journalists from political and legal intimidation?

5. Career and Professional Development

How should journalists respond when editors block stories but journalists believe the story is in the public interest?

Can journalists publish blocked stories on their personal social media platforms?

How should journalists deal with sources who solicit them for money?

How can journalists navigate profiling and tribal bias within media institutions?

Is transitioning from journalism to political communications (for example) a professional failure or a legitimate career path?



DAY 3

Comments & Reflections

1. The Normalisation of Sensationalism in Contemporary Media

Some participants observed that sensationalism and misinformation often drive visibility and career growth in the industry, creating pressure on younger journalists to prioritise attention over substance and depth

2. Commercial Pressure and the Rise of Explicit Content in Community Radio

Concern was raised about community radio stations that focus heavily on sexual content - even in culturally conservative communities - because such programming attracts larger audiences and advertising revenue. This trend was seen as creating competitive pressure on more responsible stations to lower editorial standards.

3. Community Expectations and the Misplaced Accountability of Journalists

Participants noted that journalists are often treated as problem-solvers within communities, particularly in cases such as water shortages or service delivery failures. Community members don't have access to relevant leaders, so they sometimes expect journalists to fix issues directly rather than relay concerns to responsible authorities. This places undue pressure and accountability on reporters.

4. Psychological Strain and the Need for Mental Wellbeing Support in Journalism

There was a strong recommendation that future training incorporate structured sessions on mental wellbeing, given the increasing psychological strain caused by political pressure, threats, economic instability, and high-risk reporting environments journalists operate in.

Questions Raised

1. Professional Boundaries and Personal Experience

Can journalists use their personal experiences on air to communicate lessons to the public, for example sharing a personal health experience while discussing medical issues?

While journalists are advised not to be activists, are they permitted to share personal political opinions in private or peer engagements outside formal reporting?

2. Editorial Trust and Source Protection

If journalists are legally required to reveal sources to their editors upon request, what should they do if they do not trust their editors to protect those sources?

3. Safety, Security, and Protection

Are there media safe houses in Kenya for journalists under threat?

If forced into exile due to threats, which organisations or countries offer protection or support?

Given increasing threats, should journalists receive self-defense training or even be licensed firearm holders?

4. Interviewing and Political Engagement

When interviewing public officials, are journalists required to send questions in advance?

What should a journalist do if a leader insists on dictating the questions to be asked?



Expectations & Overall Rating of The Training



In one word, what is your primary expectation for the FELT Africa media training?

Wordcloud Poll

24 responses

18 participants



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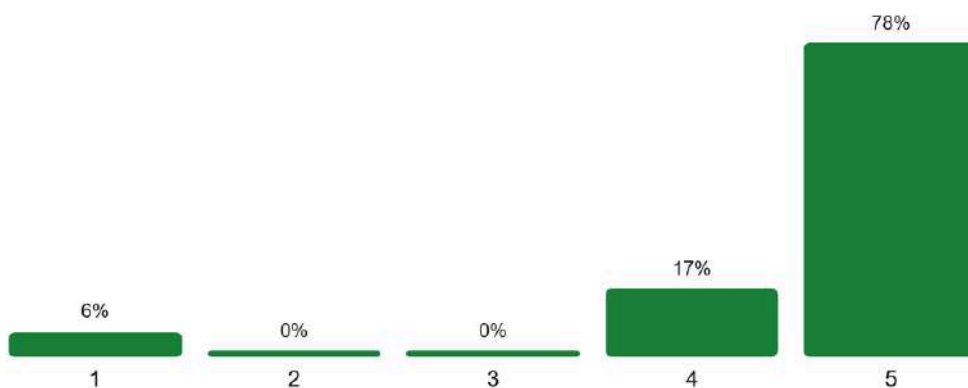
What is your overall rating of the FELT Africa Media Workshop? Were your expectations met?

Rating Poll

18 votes

18 participants

Score: 4.6



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PARTICIPATING STATIONS

#	Organization	County
1	Sauti Ya Mwanachi Radio	Nakuru
2	Kerio Radio	Elgeyo Marakwet
3	Imani Radio	Baringo
4	Radio Alpha	Baringo
5	Radio Alpha	Baringo
6	Egerton Radio	Nakuru
7	Mwananchi Kwanza	Baringo
8	Sayare FM	Uasin Gishu
9	Taai FM	Kericho
10	Emoo FM	Transzoia
11	Radio Yetu	Nakuru
12	Radio Mchungaji	Samburu
13	North Rift Radio	West Pokot
14	Lokoi FM	Baringo
15	Radio Ashe	Samburu
16	Taach FM	Nairobi
17	Serian FM	Samburu
18	Echami FM	Turkana
19	Upendo FM	Nandi & Uasin Gishu
20	Kass Media	Nairobi & Uasin Gishu





CONTACT US

📍 FELT House, Kaumoni Close, Loresho, Nairobi

🌐 hello@feltafrica.com

📞 +254 7 13 271 232 / +254 712 773 703

🌐 📷 📱 @feltafrica

www.feltafrica.com