# Measuring Change II

## Expanding Knowledge on Monitoring & Evaluation in Media Development



media**me**
MEDIA DEVELOPMENT MONITORING + EVALUATION

5th Symposium *Forum Media and Development:*

# Measuring Change II

## Expanding Knowledge on Monitoring and Evaluation in Media Development

Bad Honnef, 12-14 October 2009

FORUM
medien und
entwicklung

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# Preface

Inspiring presentations and lively discussions marked the 5th symposium of the German Forum Media and Development (FoME – Forum Medien und Entwicklung), in Bad Honnef from 12 to 14 October, 2009. On behalf of FoME, CAMECO coordinated this follow-up to their earlier conference Measuring Change – Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation in Media Development. Seventy participants – including representatives from donor organisations, media implementing organisations, evaluation experts, and the academic community – proved again that monitoring and evaluation in media development is today a crucial topic in any discussion of media assistance.

Measuring Change II constitutes a follow-up in several respects. It is the progression of earlier discussions during the 2007 symposium. It also picks up on participants' recommendations to establish a wiki to facilitate sharing of M&E tools and experiences. Measuring Change II therefore follows up on CAMECO's pledge to manage development of the wiki during the start-up phase, and also marks the "soft launch" of the mediaME-Wiki – media development monitoring and evaluation – with a core amount of content.

This was only possible with the support of those colleagues who advised development of mediaME and provided the "soft launch" with initial content contributions; first of all, Prof. Thomas R. Lansner, who has been key member of the coordination group since the initiative's early beginnings; Jackie Davies, Communication for Development Consulting, Rebecca Horsewell, Global Partners & Associates, Birgitte Jallov, Communication Partners, Jan Lublinski, World Federation of Science Journalists, and Leon Willems, **Press Now**, volunteered as members of the mediaME-expert group, and contributed to the development of the mediaME-wiki with their expertise and commitment.

*Sofie Jannusch*
*Aachen, December 2010*

# Contents

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Measuring Change II – the 5th Symposium of the German Forum Media and Development – extended and deepened discussions on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in media development launched in its 2007 conference. Participants shared latest trends, tools, and learning on assessing media landscapes, evaluating the quality and impact of training, and how media's contributions to social and political change are assessed. Donor and media assistance organisations presented approaches to M&E and shared their experiences with existing frameworks.

Ample room was provided for presentations and discussion on various frameworks for assessing media landscapes. It is these measurements that provide the rationale for media advocacy work and determine interventions to improve a media sector and its enabling or constraining environment. "It is clear", says Fackson Banda, "that assessing media landscapes is much more than just a research activity; it is a conceptually-informed process of enquiry and a conscious, ideological act of intervention in remedying the problems brought to light as a result of the assessment exercise." Most authors attached importance to identifying the normative concepts and value-based assumptions behind different methodological frameworks, reminding us that media are an integral part of and shaped by different cultural and social settings.

In recent years, the call for "impact assessment" has become dominant in the media assistance community, while voices referring to media as the "institutional realisation" of the human rights of free access to information and free expression are less heard. Impact assessment, it is assumed, finds results that justify spending on media development. Although the complexity of social change is not denied, the wish to identify clear cause-effect relationships still seems to prevail, as inherent in the logic that inputs generate activities, which create outputs, which produce outcomes and impacts. The presumption is that social change can be engineered, and that specific interventions, if well planned and properly implemented, will necessarily lead to the desired changes in societies. This perspective is most ambitiously exemplified in USIP's IONA approach/framework.

But a coherent and universal theory of social change, and media's roles in such processes, is missing. The interaction of various intervening factors and the multi-dimensionality of societal change make it extremely laborious – if even possible – to reduce change processes

to specific actors in isolation – e.g., the political system, judicial, civil society, media, cultural settings, etc., especially if it is accepted that change is ongoing and dynamic. Nevertheless, the desire to direct societal dynamics still exists, and is especially distinctive in crisis situations.

The resulting leading paradigms in *development* evaluation are currently challenged by the concept of *developmental* evaluation.[1] Contrary to traditional approaches, developmental evaluation "supports innovation development to guide adaptation to emergent and dynamic realities in complex environments", which are characterised by a "large number of interacting and interdependent elements in which there is no central control" (Patton 2011, p. 1). Some groups, like Search for Common Ground, are now adopting this approach.

The value of developmental evaluation in the field of media is not only that it embraces complexity, while most other evaluation approaches are trying to reduce it. It also supports exploration and innovation before there is a programme model to be improved, and can generate models that are subsequently formatively and summatively evaluated. It also raises the question of whether, in the past, best practice models in media development were too soon declared after only short-term or localised project or programme success.

While the concept of developmental evaluation does not neglect or deny the relevance and adequacy of other forms of traditional evaluations, it will definitely stimulate and extend the discussion on the most relevant, practical and effective evaluation approaches for different settings, together with the development of cost-effective M&E tools, a need expressed in various presentations and contributions during the symposium.

A very brief outline of the conference presentations, which are discussed in more detail later, follows.

# Assessing Media Landscapes

**Assessing Media Environments Worldwide: UNESCO's media indicators framework toolkit**
*Andrew Puddephat, Global Partners*

The **IPDC media indicators framework**, presented two years ago as work in progress by **Andrew Puddephatt** from London-based Global Partners, and in the meantime officially adopted by UNESCO, aims to build consensus on existing indicators, taking a ***toolkit approach***. Puddephatt gives a brief overview on first experiences in the application of the indicators framework, and the challenges and achievements linked to UNESCO's initiative. He identifies as one shortcoming the missing reference to telecommunications, "which are likely to become an increasing source of content as a new generation of mobile phones and applications appear".

**C4D and media for democratic & human rights: What constitutes media development?**
*Helge Rønning, University of Oslo*

A study about the media situation in Mozambique was carried out as a test of the UNESCO's media development indicators framework by **Helge Rønning**, Professor of Media Studies at the University of Oslo. Based on seven fundamental values (justice, equality, respect, participation, dignity, transparency, and oversight and democracy), he sets the findings in a wider perspective, tracking the efforts back to the central question: **What constitutes media development?** Rønning opts for a more rights-based and citizen-oriented approach for media development. He links the issue of power to communication and sets it in relation

to social and political change. In this context, the concept of "communication for empowerment" becomes central, one of the reasons why he adds a sixth category to the UNESCO indicators framework, which puts community media, especially in rural areas, into focus.

**The African Media Barometer (AMB) in practice: Perceptions and realities in assessing media landscapes**
*Rolf Paasch, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)*

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation's **African Media Barometer** (AMB) **in practice** was presented by Rolf Paasch, the former Director of fesmedia Africa in Windhoek.[2] The AMB is considered a self-assessment instrument based entirely on African standards. The main point of the analysis is not a "pseudo-objectivistic scale" through which countries can be compared with each other. "We could do without ranking because our interest lies elsewhere – namely in looking at developments in one country over time", says Rolf Paasch. The AMB guides the discussion in a given country, and uses the final reports as an advocacy tool for media reforms: "There should be a straight line from recommendations of the AMB report to a practical campaign for certain media reforms." FES considers the AMB a complementary tool to other ways of measuring media freedom, as a "valuable addition" to other indices assessing the media landscape of a given country.

**Reviewing media development assessment: What are we winning?**
*Fackson Banda, Rhodes University*

The "plethora" of measurements of media developments was also celebrated by **Fackson Banda**[3]. His critical review asks "**What are we winning?**" Banda seeks to unravel the conceptual and methodological assumptions that underpin existing indices, exemplified in the UNESCO indicators framework, the AMB, but also the Freedom of the Press Index (Freedom House) and the IREX Media Sustainability Index[4]. Banda concludes that the ideological context in which such measurements emerge, alongside their conceptual and methodological assumptions, is a key aspect of any critical evaluation of the different assessment tools available. Examining the pros and cons of qualitative and quantitative research, he opts for a methodological "triangulation", where qualitative and quantitative research should be "innovatively combined" in a "circuit of culture" – "a process of triangulation that incorporates aspects of methodological, ethnographical, geographical, gender and analytical triangulation".

# Assessing Training

**Beyond UNESCO indicators: Assessing journalism schools in Africa**
*Marie-Soleil Frère, University of Brussels*

Marie-Soleil Frère, a research associate at the Belgian National Fund for Scientific Research, provided the participants with an insight into what lay "**beyond the UNESCO Indicators**", while **assessing journalism schools in francophone Africa**. The research project, commissioned by UNESCO, aimed to build indicators with and for journalism schools in Africa, and to identify potential centres of excellence in journalism training in Africa. She describes the struggle to convince the centres to participate in this self-assessment exercise. With regard to the journalism schools in francophone Africa, her experiences cited serious challenges, since most of the centres seem to suffer from a lack of teaching equipment and staff. "At the same time, a rigid administrative rule together with a lack of financial autonomy further diminishes the opportunities to improve the management capacities".

**A report from Laos: Building field research on a budget**
*Helmut Osang, Deutsche Welle Akademie*

**Helmut Osang,** Head of the Asia Division of the Deutsche Welle Akademie, presented another example of how to work "**between the request to know and budget constraints**". Exemplified by a project in Laos, he demonstrated how the DW Academy shifted priorities from offering training to the broader institutional capacity building of partners.

He also demonstrated how research on media usage and journalistic role concepts facilitated the planning of new programmes. An ex-post-evaluation had been budgeted to justify the DW Academy's work in the past, but support was not received to evaluate the project outcomes, to generate results that could directly be fed into the process of improving the present work.

# Approaches to M&E in Media Development

**USAID Media Sector Programs:
Assistance activities
and evaluation approaches**
*Mark Koenig, USAID*

According to **Mark Koenig,** Senior Advisor for Independent Media Development at the USAID Office of Democracy and Governance, 34 countries currently receive support for media development and communications programmes from USAID. The assistance can be divided into three basic types: (1) programmes developing independent and professional media as the primary objective, or "media-as-an-end" activities; (2) programmes, using media to communicate other development objectives, or "media-as-a-means"; and, in some cases, (3) activities concurrently accomplishing both objectives, i.e., assistance that builds media-as-an-end, while also conveying other development messages. In recent years, worldwide support for "media-as-an-end" projects has totalled over $50 million annually, while approximately $100 million are annually spent solely on health-related communications. USAID undertakes evaluations of media environments and media sector programmes on at least three levels of analysis: global, national, and programme levels. To track changes in national media environments, USAID supports Irex' MSI, considering it a "useful instrument for understanding major trends in a country's media environment." At the programme level, USAID undertakes and will publish an "indicator gap analysis", a study that will catalogue the indicator systems used in the media sector, which is seen as "an attempt to identify the fullest possible range of possible program indicators". At the global level, relatively high correlations were found between spending for free media programmes and improvements of the media sector and civil society development indicators, as well as overall democracy indicators. USAID/DG has also planned to undertake comparative country studies to test hypotheses regarding the effectiveness of different democracy-building strategies – among them media assistance.

**The Panos South Asia approach:
Spheres of influence**
*Lakshmi Nair & A S Panneerselvan,
Panos South Asia*

With **Spheres of Influence, A. S. Panneerselvan**, and **Lakshmi Nair** of **Panos South Asia** (PSA), present what they call "a practitioner's model". PSA is challenging widespread expectations on the media's roles in societies. They consider a vibrant media scene a prerequisite to human development and good governance, but they also call upon media practitioners and support organisations "to accept and recognise that this is too complex to bring about on our own." In developing PSA's evaluation framework, they have concluded that "existing tools and methodologies are devised to give a macro picture of the overall environments but fail to clearly demarcate the roles played by various actors" of which "media is just one contributing factor, albeit an important one". PSA's evaluation framework is "humbled by the fact that total and direct attributions to change is completely out of scope". Accordingly, PSA's reach within the media is tracked and documented. Panneerselvan and Nair underline that media should not be instrumentalised and be seen as an agent of change, an assumption they recognise as being implicit in any model to measure the impact of media: "Media can be catalysts for change but not an agent of change." Hence, the Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact Assessment approach of PSA takes the focus on media as the

beneficiary and "we look at impact after a certain period of time has lapsed after project completion. The analytical data available from post-evaluation of a programme becomes our baseline to track impact."

# Good Governance & Democratisation and the Media

**The "Public Sentinel":
News Media Roles
in Governance Reform**
*Anne-Katrin Arnold, CommGAP*

**Ann-Katrin Arnold** of the World Bank's Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP) provides an overview of **news media roles in governance reform**, as addressed in a recent publication – *The Public Sentinel*. The research assesses the three normative roles of news media in society: as watchdogs, agenda setters, and gatekeepers in the public forum. Although the watchdog function has been analysed in case studies, opinion surveys, and election studies, analysis often relies on anecdotal evidence. However, there seems to be evidence that investigative reporting can produce policy effects ranging from government issuing reports to substantive reform. But there are also examples where media coverage was shown to increase public cynicism towards, and disengagement with, politics. Best researched so far, is the agenda setting function of the media, but results are mixed. It is argued that "media often validate the agenda of governments, amplify the voices of officials, and help confirm their messages – even in democracies", a fact that gives governments "tremendous power in directing the public debate and selecting certain strategic choices and opportunities, while masking others." But Arnold also reaches the conclusion that "empirical evidence from developing countries does not show a strong agenda setting role of the news media".  It seems that there is a general lack of empirical research from countries outside Western Europe and Northern America.

**Building Communication
for Empowerment:
C4E pilots assess
media voice & inclusion**
*Birgitte Jallov,
Senior Communication Specialist*

An approach putting information and communication needs of disempowered and marginalised groups at the centre of support to channels of communication and information was presented by **Birgitte Jallov,** Danish communication expert: the **Communication for Empowerment** (C4E) framework of the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre. In three African and two Asian countries, needs assessment methodology was tested and key recommendations formulated. The studies in Mozambique, Ghana and Madagascar have shown that radio is the most important medium, that people show a great interest in "having a voice" and that the local radio is considered an intermediary, and that the prevalence of radio sets and radio listening in families rises sharply upon arrival of community radio – and thus the purchase of batteries or electricity is considered as important as buying rice.

# M+E of media in conflict and crises

**Media in fragile environments:
The USIP Intended-Outcomes
Needs Assessment Methodology**
*Sheldon Himelfarb, et. al.,
United States Institute of Peace*

**Sheldon Himelfarb** and colleagues present the most ambitious approach with USIP's **Intended Outcomes Needs Assessment Methodology** (IONA). They say that, in a three-stage process, IONA enables assessment teams to analyse the causes of social fragility, to understand what changes are desirable and possible, and generate those media (and other) interventions with the highest probability of success. It is also planned to develop software that would enable donors and implementers to feed in the knowledge about a certain situation and establish which interventions would cause the highest probability of success. It is obvious that the IONA approach contains numerous assumptions that will lead to interesting discussions in the future, i.e., the assumption that assessment methodology

and indicators are universally acceptable, or that research has already brought about sufficient knowledge concerning influencing factors and directions of social dynamics. IONA's mapping of the complexity of intervening factors in social change processes is a useful basis for further research although it remains to be seen if the IONA framework can meet its high aspirations.

**Nick Oatley, Search for Common Ground**
**Evaluating media for peace building: Measuring the impact of the moving image.**

**Nick Oatley**, Director of Institutional Learning at S**earch for Common Ground** (SFCG), shared the experiences in **evaluating media for peace building: measuring the impact of the moving image**, concretely of different TV soap operas. The methodologies, developed in cooperation with different universities, focus on measuring how media affect the attitudes of audiences. The results showed that attitudes promoted by the shows were reinforced, such as acceptance of others, social responsibility, youth empowerment, gender empowerment, and preference of dialogue over violence. In future, SFCG will focus on a developmental evaluation approach, taking the complex dynamics, especially in societies affected by conflict, into consideration.

**Responses to the Pre-Conference Questionnaire Thomas R. Lansner**

As part of the preparations for the conference *Measuring Change II: Expanding Knowledge on Monitoring and Evaluation in Media Development,* 18 participants responded to a pre-conference questionnaire. The aim was to gather and increase understanding of perspectives and priorities of conference themes among a range of media development practitioners, researchers and funders. An initial summary of the responses was presented verbally to conference participants, and has since helped inform development of the mediaME initiative. A broad consensus among respondents argues that improved and expanded monitoring and evaluation of media development assistance is required to gain and share knowledge that will make such assistance both more valuable and more cost-effective.

Collecting, systematising and sharing experience that can guide programmes and projects, and help media development and media practitioners enhance their own work, is a shared goal. Strategic research that might link media development assistance to larger societal change is seen as a very important, but more difficult challenge. The need for donors to recognise the need for, and to better fund, monitoring and evaluation of media development assistance, was another common theme.          *A. Sofie Jannusch*
*Thomas R. Lansner*

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[1] *Well described recently by Michael Quinn Patton: Developmental Evaluation: Applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use. Guilford Press: New York, London 2011.*

[2] *Rolf Paasch has, in the meantime, returned to the FES headquarters in Berlin and works in the Division for International Cooperation in the Department for Asia and the Pacific.*

[3] *At the time of the conference, Fackson Banda held the SAB Ltd-UNESCO Chair of Media & Democracy in the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University; in the meantime, he is based at the Communication Development Division of UNESCO headquarters in Paris.*

[4] *IREX participated in the 2nd FoME symposium Measuring Change. How Independent Media Manage to Survive to present the MSI, (http://www.cameco.org/files/money_matters_documentation_colour_1.pdf)*

# www.mediaME-wiki.net launched:

# Process—Structure—Content—Objectives

The *Measuring Change* conferences have set two milestones in the establishment of the mediaME-initiative.

During the first **symposium** in 2007, participants shared the concern that the complexity of the context of media assistance requires a diverse toolkit of means and methods for monitoring and evaluation. There was a commonly felt need for consensual frameworks, to be used by many organisations. The concrete proposal was to create a wiki to encourage the sharing of knowledge and experiences, and to identify practice oriented toolboxes as a result of broad discussion processes.

This year's *Measuring Change II* sees the "soft launch" of this wiki – in the meantime named mediaME – with a core amount of content available. The workshops, led by partnering organisations in the development of the wiki, are used directly to further develop different sections of the mediaME-wiki.

Allow me to give a brief account of the development of the mediaME-initiative since CAMECO was asked by participants to coordinate its development in the start-up phase.

**The process**

Prof. Thomas R. Lansner (Columbia University) and Press Now (Netherlands) immediately offered their support in the development of the wiki-project, and most of the

other participants laid the foundation of the mediaME expert advisory group, a virtual think-tank through which further steps in the development of the initiative were discussed. Almost 80 experts joined this newsgroup.

After the first phase, during which the initiative was named and a basic project description outlined, the mediaME concept was presented to interested parties, and workshops were organised during international conferences to explore whether the need and interest in the initiative was more widely shared in the media assistance community.

*media*ME
*MEDIA DEVELOPMENT MONITORING + EVALUATION*

Recommendations regarding structure and procedures in developing mediaME were collected. An expert meeting agreed on main structures of the process and the content, and several affiliated experts began to work on various parts of the wiki.

## The content

Structuring the content of the mediaME-wiki is among the biggest challenges in the implementation of the participatory platform that will meet the needs of implementing organisations, evaluators and researchers, media practitioners, as well as media consumers/ users. Three main sections have been agreed upon, which shall facilitate rapid access to the contents:

• A general section where interventions on different sectoral levels are identified, starting with training (comprising the success of single courses, as well as institutions) assessing media, media landscapes, and audiences.

• The second section provides a thematic approach, comprising democratisation & governance, conflict, development and health, media education and literacy, communication strategies.

• Assess ME is a separate area of the mediaME-wiki, containing useful background information on subjects including: Online resources and platforms, methodologies and best practice, guidelines of M&E, impact of evaluations, etc.

Discussion forums can be opened up at any level of the mediaME-wiki, thus leaving options to concentrate on very specific topics, as well as broader processes.

## The structure

The structure of the initiative is intended to facilitate and foster the information sharing that is one of its principal objectives; here, form is meant to be part of the function and substance.

It is assumed that the intensive development phase of the mediaME-wiki and associated activities will take three years. To allow contributions from the users' community as soon as possible, high priority is given to developing the structure of each section. By the end of the second year, a critical amount of content is to be available on all sections of the mediaME-wiki. In the present template, definition/description and indicators will – together with the structuring of the section or theme – represent a synopsis of existing studies and approaches to assess a respective section of the wiki. The creation of these three parts of any wiki section is considered to be the "critical amount of content" enabling "ordinary" users to make contributions by adding content or joining discussions.

Once sections are set up and the initial content gathered, presented and synthesised, the continued development of the wiki will be on the basis of user-led content, along an online social networking model.

**Facilitating Partners mediaME**

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|---|---|
| Assessing Education and Training: | Deutsche Welle Academy |
| Assessing Media: | CAMECO |
| Assessing Media Landscapes: | Global Partners & Associates |
| Assessing Audiences: | Audience Dialogue |
| Section Democratisation & Governance: | Internews |
| Section Conflict: | Press Now / RNTC |

Based on the agreed project outline, the first members of the expert group volunteered to take the lead in the development of certain sections. The initial development of the mediaME-wiki online platform and allied activities will be undertaken over the three-year period by a consortium of "Facilitating Partners", which will be responsible for building content and networks in specific areas. Several leading media development groups have already agreed to oversee key areas of the mediaME-wiki.

Each Facilitating Partner will establish its own "thematic network" of partner organisations and experts, and accept user-generated postings. This ensures that the broadest pos-
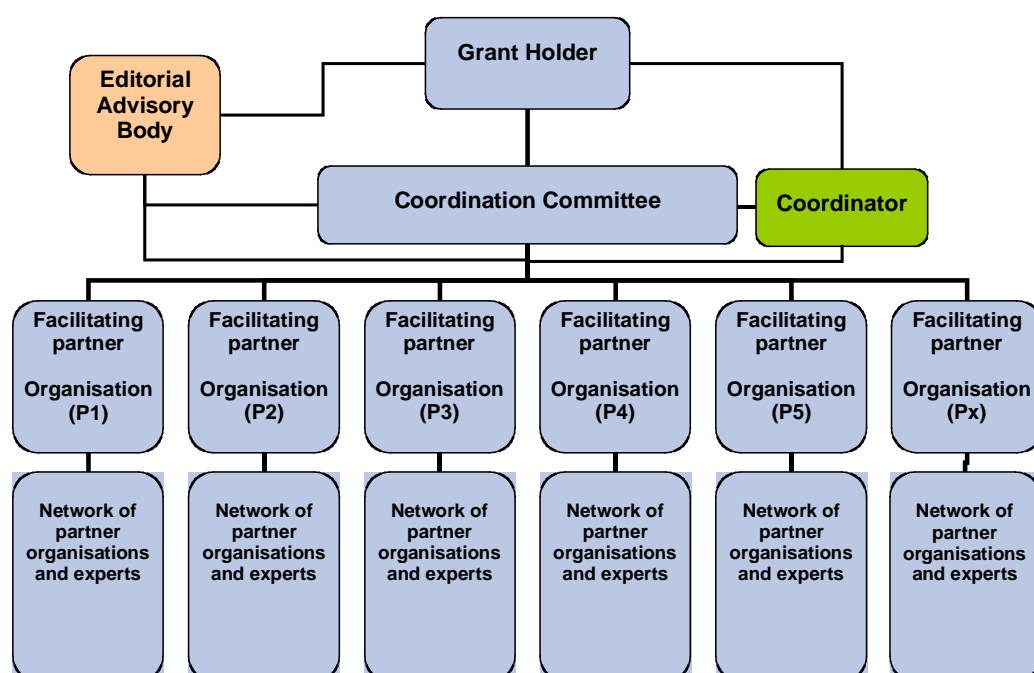
sible range of organisations and experts is engaged with the mediaME-wiki from the earliest stages, and thus contributes to sustainability following the initial project phase. The Facilitating Partners will also serve on the mediaME-wiki Coordinating Committee.

The Editorial Advisory Body – headed by the Editor – will ensure quality control on the mediaME-wiki.

**Some principles**

The mediaME-wiki is expressly designed to promote synergy – sharing and collaboration of existing knowledge, as well as generating new learning that can help improve project

delivery. The mediaME-wiki will complement and draw from existing initiatives, such as networks and associations of evaluation experts, the Communication Initiative Network or the Learning Portal Project of Search for Common Ground. It is a participatory venue, structured to generate new learning and enhanced usage through easy access to specific media development and communication for development of M&E topics, embracing the entire media development assistance sector. It will constitute a compendium – providing a structured synopsis of existing resources and links to them – and a specialised discussion forum at the same time.

## The objectives

The overall objective of mediaME is to **contribute to the improvement of media and communication development initiatives in developing countries.**

The purpose of mediaME is to **provide a resource for monitoring and evaluation that presents knowledge, experience and expertise on approaches, methods and tools used for monitoring and evaluation, and which presents an ever growing range of resources in M&E of media and communication projects**.
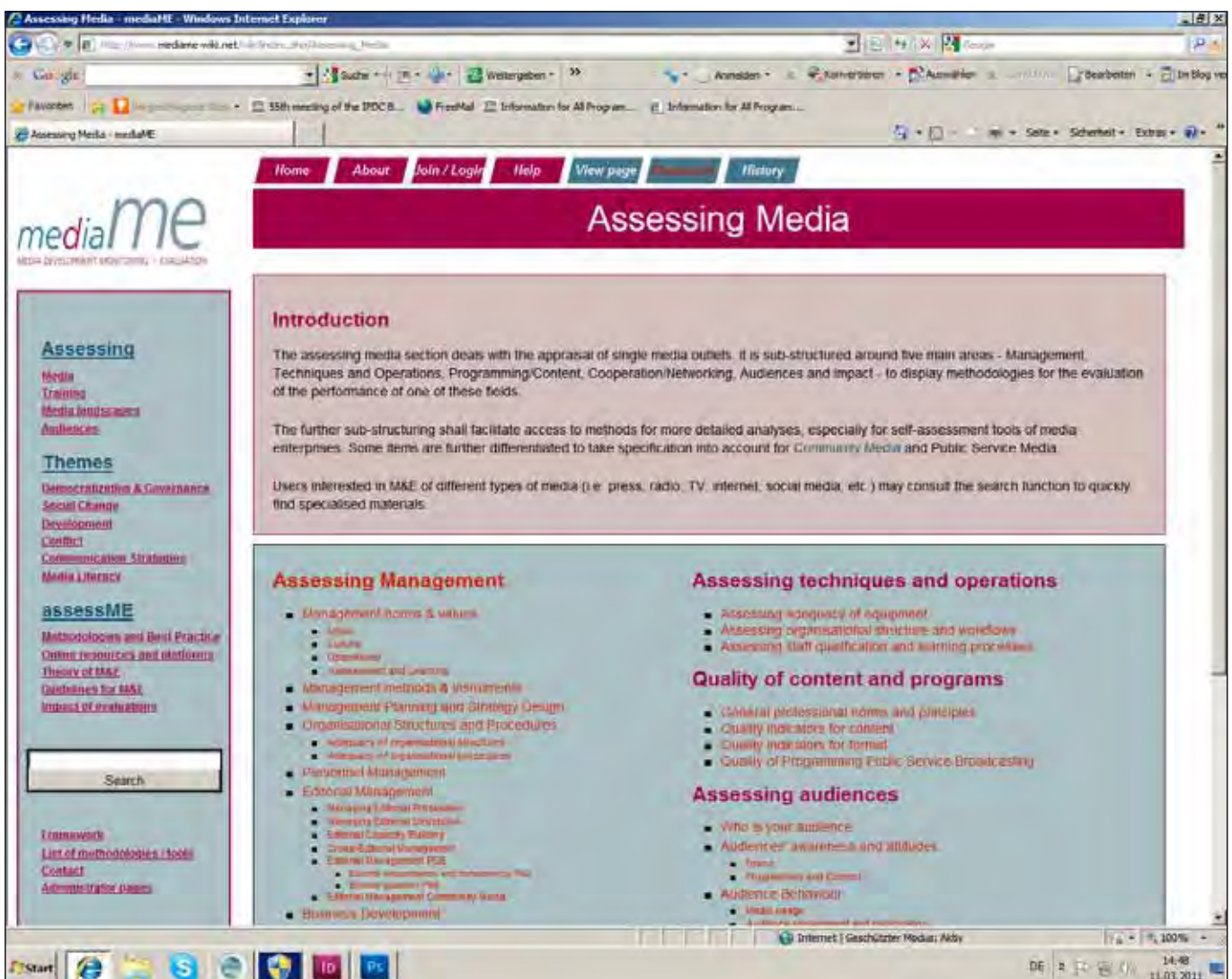
The specific objectives of the mediaME initiative are:

**• Greater communication and cooperation among media development assistance organisations and experts on monitoring and evaluation.**

It is expected that the mediaME initiative will create a vibrant and supportive platform for the sharing of knowledge and experience by practitioners in the media development and communication sectors. Evaluators, project implementers, researchers and others will form learning communities through online networking, and share resources, case studies and practical reflection on the use of M&E approaches, methods and tools.

**• Increased capacity amongst practitioners in media development monitoring and evaluation, to access and understand approaches, methods and tools, and their use in different contexts.**

Increased capacity of M&E practitioners is a key expected result of mediaME; through the initiative, practitioners who are active in designing, implementing and advising on evaluation in the sector will have access to a wide range of information, reflection and tools relating to the M&E approaches.

This will increase their capacity to understand the range and applicability of different approaches and methods.

**• Greater testing and sharing of comparative data about the application of M&E approaches, methods and tools in the field, and increased comparative learning about effectiveness.**

mediaME will promote an active networked community of practice that can further develop good practice and testing, and learn from experience in the use of different M&E approaches and methodologies in various contexts. There will be greater opportunity for fruitful testing and practical application of M&E tools. The mediaME-wiki will enable practitioners to ask questions and share their own learning about what has worked and what has not worked in the field, and to reflect on the factors that contributed to their success or lack of success. This is vital learning; only when theories are tested in practice can we learn what is most effective.

**• More effective media development assistance programmes and projects that improve through increasingly consistent, comprehensive and purposeful monitoring and evaluation.**

It is expected that the improved capacity of M&E practice in the field of media development will have a lasting positive effect on the sector as projects and programmes are more adequately evaluated and monitored, and more comparative learning achieves greater insights about effectiveness.

**• Increased capacity of funders to target media development assistance to specific objectives.**

The mediaME online platform presents funders, as well as practitioners, with a platform for gathering and sharing knowledge about monitoring and evaluation.

This will benefit funders who wish to mainstream clear monitoring and evaluation requirements within grant processes, as well as establish best practice evaluation systems for the assessment of delivery of grant programmes and projects.

**• Stronger sustainability of media assistance projects.**

The mediaME-wiki will provide resources for media outlets to perform self-evaluations, giving them tools to assess their performance and improve it, even in the absence of external assistance from media development organisations.

**• Increased participation of partners and others in developing countries.**

The mediaME-wiki will collect knowledge and experiences of local evaluation experts, NGOs and media outlets, making it a genuinely participatory platform.

The wiki will also serve to enhance broader participation in evaluation processes by offering open access to learning resources that can help promote community involvement in evaluations. It is important to note that these resources will be available to groups and individuals not typically connected to external donors.                    *A. Sofie Jannusch*

Assessing media environments worldwide:

# UNESCO's media indicators framework toolkit

## By Andrew Puddephatt

The UNESCO media indicators framework sought to identify a tool to analyse the media environment in any country. The task faced a number of challenges – from the diversity of existing initiatives themselves to sometimes contradictory application of different value systems (for example in the use of the terms "commercial" or "independent"). Furthermore, some systems of evaluation were perceived to have "western" bias and values, others based upon imprecise and inconsistent indicators or a lack of data and subjectivity. Few dealt with digital communications satisfactorily. And there was rarely an accurate correlation between development and media.

The UNESCO approach was to build consensus on existing indicators, taking a toolkit approach. The analysis model was structured around five media outcomes, each with explanatory context and main issues. In turn, these were sub-divided into sections and each section had key indicators, means of verification and a guide to potential data sources.

The five media outcomes were:
**1. System of regulation and control, including:**
● Legal and policy framework

● Regulatory system for broadcasting
● Defamation laws and other legal restrictions on journalists
● Censorship

**2. Plurality and transparency of ownership, including:**
● Media concentration
● A diverse mix of public, private and community media
● Licensing and spectrum allocation
● Taxation and business regulation
● Advertising

**3. Media as a platform for democratic discourse, including:**
● Media reflects diversity of society
● Public service broadcasting model
● Media self-regulation
● Requirements for fairness, balance and impartiality
● Levels of public trust and confidence in the media
● Safety of journalists

**4. Professional capacity building and supporting institutions, including:**
● Availability of professional media training
● Availability of academic courses in media practice

Andrew Puddephatt is Director of Global Partners and Associates, an organisation that promotes good governance, democracy and human rights. He chairs both the Audit Committee for the Parliamentary Ombudsman in the UK, and Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA). He is a trustee of the Sigrid Rausing Trust and a board member of International Media Support, the US based Witness and the European Council on Foreign Relations. From January 1999 until October 2004, he was the Executive Director of ARTICLE 19, an international human rights organisation which globally promotes freedom of expression. He has been an expert member of both the Council of Europe of the Commonwealth Expert working groups on freedom of information and freedom of expression and an expert advisor to UNESCO and UNDP. Andrew has been a senior manager in the not-for-profit sector for more than twelve years. Between October 1995 and January 1999, he was the Director of Charter 88, which was the UK's leading constitutional reform organisation. Between 1989 and 1995 he was General Secretary of Liberty (aka the National Council for Civil Liberties). In both capacities he played a leading role in securing a Bill of Rights for the UK.

● Presence of trade unions and professional organisations
● Presence of civil society organisations

### 5. Infrastructural capacity, including:

● Availability and use of technical resources by the media
● Press, broadcasting and ICT penetration

The challenges facing even this system were considerable, as data was often not reliable and some degree of subjectivity unavoidable. It was recognised from the beginning that the indicators needed to be applied with flexibility in accordance with local circumstances. The section on infrastructure does not include reference to telecommunications, which are likely to become an increasing source of content as a new generation of mobile phones and applications appear

To date, the media development indicators have been applied in Croatia by a local research team and in Mozambique, where a substantial evaluative exercise is under way. They have also been applied in the Maldives and are about to be developed in Bhutan. A major research exercise is under way under the auspices of UNESCO in Ecuador, to be followed by further programmes in Columbia and Bolivia. In each case, the exercise has been undertaken by a local research team and taken place in an atmosphere where there is both an accepted problem with the current media environment and a significant constituency (frequently including the government itself) supporting change.

The diagnostic toolkit approach allows each of the frameworks to follow the contours of the local media environment rather than impose an artificial typology from the outside. The downside risk is that the approach will be hijacked by local preoccupations. For example, in the case of Ecuador, these are tensions between government and media over questions of media ethics and government controls of the media.

One important development is the work carried out by UNESCO's Institute for Statistics [UIS] to improve data gathering by UNESCO itself. The planned new UNESCO surveys on newspapers and broadcasting will not provide indicators capable of monitoring and comparing all five outcomes, but they will go much further than is possible at present, especially in terms of assessing the balance of private versus public sectors in broadcasting and newspapers.

For the first time, the surveys will also facilitate a global comparison of number of hours devoted to certain types of broadcasting programmes (such as news, education, sports and drama) shown in different countries, as well as the gender diversity of the media workforce, the proportion of domestic and foreign ownership, and the availability of different language broadcasting. UNESCO will work with national statistical offices to develop the capacity to generate the new data. If UNESCO are successful, a more comprehensive and accurate picture of the media environment can be assembled for perhaps the first time.

C4D and media for democratic & human rights:

# What constitutes media development?

By Helge Rønning

One of the major challenges in relation to discussing indicators for media and democratic development is that the field consists of several issues that tend to be blurred. The two main approaches – which are often either in conflict with each other or inform each other – are development communication, in contrast to what media imply for democratic development. These are problems that have been hotly discussed within the broad area of communication and media development over the past decade or so.

This paper is an attempt to tackle two issues. One has to do with what communication for development implies. The other is an attempt to square this with what are the necessary elements for democratic media development.[1]

In the debate, there seem to be three approaches that often tend to imply different emphases. One can be characterised as the strict communication for development approach. It is linked to clear development agendas in areas such as health, agriculture, and environmental issues. It is often based on instrumental views of communication

techniques and technologies. The overall goal of this approach is linked to a wide perspective of poverty alleviation. And it is thus often linked to social programmes, particularly in rural areas.

A second approach that has gained importance in this perspective is what often is called peace and conflict resolution communication, and whose goal is to bring about peaceful solutions and ease conflicts, even if this may imply stifling debate and free expression. The potential conflict of interest here may exist in the promotion of what can be designated as "peace initiatives" rather than initiatives promoting accurate depictions of conflicts. An example of this dilemma is found in the area of peace journalism. Here the emphasis on preventing conflict may create contradictions in relation to the role of journalists as having the right to identify and report openly on real conflicts. In some instances, peace and conflict communication is being utilised as a pretext for not opening up spaces of democratic media. This is often the case in countries that have emerged from violent struggles. In Africa, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Uganda may serve as examples. All

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## It is difficult to imagine that communications [...] do not involve a struggle over power in some way or other.

of them have more or less restricted media systems, with Eritrea in particular having virtually no freedom of expression, based on arguments that national cohesion and unity and development is the primary objective. Democracy and freedom of media and expression take second or much lower place in priorities.[2]

The third approach puts emphasis on the development of communicative spaces and different and plural media based on an understanding that media is central to democratic processes and citizens' rights.

### Issues in communication and development

All these three main areas of interest in communication and media development are linked to an increasing realisation of that communication is becoming more and more central to developmental issues. This is of course to large degree related to the phenomenal rise in ICTs as well as the importance of global media developments. Thus governments and donors – bilateral and multilateral – have all devised strategies for how to develop and to utilise communications.

NGOs of all kinds have entered into the field with their particular and often very similar programmes, both for using ICTs in development programmes and for developing media and journalistic practices. In late February 2010, I had the opportunity to observe how a variety of NGOs, as well as UN agencies, had started programmes for media development in South Sudan. In addition to a lack of coordination, three aspects were striking. One was the lack of clarity in relation to whether the media should pursue a conflict resolution strategy or a media for democracy and pluralism policy. Governmental and UN agencies tended to lean in the direction of the first, while the media NGOs emphasised the

second. Second was a striking duplication of the efforts in the area – the same or very similar courses were being run by many different actors. And third, there was little agreement and discussion around the issue of whether media development was a goal in itself for the building of democracy, or whether it only served a broader developmental purpose. Again, the media NGOs favoured the first alternative, the governmental and the UN groups the second.

Furthermore, the area of development communication has emerged as an important field both in development studies as well as in media studies. Silvio Waisbord[3] has made a very laudable attempt to clarify the issues at play in relation to the discussion of what constitutes development communication or rather development and communication. He points out that:

> „There is growing consensus around five ideas in thinking and practicing development communication: the centrality of power, the integration of top-down and bottom-up approaches, the need to use a communication 'tool-kit' approach, the articulation of interpersonal and mass communication, and the incorporation of personal and contextual factors. ˝ (Waisbord (2005): 78)

### Power

The issue of power has become central in relation to the three main approaches I have outlined above. It is difficult to imagine that communications involving social mobilisation, as well being an instrument in contributing to development projects reaching specific goals, do not involve a struggle over power in some way or other. For citizens and communities to engage in projects that relate to their daily existence, communication is in itself an issue of who decides. To gain

information and communicate about which direction development should take, even when it comes to practical issues such as health and education, has to do with how decisions are being made and thus involves either empowerment or disempowerment. Projects that are decided without participation from the local communities often meet with resistance. This is an insight that to a large degree builds on the impetus to participatory development communication strategies that grew out of the political debate in the 1970s.

It is striking that this now is conventional wisdom among all development organisations – NGOs, government donors, the UN organisations, as well as the World Bank.[4] The only places where it seems to meet some resistance are among authoritarian and dominant-party governments. As Waisbord suggests, however, it is possible to "argue about whether the presence of participatory language in the programs of development institutions is mere pro-forma or a genuine commitment to community empowerment." (Waisbord (2005): 78)

Nevertheless, the issue of power and communication in relation to developments links the more instrumental approaches to a more rights-based and citizen-oriented view of what media for development involve. Participatory processes are part of a democratic agenda and also involve issues linked to representation and the right to free expression as well as access to information. This again involves processes where communities gain control over their situation. A central concept in this context is communication for empowerment, which has become a catch phrase for many initiatives. It is not really always clear what this involves, and in practice includes many of the elements that one usually associates with participatory development communication. The issue of power, which is

central to democratic political media initiatives, may thus be pushed to the background.

This is not, however, in line with a theoretical approach where the communication for development, empowerment and democratic media are combined. In the guidance note to the very instructive and useful report on Communication for Empowerment: Developing Media Strategies in Support of Vulnerable Groups (UNDP Governance Centre: 2006)[5] it is stated among other points how important "[…] the impact of liberalization and the ongoing struggle many media face in holding onto hard fought media freedoms […]" have been in this area.

Furthermore, the report emphasises the role of the media for the poor and disenfranchised exemplified by the"[…] importance of radio in Communication for Empowerment strategies because of its reach, accessibility to the poor and increasingly interactive character." In such a perspective, the close relationship between development communication and democratic media development occupies the centre of attention.

### Community efforts & decentralisation

According to Waisbord, the "second key idea is that 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches need to be integrated." (Waisbord (2205): 79) This is obviously linked to an emphasis on community-based development and decentralisation efforts in relation to areas such as health, agriculture, education, and environment. Quite a few of such initiatives have been the work of NGOs – often, big international ones. As Waisbord points out, this has often led to a suspicion of the government initiatives and an overemphasising on the role of civil society and NGOs to the detriment of the important role that governance plays in development.

[...] it is possible to "argue about whether the presence of participatory language in the programs of development institutions is mere pro-forma or a genuine commitment to community empowerment."

# [...] the issues arise about who pays for and commissions such undertakings, and what influence do donors and other authorities have over the content?

*"It is unquestionably important to reco-gnize the importance of civic institutions in addressing and tackling development problems, especially given the persistent shortcomings of states and the private sector, coupled with the consolidation of global forms of participation.*

*We cannot underestimate, however, the fact that governments continue to play a big part in development programs, basically because their action (and inaction) affects the lives of millions of people, particularly marginalized and poor populations. [...] To conclude that governments are inherently antithetical to development, as some of the literature on global civil society suggests, leads dangerously to a downplaying of the reality of world governance in which states still matter. Curiously, such anti-state conclusions offered by progressive and liberal analysts fall into a sort of neo-conservative position that demonizes states without offering proposals for democratizing and strengthening them in ways that would serve development goals."*
*(Waisbord (2005): 80)*

However, it is also important in this context to be aware that decentralisation strategies are often not really aimed at achieving democratisation, but rather to consolidate the power of the central state and the dominant governing party.[6] Thus the discussion of bottom-up versus top-down communication is central not only to practical developmental issues, but also to democratic issues.

The question is about who controls the local communicative spaces. There are unfortunately many examples that they often are in the hands of representatives of central government. A good example of this are the so-called community radios of the Instituto de Comunicação Social (ICS) in Mozambique.[7]

## Tools

The most instrumental element in Waisbord's analysis of key ideas is perhaps what he identifies as a 'tool-kit' approach. This involves the use of multiple communication strategies to intervene in local communities, where a variety of techniques and communication technologies play a role.

*"Social mobilization of a vast array of organizations offers a way to deal with the multiple dimensions of certain issues such as education, sanitation, nutrition, family planning, respiratory problems, AIDS, and child survival. Media advocacy is advisable in certain contexts where a significant proportion of the population gets information from a variety of media programming. Popular media (drama, community radio, singing groups) have proven to be effective in generating dialogue in small communities."* (Waisbord (2005): 81)

However, in this context the potential conflict between the understanding of communication perceived as an instrument for promoting projects rather than for empowerment becomes acute.

In the dissemination of information through techniques such as theatre, radio soaps, and popular music, the issues arise about who pays for and commissions such undertakings, and what influence do donors and other authorities have over the content? Do interests other than those that pertain to local communities set the agenda for the representation of the messages? How are controversial issues of a clearly political nature represented, or are they avoided? Do such initiatives really promote a free, plural and democratic media agenda, or are we faced with the same dilemma here as in relation to the controlled form of peace and conflict-prevention communication?

Waisbord identifies the combination of inter-personal and multimedia communication as the fourth key area for the discussion of development communication. Clearly this is linked to how different forms of communication interpret the issues that preoccupy local communities as well as the society at large. Thus the area involves issues related to the development of a plural media space – both in relation to opinions as well as communication platforms. But it also pertains to whether the issues raised by national broadcasters, for instance, represent a broad spectrum of the opinions that exist in society, or whether the national broadcaster mainly serves to promote the interests of central government. Furthermore, it is an issue that applies to the role of new media technologies, and how these may either promote a greater degree of democratic spaces for communication, rather than new communication divides. Waisbord writes:

*"The media have powerful effects only indirectly, by stimulating peer communication and making it possible for messages to enter social networks and become part of everyday interactions. Interpersonal communication is fundamental in persuading people about specific beliefs and practices such as mothers' decisions to vaccinate their children, adopt hygiene practices, and keep communities clean."* (Waisbord (2005): 81)

And here we are up against the key question of how to combine an instrumental approach to communication with an empowerment and democratic agenda.

## Behaviour change and democracy

This is again linked to Waisbord's fifth key issue, "[…] the incorporation of approaches that focus on individual and environmental factors in understanding the role of behaviour change communication." (Waisbord (2005): 81) There is both a developmental and a democratic issue at stake.

If we follow the pattern of elections in Africa in the two decades since the introduction of multi-party elections in the early 1990s, one tendency is very pronounced — namely, that incumbents win elections. Across Africa's multiparty systems, competitive political contestation has failed to take root.

Even in countries with the most institutionalised democratic elections, the opposition rarely gains more than 25 per cent of the seats. (Rakner and van de Walle (2009). Furthermore, the government often sets their goal at winning a super-majority of two-thirds so that they can change constitutions at their whim. If democracy is understood as a political system where the opposition plays a significant role, Africa's third wave of democracy displays distinct weaknesses. Underscoring the democratic challenge, the most institutionalised electoral processes are found in the dominant party regimes. This perspective may suggest that regimes which hold elections and never lose should not be classified as true democracies.

According to this definition, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Tanzania would be weak democracies. Regardless of the nature and quality of electoral institutions, opposition parties remain numerically weak and fragmented – with some notable exceptions, one being Zimbabwe. There is evidence to suggest that authoritarian regimes which hold elections remain in power longer than those who fail to hold them. Why do authoritarian governments hold elections, and why do they win elections?

• Authoritarian regimes receive a 'democracy bonus' for holding elections, through international democracy assistance, including support for media.

Thus the issue of the possibilities for behaviour change communication involves much more than practical developmental concerns. It is at the heart of the democratic process.

• Evidence suggests that competitive clientilism drives the behaviour of voters and candidates in ways that promote pro-regime parliamentarians.

• Incumbents can manage elections by employing institutional mechanisms rather than extralegal manipulation to remain in power. In this context the (ab)use of state resources, particularly the state media, for campaign purposes, is a prominent feature. Thus the issue of the possibilities for behaviour change communication involves much more than practical developmental concerns. It is at the heart of the democratic process.[8]

### The rights approach

The contestations and differences between a more communication for development approach and a media development to promote the right to communication and information are in many ways at the heart of how to apply indicators for media development. It is necessary to find ways of appraising the efficiency of communication techniques and practices in relation to concrete development goals, and it is also important to find indicators for how to assess the role of media in relation to issues of democracy and sustainability. How to combine the approaches to communication as developmental tools on the one hand and instruments for empowerment and democracy on the other? These issues have been at the heart of the debate over media development indicators in the past few years.[9] As a conclusion to this discussion, I will summarise my experience with applying Unesco's International Programme for the Development of Communication's[10], *Media Development Indicators: a framework for assessing media development*[11], to the situation in Mozambique.

The focus of the IPDC indicators is clearly on communication as a fundamental human and citizens' right, but implied in this is also that media and communication issues are at the core of wider developmental issues. Thus at the basis of my work with the indicators was a rights-based approach to both development in a wider framework, as well as to the role of media in the context of empowerment and democratic change.[12]

A central question for a rights-based approach to development is how to fight poverty. One must see that the poverty syndrome concerns the society as a whole and not just the poor. A form of underdevelopment that also affects those sectors that are not harmed by poverty directly characterises societies in which the majority of the population finds itself below the poverty line. Strategies for rights-based development must therefore be grounded in comprehensive analyses of both the causes and the symptoms of poverty.

Such analyses require an understanding of *the connections among power, politics, and human and social relationships*. The bases for change do not lie in a narrow focus on one or a few fields, but in collaboration among many actors, especially those players engaged in organising in the civil society and in social movements. Cooperation with the state must be clearly defined so as to proceed on the premise that civil organisations have their proper tasks and governmental bodies have theirs.

One consequence of this argument is that *the building of organisations* must be central in strategies for aid and development. Organisations must seek to promote those interests that arise from various groups' needs and rights. Good examples of this are organisations that promote women's rights and organisations that work to defend human rights.

Rights-based development strategies must not instil passivity, but must *build on active initiatives* taken by the concerned parties. In short, such strategies must build on creative

forces. Their tactics must also focus on which rights the citizens of a given society have. They must point out and present for open discussion various models for development, thereby encouraging participation and democratic means of decision-making. They must put development for distinct groups in the larger context of development for the society as a whole. All the above are central aspects of the role of democratic media. Thus, to create openings for a pluralistic, diverse and open media situation is central to any broad rights based development strategy.

This means that *local ownership of issues* is important, and this is an important basis for the development of community media. Development is a long-term project in which one cannot expect immediate results on the basis of narrowly-focused efforts. Development builds on experience and knowledge that are accumulated and assimilated. It involves many different groups and aspects. International collaboration in rights-based development must be based on *solidarity*.

**IPDC indicators applied**

These principles informed my analysis of the media situation in Mozambique with a point of departure in IPDC's analytical framework.[13] The first category deals with legal and regulatory systems that pertain to freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity of the media. This category encompasses issues that have to do with the constitution, laws, and other instruments such as media regulations. It covers the right to information, editorial independence, journalists' right to protect their sources, public and civil society organisations and policy towards the media, mechanisms for regulation and ethical debate. My conclusion to the analysis of the situation in Mozambique was that, from a legal point of view and in practice, Mozambique must be characterised as having a mostly open media environment, although

problems exist. Local media and human rights organisations report regularly on press freedom violations, as does the press itself.

The second category deals with plurality and diversity of media, a level economic playing field, and transparency of ownership. My conclusion is that there exists a mix of state/public, private and community media in Mozambique. It should be borne in mind, however, that state media are dominant, and that both the private and the community media are weak particularly, as regards their economic basis and sustainability.

The third aspect of the evaluation of media development deals with the media as a platform for democratic discourse, and covers public impressions of the media, media and elections, public service broadcasting, and safety of journalists. The media in Mozambique in general show an acceptable degree of pluralism. Their greatest challenge is related to poor penetration, with the exception of national radio, and insufficient resources. All media in the country must be characterised as undercapitalised. This has as a result that the media to a large degree represent the interests and views of the urban population, particularly of Maputo, and that the print media especially have an elite orientation. Pluralism of opinions, however, is observed, and the debating climate in the media is open. Limited access to information, however, often hampers the possibility of, for instance, conducting proper investigative journalism. Authorities should move beyond public statements supporting media freedom to create a truly safe environment for the press. This is particularly important because there have been, over the past years, several instances when journalists, especially those working for local and provincial media, have been threatened by governmental authorities. It should also be borne in mind that libel laws are used to instil fear among critical

The problems facing the radio stations I visited bear witness to the need for long-term and consistent support mechanisms to be put in place [...]

journalists. The spectre of the murder of the editor Carlos Cardoso in November 2000 also continues to haunt the Mozambican media scene.

The fourth category focuses on professional capacity building and supporting institutions that underpin freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity, and thus covers issues such as media and journalism education and media organisations. Education in journalism and media in Mozambique is seriously hampered by lack of resources. This affects both the quality of journalism and the understanding of the role of the media in the country. It should be emphasised that despite problems with resources, the interest in education and training is great, both among practicing journalists and among students in general. The awareness of the need for organising around issues of media freedom, moreover, is considerable in the media sector.

IPDC has made infrastructural capacity for the support of independent and pluralistic media the focus of their fifth category, which deals with access to modern technical facilities for newsgathering, production and distribution, press, broadcasting and ICT penetration, and technical aspects of both print and electronic media. There is no doubt that radio is the most important medium in Mozambique. The reach and pluralism of radio channels and services are clearly increasing. This is the case both for the services of state-run Radio Mozambique and the increasing numbers of community radios. Furthermore, radio in combination with cell phones, which is the other rapidly growing communication medium in the country, open up possibilities for empowerment of particularly marginalised groups in the country. The circulation of print media is very limited and reaches mostly audiences in Maputo, and TV is also, for all practical purposes, an urban phenomenon. While Internet and other advanced ICTs

still play a marginal role, and their penetration is low, the opportunities they represent are great, even if it will take time before they are in extensive use throughout the country.

In order to take into consideration the aspects of the role of media that pertain to more direct developmental issues beyond a strict media focus, I decided to include a sixth category that did not exist in the IPDC categories. This also implies a new emphasis on community media. Under the headline "Development of ICTs and Community Radios and Community Multimedia Centres (CMC)", I analysed, among others, the current situation of community radios and CMCs in Mozambique, radio as a gateway to the Internet, community media and democracy, community radio as a development tool, and donors and media. The most important conclusion to this part of the analysis of the situation in Mozambique is that the independence and community base of community media must be respected. This is doubly important if the ambitious plans of the Ministry of Science and Technology for establishing a CMC in each of Mozambique's districts are being realised. There is an ambiguity in the plans regarding the control of the CMCs. Are they to be truly community based through local organisations? Or are they to be part of the central media network and possibly linked to the state-run Instituto de Communicação Social? If the latter is the case, this will imply a massive strengthening of the state media sector.

Community radios and CMCs have three main functions: 1. They serve as media for empowerment and democratisation; 2. They are efficient means for development information; and 3. As a follow up to the other functions, they represent a stepping-stone for the linking of marginalised communities to new information and communication technologies. Almost everywhere in the world, community media and communication centres are

dependent on outside funding for long-term sustainability. This is particularly the case when new technologies are introduced. This is even more essential in a very poor country like Mozambique. The problems facing the radio stations I visited bear witness to the need for long-term and consistent support mechanisms to be put in place, particularly as regards the maintenance, upgrading and renewal of equipment. The issue of sustainability must be linked to the technological options that are taken. The technology must be accessible to the communities, and also be maintained properly in a manner where the responsibility and independence of the local community organisation is a priority.

## Fundamental values[14]

The analysis outlined above rests on some fundamental values, which are essential for the development of democratic communication environment, and which can be summarised by the following keywords:

*1. Justice* — Rights-based development must aim at creating a just society, both domestically within each country and internationally.

*2. Equality* — Concepts of human and civil rights rest on the value of equality. This is not the same as uniformity; rather, it entails equal opportunities and equal rights.

*3. Respect* — Strategies for development that are not built on a foundation of respect for the people concerned are doomed to fail. This value requires that the actors in the process of development be regarded as participants, not as the objects of a form of social engineering. The underlying attitude is that people must meet as subjects in a reciprocal relation to one another.

*4. Participation* — Closely connected to the value of respect is the premise that those who are subjects in the processes of development must also be participants. This idea derives from the emphasis placed on organising in the rights-based model of development.

*5. Dignity (autonomy)* — In connection with this value it makes sense to return to the first main type of rights, civil rights. These rights have their bases in the lines of thought about autonomy that Immanuel Kant pursued. It may seem a bit forced to bring an Enlightenment philosopher from the 1700s into a discussion of our day's policies on development, but those ideas in fact underlie all later understandings of rights. Autonomy entails the ability to use one's reason without supervision. Thus development is not a form of instruction in which "Others" are informed how they should behave. Knowledge about development must not be imposed from without, but must grow from within as a form of enlightenment. This process requires a discussion of a society's development that takes place in a public sphere inhabited by autonomous individuals as well as representatives of various social interest groups, and further requires that the discussion respect freedom of speech. The significance of such a process for right-based development in the area of communication is evident.

*6. Transparency and oversight* — This value arises from the preceding one. Rights-based development requires that decision-making processes be transparent and that they can be debated in such a way that the decision-makers can be held accountable. Unfortunately, the situation in much development work is that decisions are taken without sufficient openness, often by organisations that shield themselves from external oversight. It is an important element of rights-based cultural work to support the creation of an open and free public sphere with independent and critical media that serve as a watchdog of power abuse as a central element.

> It is an important element of rights-based cultural work to support the creation of an open and free public sphere with independent and critical media that serve as a watchdog of power abuse as a central element.

*7. Democracy* —   The six values outlined above point toward the last one, namely the significance of democracy. Development processes must be based on good governance. Work on cultural and media development must build on a fundamental democratic understanding of the role that democratic processes play in ensuring a free media environment. Democracy as a value in turn requires that there be a reciprocal relation between civil society on the one hand and the state and its institutions on the other. Rights must be established in law and justified politically, and they must be respected and enforced.

[1] *In the following I have benefited from the excellent book about "rethinking communication for development" Hemer, Oscar & Thomas Tufte (eds.) (2005). Media and Glocal Change. Gothenburg. (Nordicom).*

[2] *See Allen, Tim & Nicole Stremlau (2005). "Media policy, peace and state reconstruction" in Hemer & Tufte (op.cit).*

[3] *Waisbord, Silvio (2005) "Five key ideas: coincidences and challenges in development communication" in Hemer & Tufte (op.cit).*

[4] *An interesting example of this is the emphasis put on the participatory communication model in The World Bank's Development Communication Sourcebook from 2008. http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTDEVCOMMENG/0,,contentMDK:21433084~menuPK:34000171~pagePK:34000187~piPK:34000160~theSitePK:423815,00.html (last accessed 09.05.2010).*

[5] *http://web.worldbank.org/wbsite/external/topics/extdevcommeng/0,,contentmdk:21433084~menupk:34000171~pagepk:34000187~pipk:34000160~thesitepk:423815,00.htm (last accessed 09.05.2010).*

[6] *For an analysis of such a strategy see: Orre, Aslak Jangård (2010) Entrenching the party-state in the multi-party era. Opposition parties, traditional authorities and new councils of local representatives in Angola and Mozambique. Bergen. (University of Bergen).*

[7] *Instituto da Comunicação Social (ICS) is an organ of the state under the Information Bureau in the Prime Minister's Office (GABINFO) and serves to transmit information to the citizens in the form of various media, among others 21 community radios.*

[8] *The above observations are based on work in the project "Election processes, liberation movements and democratic change in Africa" that I am currently involved in together with Lise Rakner at Christian Michelsens Institutt (CMI) in Bergen.*

[9] *Examples of such initiatives to come up with media development indicators are the reports by African Media Barometer http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTDEVCOMMENG/0,,contentMDK:214330, and the IREX Media Sustainability Indexes http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTDEVCOMMENG/0,,contentMDK:214330*

[9] *84~menuPK:34000171~pagePK:34000187~piPK:34000160~theSitePK:423815,00.htm (last accessed 09.05.2010).*

[10] *International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) is part of UNESCO's programmes in the field of communication and information. The indicators are found on: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTDEVCOMMENG/0,,contentMDK:21433084~menuPK:34000171~pagePK:34000187~piPK:34000160~theSitePK:423815,00.htm*

[11] *http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=26032&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html (last accessed 09.05.2010)*

[12] *For a discussion of what such an approach implies for practical work in the areas of aid and development, see Mikkelsen, Britha (2005) Methods for Development Work and Research: A New Guide for Practitioners, London, New York, New Delhi) (Sage).*

[13] *I was contracted by UNESCO to do a pilot study of Mozambique according to the indicators in 2008. The report was submitted on June 9, 2008.*

[14] *I have worked on such principles also in relation to my activities for the Norwegian Copyright Development Association (Norcode), http://www.norcode.no/en/about_norcode/.*

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# The African Media Barometer (AMB) in practice:

# Perceptions and realities in assessing media landscapes

## By Rolf Paasch

In 2004, the Media Project of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) in Africa and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) started developing the *"African Media Barometer"*. Our goal was to create a self-assessment instrument based on African standards and a guided discussion among African experts. The resulting reports of the new measurement exercise were to provide FES and our partner MISA with both an analysis of the media landscape in a given country and an advocacy tool for media reforms.

Five years later, the *African Media Barometer* has given us a bi-annual, in-depth and comprehensive description of the media situation in 25 African countries. By the end of 2009, the AMB has conducted 47 assessments, and in six countries already for the third time. Altogether, the discussions and data compiled in these AMB reports provide us with the largest long-term study about the media situation in the African continent.

This short paper reflects on the methodological and practical problems in developing and implementing the *African Media Barometer*. It lists the difficulties overcome and the challenges remaining.

Whatever the continued shortfalls of this particular measurement tool might be, the need for analyzing the media landscapes as a prerequisite for effective media development and successful democracy promotion remains beyond doubt.

## Analyzing media landscapes

By 2005, media development had become an accepted instrument in the wider context of democracy promotion. International organizations like UNESCO[1] and the World Bank see a diverse and independent media as a precondition for the effectiveness of their good governance programs. Free media are also increasingly recognized as a powerful change agent.

Yet what was and is hampering the development of effective approaches to media development is a general lack of data in this field. There was the ambitious *African Media Development Initiative*[2] in the wake of the G8 *Commission for Africa Report* of March 2005. There are a fair number of other studies, like Guy Berger's very useful comparison of *Media Legislation in 10 African countries*,[3] and there are numerous books and papers on media in

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## 2. Development of the *African Media Barometer* (AMB)

**Perception and realities-Defining the character of new measurement tool for FES/MISA**

- qualitative tool, dialogue based written report
- home-grown: local actors not international observers
- standards based: African standards not imported concept & consultants
- practical: defining country specific points of intervention
- applicable: reflecting FES/MISA focus on media policy, regulation and public broadcasting

particular countries or aspects of the media landscape.

But none of them cover the whole canvas of contradictions that makes up the African media landscape. And most of them will soon be outdated because of the rapid change in communication technology. Setting out, we also noticed that in their newly designed African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)[4] on good governance, African leaders had conveniently forgotten to include the media. Attempting to judge each other on democratic progress, they collectively decided to not include the media sector in this enterprise of mutual self-assessment – a telling omission that showed their lack of seriousness on the matter of good governance and media reform.

While African leaders failed at the political level, African civil society recognized and stressed the role of the media in reminding governments of the standards for good governance. The *African Media Barometer* is designed to take the measure of media as the bellwether of democratic dispensation.

We looked at other existing indices for assessing media landscapes. For our purposes, Freedom House's *Freedom of the Press Index*[5] and Reporters without Borders' *Worldwide Press Freedom Index* [6] concentrate too much on press freedom violations and not enough on the enabling environment for an independent media.

Compared to these tools, the *Media Sustainability Index* of IREX[7] has a much more sophisticated set of indicators and scores. But it focuses more on the economic sustainability of media than befitted our more political interests. We also decided against adding an analysis by foreign based experts to the AMB, as the *Media Sustainability Index* does. Such an outside intervention, we thought, would diminish the "homegrown" character and credibility of our instrument. Nobody should be able to refute the self-assessment and analysis of our AMB reports by calling it "foreign interference" in African affairs.

### Development of the AMB

Matching the needs of FES and MISA with the political context in which we would be working, we came up with the following requirements for our methodology:

**The AMB could only be a qualitative tool** because we wanted media practitioners and representatives of civil society to debate and assess the media landscape in their own country. We decided that a panel of 10-12 experts, half from the media and half from civil society, could best represent the country concerned. We excluded government and party political representatives from the panel to ensure a critical but constructive debate and avoid political mudslinging or scoring. The ideal panel would represent the urban-rural, geographical, gender, ethnic, language and religious stratification of society – a tall order, as it turned out to be.

**The AMB had to be a home-grown instrument** to counter the argument that once again Western observers with their own concepts and preconceived notions would be judging African practices on the basis of their own interests. Thus, all the panelists had to come from the respective country.

**The AMB had to be based on African standards** to allow civil society groups and media practitioners to hold the result of their AMB report against the declaration and protocols signed or accepted by their own governments. Only when the violations of media freedom stand in contrast to African norms can governments be held accountable.

Consequently, we developed 42 indicators as the basis for the discussion and the scoring process from the following declarations, protocols and principles, all defined on African ground:

– The Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACPR), Banjul, 2002.
– The Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press, Windhoek, 1991.
– The African Charter on Broadcasting, Windhoek, 2001.
– The SADC-Protocol for Culture, Information and Sport, Blantyre, 2000.

**The AMB had to reflect the FES/MISA focus** on media policy, regulation and public broadcasting since we wanted information and data for our particular areas of work. As a result we grouped our indicators into four sectors:

– Freedom of Expression
– Media Diversity and Independence
– Broadcasting Regulation
– Professional and Ethical Standards

**The AMB results had to be practical** and define points of entry for FES/MISA and other media or civil society organizations. This required analyzing positive and negative developments and recommending strategies to promote media reforms. Only then, could the AMB be both an instrument of analysis and a practical tool for advocacy.

### Phase I (2005-2007/8)

The final methodology for the first generation of AMBs (2005-2008) can be summarized as follows:



● Every two years, a panel of experts, consisting of at least five media practitioners and five representatives from civil society, meets to assess the media situation in their country.

● For two days, the panelists discuss their national media environment along 42 standardized indicators that are scored in an anonymous vote on the scale from 1 to 5. The indicators are formulated as goals that are derived from African political protocols and declarations.

● If the country does not meet the indicator the score would be one; if the country meets all aspects of the indicator, it would be a 5, the best score possible. If the country meets few, many or most of the indicators it would be a 2, 3, or 4 respectively. The scoring takes place after the discussion and should reflect the personal conclusion each panelist draws from the foregoing exchange.

● The discussion and scoring is moderated by an independent consultant who edits the draft report written by the rapporteur. After the panelists have the chance to comment on the draft and offer suggestions and corrections, the moderator edits the report. Thus, the whole panel has agreed that the report

is a fair reflection of the discussion, without necessarily subscribing to each aspect or argument in it.

● In the report, panelists are not quoted by name. Their scoring also remains anonymous. If a participant does not want his or her name to appear as member of the panel for fear of persecution, he can decide to withhold it. The report will describe his or her professional position in a way that protects their identity – e.g., as "a journalist from a state paper" or in similar fashion.

● The final, qualitative report summarizes the general content of the discussion and provides the single scores, the average score



## 4. Results I (2005 – 2007/8)
### Rankings & cross country comparisons ?

Rolf Paasch, director of fesmedia Africa   17
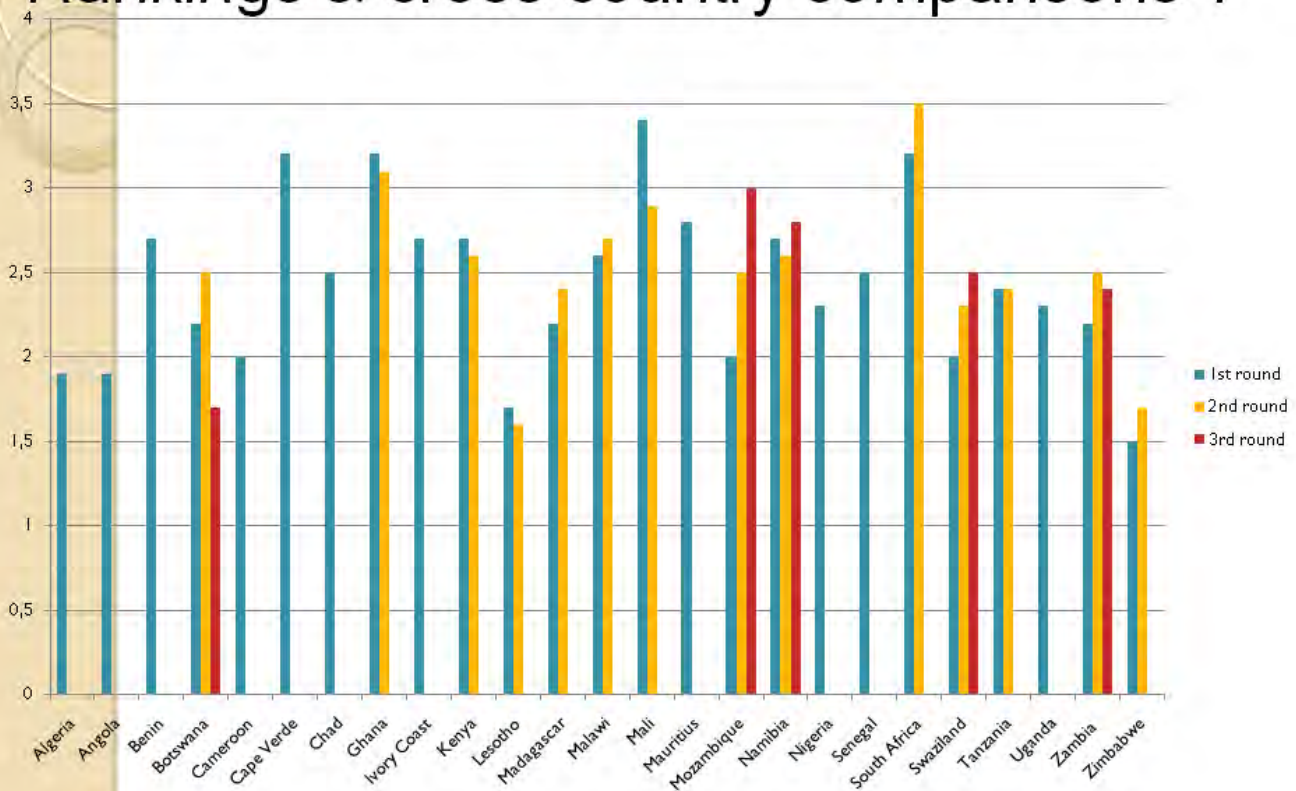
for each indicator, the average score for each sector and the overall country score. Over time, the biannual reports are measuring the media development in that particular country, and should form the basis for a political discussion on media reform.

Using this methodology for the first generation of the AMB from 2005 to 2008, we covered 23 countries, in 15 of which the exercise was repeated after two years.

With the second reports, mainly in Southern Africa, we generated comparable data over time, contributing to a large body of knowledge about the media situation in the region. What distinguished the results of the

AMB in a positive way from other academic studies of the media situation was the systematic inclusion of the "implementing factor". Panelists were told to score less the legal but more the real situation, to judge the practice, not the promises. The report would state the legal situation, but also describe the degree or lack of implementation of a particular law, which would be reflected in the scoring.

For example, many academic studies list the number of community radio stations from government lists or UNESCO-reports. The *African Media Barometer* too would state these numbers, but also check them with the collective and practical experience of the panelists. Are these community radio stations

## AMB'S BETWEEN PERIODS 2005–2009
****(Grey shading represents SADC Countries)

| | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | Times held in Country |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | | Algeria | | 1 |
| 2 | Angola | | | | | | 1 |
| 3 | | | Benin | | Benin | | 2 |
| 4 | Botswana | | Botswana | | Botswana | | 3 |
| 5 | | | | Cameroon | | Cameroon | 1 |
| 6 | | | Cape Verde | | | Cape Verde | 1 |
| 7 | | | Chad | | | Chad | 1 |
| 8 | | Ghana | | Ghana | | Ghana | 2 |
| 9 | | | | | Ivory Coast | | 1 |
| 10 | Kenya | | Kenya | | Kenya | | 3 |
| 11 | | Lesotho | | Lesotho | | Lesotho | 2 |
| 12 | | Madagascar | | Madagascar | | Madagascar | 2 |
| 13 | | Malawi | | Malawi | | Malawi | 2 |
| 14 | | Mali | | Mali | | Mali | 2 |
| 15 | | | | Mauritius | | Mauritius | 1 |
| 16 | Mozambique | | Mozambique | | Mozambique | | 3 |
| 17 | Namibia | | Namibia | | Namibia | | 3 |
| 18 | | | | Nigeria | | Nigeria | 1 |
| 19 | | Senegal | | Senegal | | Senegal | 2 |
| 20 | | South Africa | | South Africa | | South Africa | 2 |
| 21 | Swaziland | | Swaziland | | Swaziland | | 3 |
| 22 | | Tanzania | | Tanzania | | Tanzania | 2 |
| 23 | | | Uganda | | | Uganda | 1 |
| 24 | Zambia | | Zambia | | Zambia | | 3 |
| 25 | | Zimbabwe | | Zimbabwe | | Zimbabwe | 2 |
| | 7 | 9 | 10 | 12 | 9 | 15 | 47 |

still broadcasting? Have they been taken over by the local government as propaganda institutions? What kind of content are they actually broadcasting and how many of them still deserve the term "community radio"? Report and score would then reflect a reality in which many community radio stations might no longer be what they were or pretended to be.

This inbuilt reality check and the periodic repetition of ABM assessments are its big advantages over similar studies or indices.

Yet there were shortcomings, too:

● Recent developments in communication technology were not reflected in the indicators.

● The discussions were too anecdotal. Sometimes participants could not agree on numbers or were unprepared. Sometimes they quoted from studies that they did not present or from sources that could not be traced.

● There was the occasional divergence in scoring that could not be explained by differing opinions or a controversial debate. Some panelists did not master the sophisticated phrasing of the indicators. Sometimes they did not understand or agree with the basic assumptions of the methodology. In most cases, this was due to the lack of capacity, particularly among the representatives of civil society.

● In some countries, the rapporteur lacked the necessary skills or proved unreliable, so that the moderator had to step in to write the report.

● The reports themselves were not easy to read. Here, too, it turned out to be a real problem for some to summarize the often wide-ranging and emotional discussions into readable paragraphs reflecting the range and gist of the debate.

● The originally envisaged rankings proved untenable, although our attempts at ranking the results produced generally credible tables. Countries like South Africa, Ghana, and Mali led the scores, and Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and Swaziland were the bottom countries as far media freedom is concerned.

After going into the details of comparisons of sectors and indicators, however, we decided that the international ranking between countries was methodologically unsound.

It would also be the wrong incentive for our panelists. Knowing that their country would later be compared to the neighboring states, they could turn chauvinistic instead of being self-critical and honest in their judgments and scoring.

And last, but not least: we could do without ranking because our interest lies elsewhere – namely in looking at developments in one country over time.

## The AMB review (2008)

To a certain extent, these shortfalls are the price to pay for any qualitative analysis based on perceptions and a discursive method. At the same time, any quantitative analysis would produce problems of a different nature. Academic research as currently practiced between Western and African Universities rarely reaches the depth of an elaborate discussion among local experts. Much of its results are as superficial as the results of the *African Media Barometer* are "subjective" as some critics claim[8].

The answer to the respective weaknesses of the various methodologies can lie only in the combination of different approaches.

That is exactly what we tried in our review of the *African Media Barometer*: we improved the input of facts and figures into the discussion and we standardized the procedure to reduce the "subjectivity factor" in debating, scoring, reporting, writing and editing.

We:

● extended the indicators to cover recent developments in communication technology;

● decided to feed more factual information into the discussion to reduce reliance on anecdotal evidence;

● intensified the training to ensure a better and more reliable performance of the teams of moderator and rapporteur;

● mandated the presence of an FES-supervisor at each AMB to guarantee quality control;

● added an executive summary to each AMB report, written by the moderator and agreed to by the panelists.

Most of the new tasks assigned are written down in a 20-page "Moderator's Guide" to ensure a more standardized practice from country to country and year to year.

To improve the presentation and utilization of the AMB reports, we:

● designed a new layout for the reports, featuring the Executive Summary and improving the sourcing of facts;

● started developing a matrix to show the most important AMB results as an bi-annually updated African overview;

● tested the methodology of the *African Media Barometer* in India and Pakistan to understand if those standards signed and formulated in Africa would "travel" and be accepted in other regions of the world.

And perhaps most important, it became mandatory that all 12 MISA-offices in the SADC-region and all 19 FES-offices in sub-Saharan Africa integrate the result and recommendations of the respective AMB country report into their annual programs and work. After all, the AMB serves its intended purpose only if the suggestions and solutions of the expert panel are put into practice by media and civil society organizations.

**Phase II (2009- ?)**

One year after the review of the *African Media Barometer*, the results are as follows:

● 47 AMB-reports in total from 25 African countries;

● Six countries with partly comparable data over three rounds (six years);

● Nine country reports for 2009 with the reworked 45 indicators;

● Two *Asian Media Barometers* as pilot exercises that showed the standards and method to be acceptable in India and Pakistan;

● Two alternative blueprints of a matrix for showing some of the AMB-findings as an overview for the African continent.

**Conclusion**

The saying "perception is reality" has become commonplace in communication theory. By deriving its results from a discussion of media experts and representatives, the AMB reports are adding perceptions to the measurement of the media situation. If one wants to know if there is freedom of expression without fear, or to what extent self-censorship is practiced, purely quantitative measurements tools are failing to provide the whole picture. And if one also wants to capture the "implementing factor" in assessing the framework of media



### 6. Results II (2005-2009)

- 50 AMB reports from 25 African countries
- 6 countries with partly comparable data over three rounds (six years)
- 12 country reports for 2009 with reworked (45) indicators in improved format
- two alternative systems for summarising the AMB data developed
- 2 pilot *Asian Media Barometers* held in India and Pakistan in September 2009 using African standards

**AMB's 2010**

****(Grey shading represents SADC Countries)

| | Countries | 2010 |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Angola | not yet clear |
| 2 | Lesotho | By Dec 2010 |
| 3 | Madagascar | By April 2010 |
| 4 | Malawi | By May 2010 |
| 5 | Mauritius | By August 2010 |
| 6 | South Africa | By April 2010 |
| 7 | Tanzania | By July 2010 |
| 8 | Zimbabwe | By January 2010 |
| 9 | Cameroon | By December 2010 |
| 10 | Ethiopia | not yet clear |
| 11 | Ghana | By September 2010 |
| 12 | Mali | By October 2010 |
| 13 | Nigeria | By October 2010 |
| 14 | Senegal | By December 2010 |

regulation, only a qualitative analysis will do.

Yielding a regularly updated data set that reflects the actual implementation of media legislation and practices, the AMB takes you closer to reality than most traditional, one-off and supposedly "objective" research methods.

The biannual *African Media Barometer* can show progress or setbacks, and help determine agents of change or saboteurs, of media reform. Based on such an assessment, the panel of experts suggests possible interventions for MISA, FES, other civil society organizations and donors. There should be a straight line from the recommendations of the AMB report to a practical campaign for certain media reforms. In some cases, the panel of experts may form the nucleus of an advocacy group.

With its home-grown and perception-based approach, the *African Media Barometer* was developed as a complementary tool to other ways of measuring media freedom. Since then it has become a valuable addition to the line of indices assessing the media landscape of a given country. The mining of the "quarry of information" in the growing library of AMB reports will remain an opportunity for the coming years. The *African Media Barometer* should be read as a longitudinal study of the evolving African media landscape, with all its dark shades and bright colors – and with recommendations to be acted upon.

[1] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (2007): Defining Indicators of Media Development, Background Paper, Paris: UNESCO, p.17

[2] African Media Development Initiative (2006): Research summary report, London: BBC World Service Trust

[3] Berger, Guy (2007): Media Legislation in Africa: A comparative Legal Survey, Grahamstown: Rhodes University

[4] http://www.aprm.org.za/

[5] www.freedomhouse.org

[6] www.rsf.org

[7] www.irex.org/MSI/index.asp

[8] UNESCO (2007), Defining Indicators.., p.22

# Critical review of media development measurements:[1]

# What are we measuring?

## By Fackson Banda

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The notion of "media development" and how *to make sense of it has spawned different* types of "measurements" of media landscapes across the globe. However, there does not appear to be a sustained critical evaluation of these measurement tools. While this paper celebrates the plethora of measurements of media development, it seeks to unravel the conceptual and methodological assumptions that underpin such measurements. It concludes that the ideological context, in which such measurements emerge, alongside their conceptual and methodological assumptions, is a key aspect of any critical evaluation of the different assessment tools available.

For the purpose of this evaluation, we consider the following media development assessment tools:
● Freedom House Freedom of the Press Index.
● International Research and Exchanges (IREX) Media Sustainability Index, focusing on the 2006/2007 report on the development of sustainable independent media in Africa (IREX, 2008).
● The African Media Barometer (AMB) (MISA, 2006).

The choice of the three media development indices is based on the following consideration. The first two represent measurement tools developed in the developed, Western context, while the third represents "a self-assessment exercise done by concerned and informed citizens in each particular country according to a number of general, home-grown criteria", with most of the benchmarks "lifted from the African Commission for Human and People's Rights (ACHPR)" as well as the Windhoek Declaration (1991) and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Declaration on Principles of Freedom of Expression (2002) (MISA, 2006: 170).

## Surveying the measurement tools

Freedom House Freedom of the Press Index

Freedom House claims that its study methodology is "based on universal criteria", with the individual as the "most universal unit of concern" (Freedom House, 2008). Based in Washington, DC, Freedom House has since 1978 published the *Freedom in the World* survey, now covering 195 countries. In 1980, it started conducting its *Freedom of the Press: A Global Survey of Media Independence,* covering 192 countries (Freedom House, 2008).

Underpinned by the need for "comparability of data", the survey methodology questions are presented as "diverse" in order "to encompass the varied ways in which pressure can be

placed upon the flow of information and the ability of print, broadcast, and Internet-based media to operate freely and without fear of repercussions". As they put it:

"In short, we seek to provide a picture of the entirev 'enabling environment' in which the media in each country operate. We also seek to assess the degree of news and information diversity available to the public in any given country, from either local or transnational sources" (Freedom House, 2008).

The survey methodology encapsulates three analytical categories: the legal environment; the political environment; and the economic environment. The *legal environment* is analysed



in terms of both the laws and regulations that could influence media content and the government's inclination to use these laws and legal institutions to restrict the media's ability to operate. The indicators assessed include:

● Positive impact of legal and constitutional guarantees for freedom of expression;
● Potentially negative aspects of security legislation, the penal code, and other criminal statutes;
● Penalties for libel and defamation;
● Existence of and ability to use freedom of information legislation;
● Independence of the judiciary and of official media regulatory bodies;
● Registration requirements for both media outlets and journalists; and
● Ability of journalists' groups to operate freely (Freedom House, 2008).

The *political environment* is assessed in terms of the degree of political control over the content of news media, especially:

● Editorial independence of both state-owned and privately owned media;
● Access to information and sources;
● Official censorship and self-censorship;
● Vibrancy of the media and the diversity of news available within each country;
● Ability of both foreign and local journalists to cover the news freely and without harassment; and
● The intimidation of journalists by the state or other actors, including arbitrary detention and imprisonment, violent assaults, and other threats (Freedom House, 2008).

The economic environment for the media includes:

● Structure of media ownership;
● Transparency and concentration of ownership;

● Costs of establishing media as well as of production and distribution;
● Selective withholding of advertising or subsidies by the state or other actors;
● Impact of corruption and bribery on content; and
● Extent to which the economic situation in a country impacts the development and sustainability of the media (Freedom House, 2008).

The legal environment is scored on a 30-point scale, the political environment on a 40-point scale and the economic environment on a 30-point scale, giving a possible total score of 100 points. The three sub-indices are then added up to give a final score for each country.

A score of 0-30 represents "free"; a score of 31-60 "partly free"; and a score of 61-100 "not free". Here, it is important to make an observation about what appears to be the absolutist inflexion of the conceptual categories "free" and "not free". They may not tell the whole story – they may not capture the gray areas that inhabit the nature of the communicative space between "free" and "not free". For example, if the American media system is viewed as "free" and the Zimbabwean media system as "not free", how do we (i) account for the subversive communicative activities of micro-media initiatives that are occasioned through the use of new media technologies, such as web-blogging, etc., and (ii) explain the fact that the highly corporatized American media system has a way of narrowing the range of public opinion?

## Media Sustainability Index

Another instrument that has international resonance is the product of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) called IREX (International Research and Exchanges Board). This index has been applied consistently across Europe and Eurasia, starting in 2001, and continued annually since then, covering 21 countries. It has been undertaken in North Africa and the Middle East, covering 18 countries in 2005. In 2006-7, it was replicated in Africa, with 37 countries covered (IREX, 2008).

IREX states that the index has become a key benchmark study to assess how media structures change over time and across borders. It argues that this means the tool constitutes a comparative standard for all countries, striking the same universality cord as the Freedom House survey. However, the Africa study does more explicitly embrace what it calls "uniquely African features, including the prevalence of radio – notably community radio" (IREX, 2008: vii).

The MSI assesses five "objectives" in shaping a successful media system:
1. Free speech and access to public information (legal and social norms);
2. Professional journalism;
3. Plurality of news sources;
4. Independent media are well managed, and allow for editorial independence; and
5. Supporting institutions.

Each objective has some seven to nine indicators, "which determine how well a country meets that objective" (IREX, 2008: xvii). The research method combines two features. First, a country is scored by a panel of experts drawn from local media, NGOs, professional associations, international donors and media-development implementers. Second, IREX staff score the countries independently. The two scores are then combined into a final score.

IREX uses the overall score – after averaging the averages of all indicators to obtain a single, overall score for each objective – to interpret the nature of the media system in terms of four characterisations:

● Unsustainable, Anti-Free Press (0-1): Country does not meet or only minimally meets the objectives.

● Unsustainable Mixed System (1-2): Country minimally meets objectives, with segments of the legal system and government opposed to a free media system.

● Near Sustainability (2-3): Country has progressed in meeting multiple objectives, with legal norms, professionalism, and the business environment supportive of independent media.

● Sustainability (3-4): Country has media that are considered generally professional, free, and sustainable, or to be approaching these objectives.

An important methodological-analytical observation to make here is that the in-country panellists' scores are reviewed by IREX's in-

country staff and/or Washington, DC, media staff, who then score the countries independently of the MSI panel. While IREX argues that "this method allows the MSI scores to reflect both local media insiders' views and the views of international media-development professionals" (IREX, 2008: xvii), it actually suggests a lack of trust in the ability of the in-country panels' self-assessment. Arguably, it is such in-country panellists who are better placed to speak about their lived experiences. In a sense, IREX demeans the "speaking positions" – the human agency – of such panellists. This seems to be the gap that the African Media Barometer attempts to fill (MISA, 2006: 170).

### African Media Barometer

Formulated by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, in partnership with the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), the African Media Barometer draws from the standards set out in the Windhoek Declaration (1991) and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Declaration on Principles of Freedom of Expression (2002). This tool covers four sectors:

1. Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, is effectively protected and promoted.
2. Media landscape characterised by diversity, independence and sustainability.
3. Broadcasting regulation is transparent and independent, guaranteeing the transformation of the          state broadcaster into a truly public broadcaster.
4. The media practice a high level of professional standards (MISA, 2006: 170).

Each of the four areas has approximately seven indicator areas. The research method is via national panels of up to 10 people, half of whom are directly involved in the media, and the others from civil society. The *Barometer*

operates with a scale in terms of which each country is scored in terms of the extent to which it meets aspects of a given indicator. The scores for each indicator are given equal weight when added up and averaged (MISA, 2006: 171).

There are five degrees of achievement:
● Country does not meet indicator (1).
● Country minimally meets aspects of the indicator (2).
● Country meets many aspects of indicator but progress may be too recent to judge (3).
● Country meets most aspects of indicator (4).
● Country meets all aspects of the indicator and has been doing so over time (5) (MISA, 2006: 171).

Given the reference points of this tool in credible African declarations, it has the advantage of measuring performance against self-proclaimed continental standards. Its normative character is evident in the importance it attributes to broadcasting in African countries (It makes the topic a sector area in its own right and of equal weight to the other three somewhat broader categories.) The Barometer also includes the requirement that "the state broadcaster is transformed into a truly public broadcaster" (MISA, 2006: 170; Banda & Berger, 2006).

In general, then, the foregoing discussion of the three media assessment systems suggests that there is no need to reinvent wheels when one decides to do an assessment of media. On the other hand, it does help if one knows the range of "wheels" that is on offer. And it helps even more if one knows who manufactured them, what size they are, and for what purpose they were originally designed.

In looking at what systems already exist, one can also look at their performance in practice. That allows one to see if one can milk the fin-

dings of people who have already deployed such pre-existing survey instruments. There's certainly no point in duplicating the data results generated by any of them – unless one thinks there's a need to update or that there's a likelihood of different findings being generated (Banda & Berger, 2008).

It is still important to acknowledge, however, that diverse instruments produce diverse and even sometimes conflicting findings. Puddephatt (2007:10) has pointed out that: "... five Middle Eastern and North African countries categorised as 'near sustainability' by the MSI are classified as 'not free' by Freedom House; the Palestinian Territories are, according to MSI, 'near sustainability' yet come second to bottom of the Freedom House scale, just above Libya."

This observation highlights that it is not a simple or neutral matter to choose one particular tool. There are consequences. Puddephatt himself has compiled a valuable comparison of 15 instruments in regard to what they cover (2007:42-3). His tabular representation enables one to see at a glance where there is overlap (for example, eight of the 15 take on board defamation laws), and where there are gaps (only three look at access to printing and distribution facilities). Adopting a multiple approach – or at least doing a cross-tool scan before alighting on one tool – is one way to deal with the issue of different tools on their own producing different results (Banda & Berger, 2008).

Another issue relevant to choosing from existing instruments is to be aware that many of them date from a pre-convergence view of media. This context means they may have some blind-spots:

● They do not always transcend the idea of separate silos of media, and they may therefore miss out on important develop-

ments at the level of production, ownership, distribution, regulation and consumption.

● Many are also narrow in the sense of ignoring cultural industries (like music or film), and intellectual property issues more broadly. For tools to study the latter, for example, one may need to go outside the "predictable" sources such as those cited in the section above, and look instead at resources like the "WIPO Guide on Surveying the Economic Contribution of the Copyright-Based Industries" (Banda & Berger, 2008).

● Many of the media instruments discussed above also date back to a period when "media" equated to (specialised) institutions, whereas today the actors involved in mass communication increasingly include numerous other players. One may not want to ignore the significance of these other mass communicators no matter whether they are individuals, NGOs, public institutions or companies. They could be playing in the public sphere with great relevance to public opinion, alongside the traditional media. The point is that media is no longer the exclusive preserve of "the media", although it is of course still important to acknowledge the latter as institutions where a distinctive kind of mass communication is core business (as distinct from being incidental or secondary).

● In addition, whereas the national unit of analysis still has much relevance, many communications issues today are best understood in terms of transnational, international and global connections that encompass technology, economics, policy regimes and content flows.

● Questions also arise today as to what constitutes "journalism" within the burgeoning "mass communication mix", given the passing of a period in which the practice was coterminous with fulltime "professional"

journalists. There are also issues around what the writer Dan Gillmor has called the "former audience". In many cases this entity is not a passive and atomised mass of individuals, but a meaning-making and –shaping set of shifting communities and social networks (Banda & Berger, 2008).

All these fast-changing dynamics complicate the development and utilisation of indicators, meaning that caution is needed in adopting one or more existing systems. Drawing from Puddephatt (2007: 20), this is where the value of a "toolkit approach" comes in. The advantage of such an approach, in his view, is that it "offers an inclusive list of indicators and methods from which selections can be made according to the requirements of a particular programme or intervention". In addition, it "recognises that indicators and methodologies must be customised, using local expertise to fit the particularities of the national context". He adds that "indicators must be tailored to the correct level of engagement within each national context (e.g. the national media system, the individual media organisation, the professional group)". To this can be added that as much as an eclectic approach is legitimate, the resulting instrument does need to have a degree of internal coherence, consistency and logic (Banda & Berger, 2008: 10).

## A critical review

Here, I mount a specific critical review of three aspects of the media indices discussed above: (a) ideological assumptions; (b) conceptual assumptions; and (c) methodological assumptions.

### Ideological assumptions

The Freedom House and IREX surveys assume a universalising approach, arguing that their methodology allows for comparability across

geographical spaces. What they neglect is the geo-ideological assumptions that underlie them; positing such methodologies as "universal" smacks of modernist totalisation.

For example, as noted above, the weighing for each of the performance indicators of the Freedom House survey categories is largely normative, reflecting Freedom House's neo-liberal predisposition towards the state as predatory, always encroaching on media freedom and independence. Under the economic environment category, for instance, government ownership and control of the media is assessed on a scale of 0 to 6, while private ownership of the media is weighed on a scale of 0 to 3.

Like Freedom House's, IREX's objectives, indicators and means of verification have an ideological, normative emphasis, in that they concentrate especially on conditions for privately-owned media (Banda & Berger, 2008). For instance, it includes as an indicator that "independent media do not receive government subsidies" (IREX, 2008: xviii). Similarly, it upholds sources of newsprint and printing facilities being in private hands, and channels of media distribution (kiosks, transmitters, Internet) also being private, apolitical, and unrestricted (IREX, 2008: xix). As noted above, such a non-government funding media-sustainability strategy would, for example, run counter to South Africa's government-subsidised sustainability strategy for small-scale commercial and community media initiatives through the *Media Diversity and Development Agency* (MDDA) (Banda, 2006). And yet, South Africa is rated by the MSI as "sustainable" (IREX, 2008: xiii).

On the other hand, the *African Media Barometer* is less ambitious. It is relativist in that it defers to self-proclaimed continental standards, as evidenced through the Windhoek Declaration (1991) and the African Commis-



sion on Human and Peoples' Rights Declaration on Principles of Freedom of Expression. Its ideological normativity is demonstrated by the importance it attaches to broadcasting in African countries, including the place of public broadcasting in the body politic. The "socialised" ownership of public broadcasting underlies a communitarian broadcasting system, arguably running counter to the corporatized media system extant in America, for example. This would seem to explain why there is less emphasis on public or community broadcasting in the case of Freedom House. IREX, for its part, seems to recognise the importance of radio, especially community radio in most of Africa (IREX, 2008: vii).

**Conceptual assumptions**

Choosing amongst existing "wheels", or in wanting to design one's own, it is important to be very clear about what part of the landscape one wishes to map. Some assessment tools may fall short of properly scoping and defining their terrain. For example, there is a big difference between whether one is looking at "communication development" broadly (which might include community internet centres), or more narrowly the development of the media industry (and which may include the development of a market research and advertising industry).

There is also a big distinction between looking at the latter area ("media development"), and looking at "media for development" and "development media". The first focuses on developing the media as an end in-itself; the others relate to the role of (some) media as a means to an external end (e.g. Citizenship development, corruption reduction, HIV and Aids awareness and behaviour change, etc.) (Banda & Berger, 2008).

In this context, it is particularly important for one to decide what constitutes "media", and why one wants to look at it. Is it all aspects of content generation, or is it mainly the role of journalism or, say, of edutainment – and why? Does it include folk media (present in popular culture)? Should it encompass cell phones (bearing in mind their current "limited" mass media character)? One would need to start with the widest definition of media, and then decide logically what one wants to highlight within this, and why (Banda & Berger, 2008).

To give an example on this issue, donor support for community media is often a means towards constructing a sector that in turn plays a particular role in society (e.g. local democracy and development). The end goal is that role dispensation. But one can break this down into at least three distinctive areas which merit investigation and intervention:

● One study might focus on the resourcing available to community radio per se (as a necessary, though insufficient, precondition for the penultimate goal to be achieved).
● Another initiative might address the shortfall between the ideal democratic roles of community radio, and its present capacity and orientation to do so (the ultimate goal). This might, for example, look at the extent of participation.
● A third approach could concentrate on the issue of an enabling legislative environment for community radio – which in most respects is not an absolute end-in-itself (although it could still be an essential goal to achieve).

First and foremost, therefore, the environmental issue is mainly a means to reaching the conceived ideal role of community radio in society (Banda & Berger, 2008).

All these three foci are absolutely legitimate. The point is simply to highlight the value of distinguishing the items in a wider chain of assumed conceptual cause and effect. One does not want a mixed up set of indicators, where the status of each in relation to the other is uneven or unclear. The inter-relationships (even if assumed) between means and ends, and how those ends then serve as further means to bring about yet further ends, need to be unpacked (Banda & Berger, 2008).

**Methodological assumptions**

In conducting an assessment of any media landscape, it is valuable to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative research. They are distinct, although at the same time there is necessarily a qualitative dimension to defining what is being counted in a

quantitative exercise. An example is that counting the number of journalists depends on who is defined as a journalist (does it include sub-editors, executive producers, government communicators, freelancers, etc?). The same goes for assessing local content quota adherence or even media repression. Likewise, some qualitative research can involve counting and scoring. For example, gender stereotypes embedded in content can be compared as to the relative frequency of each. The difference lies mainly in their different knowledge claims. Quantitative findings are usually supposed to be representative of a broad reality, and quantitative samples are legitimately generalisable to a wider universe. Qualitative research goes deep, rather than wide, using case study approaches, for example, from which abstract principles can be extrapolated but not statistical trends (Banda & Berger, 2008).

**Qualitative versus quantitative assessment**

Much of the data produced by the media indices cited above is qualitative. There are instances in which assessors seek to "quantify" the responses to assist in data presentation and interpretation. While this allows for drawing comparisons, it does not indicate any statistical representation, nor does it show interval or ratio levels of measurement. In quantitative research, an interval level of measurement means that numbers assigned to research categories and/or indicators are meaningful as *countable numbers* and not merely as *descriptive labels*. In other words, interval level measurement facilitates ordinary numbering and counting of phenomena and thus facilitates numerical comparison. However, in interval measurement, such numbering and counting starts with the number '1'. On the contrary, ratio levels of measurement include an absolute zero point, as in when we measure the absence or

presence of radio and television stations and sets per country, etc (cf. Kumar, 2005).

In the absence of statistical information, assessing the media landscape tends to be based on nominal and ordinal levels of measurement, whereby numerals are only assigned to categories and indicators for the purpose of classification and rank-ordering. For example, one can assign numerals '1' and '2' to the variable 'sex' to connote 'male' and 'female' respectively. This is not about numbering in the interval or ratio sense of the word; it is about classifying the different aspects of a variable or concept. It also facilitates a degree of comparison. It is about managing human complexity.

As a result, nominal and ordinal levels of measurement do not really represent the actual state of affairs. For example, the numerical measures of "media diversity" in the African Media Barometer do not represent the actual state of affairs on the ground. They represent a group's perceptions, categorised and rank-ordered according to particular attributes of the variable, as defined by the developers of the research protocols. But the scores assist us to classify, rank and compare such perceptions over time, and in relation to other groups' scores on this point in other countries. The findings for one national group ought never to be assumed to apply to other countries (even with similar objective features), and neither as being necessarily representative of how the majority of people in the particular country perceive the issues.

Because of their dependence on nominal and ordinal levels of measurement, qualitative assessments attempt to enhance their trustworthiness through establishing the greatest degrees possible of *credibility*, *dependability* and *confirmability*. 'Credibility' refers to the degree of compatibility between the constructed realities that exist in the minds

of respondents and those that are attributed to them. 'Dependability' refers to the notion that an inquiry must also provide its audience with evidence that if it were to be repeated with the same or similar respondents (subjects) in the same (or similar context); its findings would be similar. "Confirmability" means the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not the biases of the researcher (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 277-278). These three aspects of the qualitative research design can be achieved by the following:

● Careful use, interpretation and examination of appropriate literature.
● Careful justification of the qualitative research methodologies employed.
● Careful structuring of the data analysis to ensure full and descriptive evaluation and assessment, particularly in relation to data of key significance (in Levy, 2006:383).

Qualitative data, for the most part, are good at helping us to assess the "thickness" of the description and interpretation of media reality. Such findings can assist us to record and analyse the different perceptions and/or discursive practices associated with the respondents and examine what might colour their responses. In this way, qualitative assessments help us to develop keener understanding of the media landscape. So, where our research interest lies in developing a nuanced understanding of media reality, qualitative research of the type used in most of these assessment tools is certainly useful.

In most cases, quantitative data are credited with more believability than qualitative data, because of their presumed character to represent a state of affairs in an incontestably measurable way. Quantitative research can answer the more positivistic assessment questions about "reliability", "validity" and "bias". In media research, this is often associated with establishing, for example, the *quantity* of media plurality as opposed to its *quality*. While quantitative research can easily adduce statistical evidence about how many media outlets a country has, it is not always easy to find generalisable samples that deal with more complex matters such as media performance, or to reduce something like media impact to common features that can be counted.

**The arithmetic mean can be mean**

A particularly weak aspect of the quantification attempted by the MSI and the *African Media Barometer* is the use of a measure of central tendency known as the mean or the arithmetic average. It is evident that "averages offer readers the special advantage of reducing the raw data to the most manageable form: a single number (or attribute) can represent all the detailed data collected in regard to the variable" (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 427). It is important, however, to note that this comes at a price, because the reader cannot reconstruct the original data from an average (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 427). A further word of caution: "Whenever means are presented, you should be aware that they are susceptible to extreme values: a few very large or very small numbers" (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 424).

In their attempt at quantification, the MSI and the *African Media Barometer* oversimplify the complexity of the media reality in African societies, ignoring the discursive or ideological positions of the respondents and the statistical dispersion of their responses. For this reason, qualitative research can often better assess, for example, a different dimension to media plurality – such as whether the number of media outlets translates into participation in media production, associated expansion in freedom of expression, gender empowerment, poverty alleviation, and the

like. However, it is often important to establish the quantitative nature of media reality before we can qualitatively assess its professional and other aspects.

## Towards a study of the media landscape as 'culture'

A possible solution to the problems identified above is to assess the media as a feature of culture, and thus assess it in its totality. As such, a fuller assessment of media landscapes would have to reckon with what some media and cultural studies scholars refer to as 'the circuit of culture' (DuGay, Hall, Janes, Mackay and Negus, 1997).

Assessing the media condition as part of the circuit of culture would highlight how the different but interconnected cultural moments of production, identity, representation, consumption and regulation articulate the mediation of the lived experiences of the people, including those who are used as respondents for media assessment. Another way of understanding the study of media as culture is to frame the study in three ways:

There is the lived culture of a particular time and space, only fully accessible to those living in that time and space. There is the recorded culture, of every kind, from art to the most everyday facts: the culture of a period. There is also, as the factor connecting lived culture and period cultures, the culture of the selective tradition.

> *"[...] A selective process, of a quite drastic kind, is at once evident, and this is true of every field of activity ... No individual in the society would have known more than a selection of its facts ... Theoretically, a period is recorded; in practice, this record is absorbed into a selective tradition; and both are different from the culture as lived" (Williams, 1995: 336).*

This means that a media assessment index must attempt to comprehend the multifaceted nature of the media condition, entailing a process of conceptual, methodological and analytical triangulation. In a word, an assessment protocol needs to innovatively combine qualitative and quantitative research in a cultural analysis of how the following features articulate in mediawork:

● Institutional production of media;
● Representational role of the media;
● Identity politics that media representation engenders;
● Consumption of media; and
● Regulation of media.

The assessment tools I have analysed above tend to focus more on institutional-production aspects of media work, and how it relates to political power and the economic structure of society. Questions of consumption, and the related identity politics of representation, are rarely analysed. The notion of triangulation would remedy this somewhat. Drawn from navigation, the notion of triangulation refers to the orientation one gets by referencing one's location against several beacons. According to one writer:

"Because of the complicity in ,a confused reality', it is difficult to study/investigate a phenomenon in its totality. In this complex reality, multiple methods ... afford a partial solution..." (Grobbelaar, 2000: 91-92).

In the type of qualitative assessments undertaken by the various media assessment tools cited above, it is clear that triangulation with quantitative information could make for richer results. At the same time, one should not think that quantitative and qualitative findings can directly corroborate each other: they are only complementary animals. Triangulation occurs differently within either quantitative or qualitative research designs:
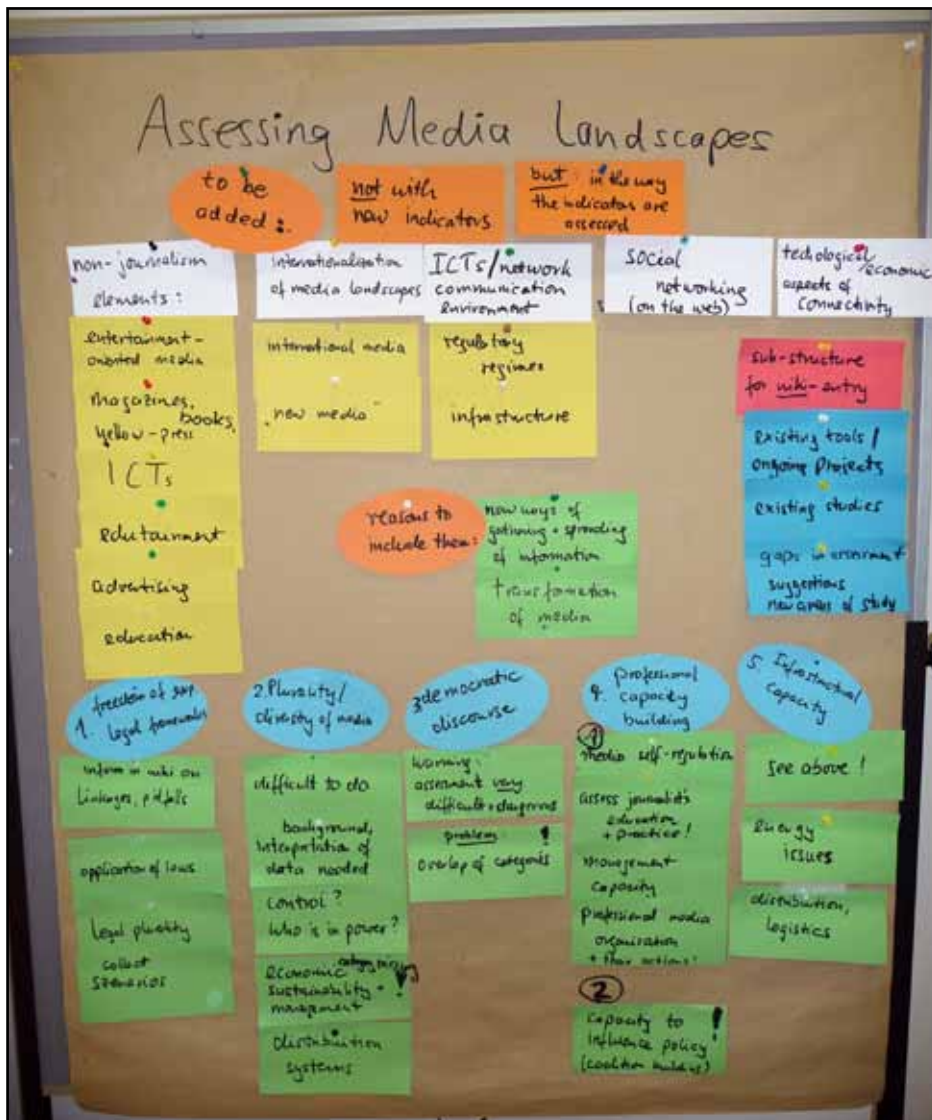
Recommendations for the "assessing media landscapes" section of the mediaME-wiki collected by participants during the workshop of the symposium Measuring Change II

Subjects of study are placed in a controllable environment, where 'natural' interferences are eliminated or significantly reduced. But even here problems abound. For example, placing subjects in a controlled environment might result in atypical behaviour, quite different from what such behaviour would 'naturally' be.

● On the other hand, qualitative research, as noted above, is more interested in the thickness of description and interpretation. It is aimed at creating greater understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Triangulation with other qualitative research thus becomes important, at the level of extrapolation and principles uncovered. In the case of the assessment indices cited above, triangulation can be contemplated and implemented at different levels, as suggested below:

● *Methodological triangulation*: Here, both quantitative and qualitative research designs should be contemplated, in keeping with the overall research aim and objectives. An attempt at this was evident in the AMDI and STREAM research processes – a combination of statistical data gathering and aggregation, literature review, personal interviews, case studies, consultative workshops, and the like (Banda, 2007).

● *Ethnographical triangulation:* Here, the assessment effort must be targeted at different people in different discursive practices. More often, assessments of this type, especially those undertaken in Africa, have tended to focus on the same respondents. This has the danger of the "Hawthorne effect", with respondents knowing exactly how they ought to respond during focus group or panel discussions, especially when they know the results might be used for advocacy ends which will serve their causes. Why, for example, do certain categories of respondents repeatedly describe the media as tools for

● Within quantitative research, triangulation would serve to further assist in reliability and validity. Here, reliability means that if identical investigations are repeated, similar research results will be obtained. Validity means that the assessment tools as well as assessment results and interpretation are in sync with the research aims and objectives. In quantitative assessment, you can try to control some intervening variables in a way that can ensure a greater degree of reliability and validity. An example would be the experimental research design which is normally used for the purpose of isolating intervening variables.

political repression? What is their own discursive practice in society? What happens when such respondents get into positions of political power? How can such respondents' responses be checked against other readings? This "Hawthorne effect" tends to skew the results in favour of the "anti-establishment" discourse. It is thus important to cast the net even wider and draw in as many voices as possible as an attempt at "balancing" the assessment outcomes.

● *Geographical triangulation:* As a result of the often logistically determined focus on the same urban-based, often Western-educated, respondents, it might be important for media assessments to go beyond the line of rail and focus on other geographical localities, especially rural areas. Although this might be problematic in terms of logistics and costs, it is something worth investing in, so as to draw in "ordinary" and poor people's voices and perspectives. This is particularly appropriate in an environment replete with rural-based community media initiatives, such as Africa.

● *Gender triangulation:* It is usually men who speak whenever there are assessments of the type referred to above. There should be a deliberate effort to draw in women so that they can speak on issues that directly relate to them. This is a process of empowerment, in itself, which is a critical aspect of measuring media development. To what extent are women represented in media content? Who speaks for them? How are they represented? These are legitimate questions that need to be factored into the design of any assessment tool.

● *Analytical triangulation:* Who analyses the outcomes of such responses as are gathered? What is their discursive practice? Whose analytical categories are used, and what ideological assumptions underpin those categories?

Where are they located – in Washington, DC or in-country? How can responses be more "realistically" and "organically" analysed?

## Conclusion

This paper is a critical evaluation of a select number of existing tools used to assess the media landscape, particularly as seen through the lens of the emerging concept of "media development". In particular, it describes and evaluates the Freedom House Freedom of the Press survey, the IREX Media Sustainability Index, and the African Media Barometer.

It is evident that each of these tools has specified criteria and indicators for "measuring" media landscapes, and within their chosen scope and normative frame, most aspire to be as comprehensive and cohesive as possible. In many cases, the focus has tended to be on assessing particular dimensions across the totality of the cultural circuitry of media production, representation, identity, consumption and regulation.

In critically evaluating them, this paper concludes that ideological, conceptual and methodological assumptions underpin them. A key issue emerging from this evaluation is the need to study media as a 'circuit of culture', in part made possible through a process of purposive triangulation that incorporates aspects of methodological, ethnographical, geographical, gender and analytical triangulation. This is aimed at enhancing the assessment tool's representativeness, credibility, dependability and conformability.

It is clear that assessing media landscapes is much more than just a research activity; it is a conceptually-informed process of enquiry and a conscious, ideological act of intervention in remedying the problems brought to light as a result of the assessment exercise.

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*[1] This paper draws heavily on Banda, F & Berger, G. 2009. How to assess your media landscape. A paper commissioned by the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD). 2nd edition. January, 2009.*

Beyond UNESCO indicators:

# Assessing journalism schools in Africa

By Marie-Soleil Frère

This presentation is about attempts to assess journalism training and the quality of journalism education in journalism schools in Africa over the past several years, emphasising a UNESCO-sponsored project to identify *Potential Centres of Excellence* for African journalism education and journalism training.

First, I will start with some indicators about the context in which these journalism schools and trainings operate. Then I will present the study that was initiated by UNESCO and conducted by the Ecole Supérieure de Journalisme de Lille (ESJ) (France) and Rhodes University (RU) in Grahamstown (South Africa) in 2007, aiming at elaborating indicators and criteria to assess journalism schools in Africa. Finally, I will draw some conclusions about how those indicators and criteria can be useful for journalism schools in Africa.

**The context**

I should at first clarify the distinction between journalism training and journalism education, as did Guy Berger in his assessment manual for journalism training published in 2001 (Berger, 2001:9):

– Education: focuses on knowledge and emphasises questions. It is a process through which teachers try to pass on to students' knowledge required to integrate into the professional environment.

– Training: focuses on skills and emphasises answers. It is a process through which trainers try to consolidate job-related skills of employees of a media outlet in order to improve the professional performance of the journalists and therefore the quality of the media production.

In Francophone Africa, journalism education is provided by four types of institutions[1] :

– The **regional journalism schools** that were created in the 1970s, mainly with the support from UNESCO and bilateral donors (France, Canada, Switzerland and others): the CESTI in Dakar, ESIJY (now ESSTIC) in Yaoundé, CIERRO in Ouagadougou, ISTI (now IFASIC)* in Kinshasa. With the support of bilateral aid, they have trained generations of African journalists to work in public and state media, which were virtually the only existing media until the beginning of the 1990s. After the

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liberalisation of the media landscape, most of these schools faced both a shortage of financial support and the emergence of new needs in the liberalised media sector that they couldn't really fulfil. Also, most of them were integrated in universities and lost their status of professional specialized institutions after being required to meet more academic criteria. Thus they went through difficult times and faced a lessening of their credibility.

– **Professional national training centres** also existed in many countries since the 1970s. Often linked to the ministry of information, they were devoted to training staff of government media and helping them earn the diploma they needed to progress within the frame of public administration. Examples are the IFTIC in Niamey, the CFPJ in Ouagadougou, the professional training centre of the CRTV in Cameroon, or the SEVOZA in Kinshasa. Facing shrinking support from their ministries, most of these centres are trying to meet the challenge of turning into training facilities open to the private sector and proposing projects to foreign donors. However, their efforts generate a lot of suspicion because of the degree of governmental control.

– The **Universities** are now more and more providing communication or journalism curricula (University of Cocody in Abidjan, University Marien Ngouabi in Brazzaville University of Kinshasa [Unikin], University of Lubumbashi [Unilu], and University of Kisangani [Unikis] in DRC, University of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, National University of Chad, and others). These journalism and communication departments were mostly created after the liberalisation of the media sector in the 1990s and 2000s. They are very popular and usually host hundreds or thousands of students fascinated by the media and by PR and marketing careers. The curricula are often

very theoretical and produce young graduates who are not well prepared to step into the media market.

– **Private journalism schools** are new actors in the training and education sector. The development of the private media landscape (written press first, then radio and television stations) generated much enthusiasm among young people wanting to incorporate media enterprises. The liberalisation of the education sector allowed creation of private schools and universities leading to the multiplication of the initiatives in this field. Some private schools are quality institutions, such as ISSIC from Sud-Communication in Dakar, but most of these schools have very low standards, with a lack of skilled teachers and any practical equipment.

Besides those transformations in the field of journalism education, there was also, over the past 15 years, major changes in the field of journalism training in Francophone Africa. The emergence of new private media drew much attention from the donors, and budgets were devoted for journalist training in those countries experiencing "transition to democracy". Hundreds and thousands of one-day to one-week professional training sessions were organised all over the continent. This tendency for short-term professional trainings generated two consequences:

– The multiplication of local professional organisations aiming at setting up this kind of short-term trainings, e.g., presses houses and similar groups.
– Some Northern NGO's specialised in training.

These efforts are doubtless grounded on a real problem. There is a need for professional training in many fields from managing a newsroom to ethics, from covering electoral processes to a better use of ICT's, to the

practice of investigative journalism. There is also much goodwill from the donors. But most of those seminars and short-term trainings have been organised with only a very short-term view, including:

– No real identification of what other donors are doing in the same areas, very often duplicating the same initiatives. In Benin, before the 1992 Presidential election, three different workshops on covering the election were organised at the same time by three different organisations;

– No follow up of what the trainees have actually learned and what the media is gaining from taking part in those sessions. Many participants go back to their media and do not even have the opportunity to implement what they have learned;

– A very rough process of selection of the trainees. Most of the donors and operators want to be "inclusive" and integrate in the trainings participants who don't actually belong to a genuinely existing media, participants who are mainly attracted by the "per diem" for attending the training session, participants who are taking part in so many training sessions that they are not in their newsrooms anymore;

– Contents that are not always appropriate to the level of development, the situation or the concerns of the African media;

– Sometimes very little consultation of the media managers in order to respond to their needs. Many media managers are faced regularly with a demand to send one of their team members to join a training session in the following weeks without having been consulted before at all.

And, most of all, the majority of those initiatives have been implemented without any care

or methodology for assessing the output. Since 2000, facing a growing expectation of the donors to measure the outputs of the training projects, some NGOs like the Panos Institute or Search for Common Ground (SFCG) have developed new assessment tools. Yet a main challenge remains how to verify the changes in professional behaviour and to increase professionalism (if any) of the participants once they go back to their newsroom.

## Assessing journalism schools: A UNESCO project

In 2005, UNESCO organised a meeting of experts to review journalist training in Africa. Clearly identifying training as a major problem for African journalists, UNESCO supported then the idea of trying to identify " potential centres of excellence" for the training of journalists in Africa. Those "potential centres of excellence" recognised by this UNESCO-driven assessment process could then be in a better position to negotiate funding with the donors.

To identify training centres as "potentially excellent "(the word "potential" was crucial in the process), it was necessary to have an assessment process and therefore to have



**ULB** — **Unesco Study**

- Unesco meeting (2005) identifies training as a major issue for African media
- Objective : to identify « potential centres of excellence » in Journalism education
- Necessity : to adopt criteria and indicators to measure the degree of « potential excellence » of the training centres
- Pre-condition : The J-schools have to be consulted and to agree with the indicators.



**ULB** — **Methodology**

**5 steps :**
1. Establish a mapping of the J-shools on the African continent.
2. Debate with the J-schools, experts, and NGO's involved in journalism training or media support in order to adopt shared indicators and criteria.
3. Ask the J-schools to do a "self assessment" based on the indicators and criteria.
4. Have outside experts visit the schools that seam to have capacities to qualify as "potential excellence centres".
5. Publish a list of the "potential centres of excellence" in journalism training in Africa.

criteria and indicators to measure the degree of "potential excellence" of the training centres.

Criteria and indicators aiming at assessing journalism education already exist, formulated mostly during assessment initiatives in UK or USA. In the Francophone environment, there is a network of journalism schools (Théophraste network) that has started to implement a "peer review" process. To enter the network, each school has to be assessed by another school and therefore some basic criteria have been jointly adopted.

But most of the existing criteria remained very unclear. On top of that, some of them were viewed as biased (or "western-centric") by the African schools that had been assessed. In this case, the results of the assessment cannot be of any help to the assessed schools if they are not recognising themselves in the results of the assessment.

A new inclusive and Africa-based methodology was thus elaborated and conducted. That's what I will present now.

## Project methodology

The Ecole Supérieure de Journalisme de Lille (Lille [France] Higher School of Journalism) and the School of Journalism of the Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa, were chosen by UNESCO to conduct the study. They were selected because they both enjoyed great legitimacy in their field.

Together, they elaborated a methodology based on five steps:

1. Establish a mapping of the schools training journalists on the African continent.
2. Engage a discussion with those schools and with experts of the field and NGOs involved in journalism training or media support in Africa, in order to adopt jointly the indicators and criteria that would be used to assess the schools and identify their "degree of potential excellence".
3. Ask every school that would take part in the process to do a "self-assessment" based on the indicators and criteria adopted.
4. Have outside experts visit the schools that seemed, from the self-assessment process, to have the most capacity to qualify as "potential centres of excellence".
5. Publish a list of the "potential centres of excellence" in journalism training in Africa.

What both partners agreed not to do was to create a "ranking" of the ten best journalism schools on the continent. Instead, they proposed to offer UNESCO a list of ten remarkable institutions that were all "potential centres of excellence".

### Phase 1 : The preliminary mapping

The first step of the project is the one I was most directly involved in, as I was responsible for the mapping and first basic description of the schools in Francophone Africa. If the three first types of journalism training institutions described above could be easily identified, it was much more complicated for those of the fourth category, which are sometimes deprived of permanent teachers or even of their own buildings.

The terms of reference given by UNESCO were also unclear regarding:

– the necessity to include training centres that were engaged in short-term training sessions or only institutions providing long-term basic journalism education;

– if such training centres were included, should the indicators and criteria be discussed separately from institutions providing long-term basic journalism? Or was it possible to identify criteria and indicators that would fit both types of institutions?

After discussion, it was decided that the mapping would integrate the major training centres, but that the following steps (elaboration of indicators and criteria) would focus only on journalism schools.

The mapping established in October 2006 (available on UNESCO website) identified 96 "schools of journalism" based in 36 countries on the continent, including higher educational institutions, private colleges and NGOs. Sixty were based in Anglophone Africa, 30 in Francophone Africa, and six in Lusophone Africa. Basic identification documents were set for each institution, with the data provided by the institution itself (therefore allowing "subjective" variations).

At this stage, many of the schools asked questions about the real aim of the project: would this first "mapping" step determine which institutions would benefit from financial support later on? What exactly was at stake with the study? Those questions probably influenced the way the schools presented themselves.

**Phase 2 : Online debate regarding indicators and criteria**

The two leaders of the study then established a web forum on which they posted a draft document based on the results found in the self-assessment of the journalism schools to encourage debate about indicators and criteria. The 96 schools mapped were asked to participate.

During the month that the debate lasted, only 11 schools and three outside experts actually took part in the online discussion. Yet many questions arose:

– Why would it be necessary to have "African-made" indicators and criteria? Some of the schools (such as the ESSTIC in Yaoundé)

argued that the criteria to measure the "good practices" in journalism education should be the same in Africa as in any other part of the world. Other schools (e.g., Tshwane University of Technology in South Africa) were convinced that African journalists were facing particular challenges (related to the spread of HIV/Aids or the particular objectives for development) and needed specific thematic training, justifying the training institutions that would be asked to transmit particular skills.
– To what extent should the journalism schools themselves define the quality of their institutions (and therefore the indicators and criteria) rather than the national or regional media industry?
– Why would it be useful or necessary to identify common indicators and criteria for institutions that each has its own specific aims and context?

One of the reasons identified to explain the low response rate was the difficulty of some schools to get access to the Internet and to manage the online debate technology.

Based on the contributions, ESJ and RU elaborated a first draft list of three criteria and 50 indicators. The list was so huge that the organisers feared the institutions would be reluctant to proceed to the self-assessment. Therefore, they were aggregated into 27 indicators.

**Criterion A: Curriculum and institutional capacity**

**1) Curriculum**

– Balance between theory, practical application and reflection (there was very little discussion about this point, which was a major debate in the 1980's).
– Teaching the links between media and democracy (e.g., values and laws of free speech, ethics, economics, the historical role

### Indicators (2/9)

**2) Teaching Resources and Equipment**
- Staff's education and skill-set;
- Numbers of journalism graduates *(text illegible)*
- Range of media platforms covered in course
- Adequacy of technology for students to learn practical dimension *(illegible)*
- Instructor-learner ratio for practical courses
- Opportunities for practical media production by learners *(illegible)*
- Internet access for staff and students

### Indicators (3/9)

**3) Assessment Systems**
- Description of systems used to assess learning *(illegible)*
- Description of systems used to assess teachers and courses *(illegible)*

### Indicators (4/9)

**II. Criterion B: Professional and Public Service, External Links and Recognition**

**1) Interaction and Relations within the Profession**
- Formal mechanisms for interaction within the profession *(illegible)*
- Offer of continual or in-service training to practising professionals
- Organisation of knowledge-disseminating activities aimed at professional circles *(illegible)*
- Involvement of teachers in productions for the media industry
- Graduate employment rates within mass-media field
- Guest speakers/media industry experts to lecture specialist subjects in curricula
- Level of participation by journalist alumni *(illegible)*

### Indicators (5/9)

**2) International Networking and Recognition**
- Level of involvement in journalism and/or training networks and associations
- Involvement in external networking initiatives *(illegible)*
- Invitations to serve on editorial boards, or be external evaluators of other journalism programmes
- Inscription of students coming from abroad *(illegible)*

**3) Social Participation and Standing**
- Links with private sector or community organisations
- Role as institutional representative in the training, critical engagement with media on its role

### Indicators (6/9)

**4) Other External Orientations**
- Publications and/or web presence of your institution
- Number and type of other external organisations/activities undertaken within the past two years

of media, investigative journalism, and critique of bad journalistic practices). Are there special courses? Are these mainstreamed/integrated? (The CAPJC in Tunisia did not support these criteria, putting forward the importance of technological equipment.)

– Development of linguistic and multilingual skills (This was very important to the schools established in countries that have a real political agenda to promote a local language like Kiswahili in East Africa, but much less for other countries that are mainly using the former colonial language, English or French).

– Teaching how to report on key issues (e.g., health, HIV, gender issues, Pan-Africanism, development, rural-urban issues and community media)? What are the "African" inputs in journalism training?

## 2) Teaching resources and equipment

– Staff education and skill-sets.

– Numbers of journalism graduates per annum: throughput record (completion rates vs. enrolment rates). (Some discussants disagreed with these criteria, because the number of graduates doesn't tell anything about the quality of journalism education). Completion rates do not tell anything about the level of the trainees.

– Range of media platforms covered in courses.

– Adequacy of technology for students to learn practical dimension (dedicated computer labs, radio studio, etc.).

– Instructor-learner ratios for practical courses.

– Opportunities for practical media production by learners (e.g. internships).

– Internet access for staff and students.

## 3) Assessment systems

– Description of systems used to assess learning (e.g., continuous assessment, portfolios, external examiners for quality control, indus-

try-related systems regarding credit-bearing internships, etc.)

– Description of systems used to assess teachers and courses (e.g., student course evaluations, internal discussions with staff, peer evaluations, etc.).

## Criterion B: Professional and public service, external links, and recognition

### 1) Interaction and relations within the profession

– Formal mechanisms for interaction within the profession (e.g., advisory board, external examiners, consultation on curriculum, assessment of internships).

– Offer of occasional or in-service training to practising professionals.

– Organisation of knowledge-disseminating activities aimed at professional circles (symposia, lectures, events, etc.).

– Involvement of teachers in productions for the media industry.

– Graduate employment rates within mass media field (measured as a proportion of whole output). The discussant from Cameroon noted that employment rate didn't necessarily mean good training given the poor level of local media.

– Guest speakers / industry experts to lecture specialist subjects in curricula.

– Level of participation by journalist alumni (e.g., a dedicated association for the school itself, participation in meetings, response to requests from institution, etc.). The ideal would be for each institution to be able to keep track of the professional evolution of each trainee but that indicator sounded too unrealistic.

### 2) International networking and recognition

– Level of involvement in journalism and/or training networks and associations.

– Involvement in external networking initiatives (securing bursaries, judging journalism competitions, etc.).
– Invitations to serve on editorial boards, or to be external evaluators of other journalism programmes.
– Inscription of foreign students and capacity/obstacles to enrolling learners from other African countries.

### 3) Social participation and standing

– Links with private sector or community organisations.
– Role as institutional representative in this field (e.g., critical engagement with media on their role; whether you are approached for commentary on media issues, protesting violations of media freedom, commemorating World Press Freedom Day on 03 May, etc.).

### 4) Other external orientations

– Publications and/or web presence of your institution.
– Number and type of other external projects/initiatives undertaken within the past two years.

## Criterion C: Development strategy and potential

### 1) Strategy

– Expansion or improvement of programmes over past three years, (e.g., updating activities through new courses).
– Innovation and evidence of the ability to adapt to challenges or opportunities (e.g., creation of new structures, introduction of new teaching methods).
– Written annual or medium-term strategy available.
– Investments foreseen regarding the introduction of additional or new technology, facilities, staffing, curriculum, continuing training services, etc.

### 2) Budget and sustainability

– Proportion of financing from the state, donors, individual sponsors, consultants and students. Account for who pays tutor salaries and equipment.
– Commitment and capacity of parent institution's overall management towards your activities (e.g., budget allocation, facilities, equipment renewal, etc.).
– Latitude to manage budget.
– Diversification of national and international partners. How dependent are you on a single relationship for a particular activity?

### 3) Management

– Participatory governance and transparency of decisions (collegiality, student representatives, etc.).
– Systems for development of staff through education and training, exchanges, etc.
– Formal external review mechanisms of your institution, and use thereof to improve.

### 4) Challenges

– What challenges or weaknesses are you facing and how do you expect to overcome them?

## Phase 3 and 4: (Self) Assessment of journalism schools

The list of criteria and indicators was then sent to the 96 journalism schools identified and mapped. The main problem here was that very few schools took the time to reply. Eventually, the organisers had to "assist" a number of schools to complete the assessment form.

Some of the planned "onsite" visits (Phase 4) were useful to either help some schools to complete the form or to verify what they had written.

As the final report states, "The visits did not necessarily play to the advantage or disadvantage of the institutions inspected. In certain cases, weaknesses were identified that were not apparent from the self-completed surveys. Accordingly, those institutions not visited were not necessarily prejudiced as a result of unavoidably missing them out."

Eventually, 30 schools, including 22 Anglophone and 8 Francophone, completed the criteria and indicators questionnaire. The Francophone journalism schools rated quite poorly. The major difficulties identified for them were as follows:

– Lack of teaching equipment (to ensure practical applications in written press, radio or television journalism);
– Weak motivation of an underpaid teaching staff, spending most of their time in other activities (as consultants for instance) to get extra income;
– Very rigid administrative structures, making it difficult to implement any innovation;
– Lack of financial autonomy for schools still overseen by the ministry of higher education or ministry of communication.

## Phase 5: Establishing a list of "potential centres of excellence"

Twelve "Potential Centres of Excellence" in Africa were noted by the researchers:

1. Mass Communication Department, Makerere University, Uganda.
2. The School of Journalism and Mass Communications (SOJMC), University of Nairobi, Kenya.
3. Department of Mass Communication, University of Lagos, Nigeria.
4. Department of Journalism, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa.
5. School of Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University, South Africa.
6. School of Communication Studies, Walter Sisulu University, South Africa.
7. Department of Journalism, Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa.
8. School of Communication, Legal and Secretarial Studies, Namibia Polytechnic, Namibia.
9. Mozambican School of Journalism, Mozambique.
10. Centre d'études des sciences et techniques de l'information (CESTI), Senegal.
11. École supérieure des sciences et techniques de l'information et de la communication (ESSTIC), Cameroon.
12. Institut supérieur de l'information et de la communication (ISIC), Morocco.

The results were obviously geographically and linguistically unbalanced. One-third of the "Potential Centres of Excellence" are located in South Africa, where ESJ found equally high potential amongst the four institutions visited. The journalism schools from Dakar, Yaoundé, Maputo, and Rabat had to be introduced even though these were not reaching the same level as the other ones in order to have some Francophone and Lusophone schools, but also schools from West, Central and North Africa.

It is also in order to mention some institutions, even though they were well behind the first group, that the promoters of the research decided to add as a second list of "reference centres", which were defined as centres

that would benefit from support to help to improve rather than be stuck in dependency.

Nine institutions were noted for their eligibility as potential Centres of Reference:
1. Department of Communication, Daystar University, Kenya.
2. Africa University College of Communications (formerly Africa Institute for Journalism and Communications), Ghana.
3. Department of Mass Communication, Lagos Polytechnic, Nigeria.
4. Department of Communication, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
5. Department of Media Studies, University of Namibia, Namibia.
6. Faculty of Communication and Information Science, National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe.
7. School of Communication, Southern African Media Training Trust (NSJ), Mozambique.
8. Département de la communication & journalisme de l'Université de Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.
9. Unité de formation et de recherche en journalisme, Antananarivo University, Madagascar.

The final report published by UNESCO included a short presentation of all 21 institutions, identifying their strengths and weaknesses and suggesting ways and priorities to reinforce their capacities.

The report was put online and the last step of the process was to allow all training institution to comment on the results.

## Conclusion

Journalism schools in Africa are undergoing major changes, facing an increasing number of media and journalists in the field, but also huge changes in the professional techniques and therefore in the media industry's needs and expectations.
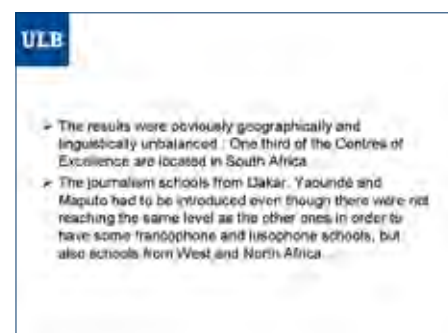
The process conducted by UNESCO was aimed at identifying schools that could potentially play a major part to improve journalist training on the continent. But it led to the conclusion that trying to compare those institutions with each other and to assess them with identical indicators was probably unrealistic.

Being identified as a "potential centre of excellence" may help some institutions to promote themselves to donors, but this recommendation is probably not enough to establish long-term trust or collaboration.

The report may also help donors to identify better ways to support those selected institutions, as the current needs and objectives of development are clearly stated.

In my view, the main point of this study does not consist in the final "ranking" or description of the schools identified either as a "centre of potential excellence" or "reference" centres. Too many external factors came to influence the final results: the necessity for UNESCO to have a minimum of geographical and linguistic balance; the limited budget that allowed only a few field visits conducted by different experts; the fact that one of the institutions conducting the study was itself an African training institution, and; the short time that was actually devoted to the project, particularly Phases 2, 3 and 4 because of "contract" constraints.

The indicators are useful mainly as a checklist for the journalism schools that would want to undertake a truthful self-assessment in order to work on their own development project and set themselves new objectives. Every criteria and indicator can become a matter of discussion within the teaching staff, with the school managing team or with the stakeholders of the media industry. Each of the points is certainly an inspiring subject for reflection. Finally, through the online debate, the pro-

cess might also prove useful in building communications among journalism training institutions of the continent. This could lead to a better networking of those schools, something Rhodes University is continuing to work to encourage.

[1] *A major study about journalism education and training in Francophone Africa was conducted by GRET for the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2001. See Paquot E., Ponthieu G. &Kouch-*

*ner J., « Etude sur la formation aux métiers de l'information en Afrique », GRET, Paris, 2001.*

*

*CESTI: Centre d'Etudes des Sciences et Techniques de l'Information*

*ESSTIC: Ecole Supérieure des Sciences et Techniques de l'Information et de la Communication*

*CIERRO: Centre International d'Etudes en Radios Rurales de Ouagadougou*

*IFASIC: Institut facultaire des sciences de l'information et de la communication*

**ULB** Conclusion
- Trying to compare those institutions to each other and to assess them with identical indicators was probably unrealistic
- Having been identified as a potential centre of excellence may help some institution to promote themselves in front of donors
- The report may also help the donors to identify the better ways to support those selected institution as the current needs and objectives of development are clearly presented

**ULB** Conclusion
- Many external factors influenced the final results:
  - the necessity for Unesco to have a minimum of geographical and linguistic balance,
  - the limited budget that allowed only a few field visits, conducted by different experts,
  - the fact that one of the institutions conducting the study was itself an African J-school
  - the short time that was actually devoted to the project

**ULB** Conclusion
- The indicators are useful as a checklist for the J-schools that would want to undertake a self-assessment in order to work on their own development project (eg DRC)
- Every criteria and indicator can become a matter of discussion within the teaching staff, with the school managing team or with the stakeholders of the media industry

# A report from Laos:

# Building field research on a budget

## By Helmut Osang

At DW-AKADEMIE, the common practice for many years has been to ask participants to complete a feedback questionnaire at the end of training courses/workshops. The questionnaire has a mix of closed questions, many of them scaled questions with ranking or rating scales, and open questions, with a lot of room for personal remarks, observations, and comments. The instrument has been refined over the years and gives rich material to assess the training courses.

However, as we all know, the validity of results of questionnaires is questionable and has a number of limitations, in particular because:

● Results, answers are influenced by *emotional aspects*, by sentiments: Group feeling and group dynamics, having good time together, making friends, sharing, etc.

● It is based on the *direct experience* of the training situation itself only, which is not, or hardly, related to actual situation at the workplace, in the organisation, in the media environment, in the society at large. The *transfer to the workplace* is not asked for, is not in question, and is not in focus: how realistic is the training content? How fit is it to be transferred to practice? What is condu-

cive to actually transfer newly acquired skills/knowledge/behaviour, what not? All of this is beyond the scope of a post-training questionnaire.

● A feedback questionnaire is about *spontaneous statements and reactions* of individuals. But where is the organisation, where is the institutional dimension? From a media development perspective, training is about building institutional and organisational capacity, not about enhancing careers of individuals. Changes in attitude and in thinking, changes in products of the daily work, changes in media output, impact on the media system, and eventually the society, can neither be measured with nor be extrapolated from a feedback questionnaire.

● A feedback questionnaire is nothing more than trying to capture the feedback on a *specific training course or workshop.* The tool is thus not able and not suited to monitor or evaluate long-term integrated media development cooperation projects, not to assess "vital signs" of changes in the outcome and impact level.

● Finally: High ratings, or *good marks*, from the questionnaires, tend – in the organisation

Helmut Osang (Ph.D.) is Head of the Asia Division of the DEUTSCHE WELLE AKADEMIE. Since joining the (former) Radio Training Centre of DW in 1993 as journalism trainer and media consultant, he has held dozens of workshops in Germany and abroad, in Africa, the Middle East, South-East Europe and Asia, in particular South-East Asia. In 1997, he taught "Radio Journalism" at Ngee Ann Polytechnic in Singapore. Helmut has been a radio journalist with DW since 1984. Before that, from 1975 onwards, he worked as writer and editor for various magazines, daily newspapers and news agencies (Reuters, Inter-Press Service). He holds a doctorate degree in Media and Communication Studies and Sociology. In 2006, Helmut co-founded the German Forum Media and Development FoME, which networks scholars, practitioners and policy makers, from the North and the South, to discuss issues of international media development.

The Radio Savannakhet pilot project: Taking interviews in the province, here with a family in small salt cooking premises, next to the big salt factory

that provides training – to be taken, or rather mistaken, as vital sign of *success,* as equivalent for "good work".

Times have changed: For a number of years, there is an increasing awareness of the limitations of the questionnaire as the only tool to evaluate our work. Staff and management are growingly dissatisfied with this kind of narrow, restricted M&E approach. Efforts were started to take a deeper, a more research-based look into the success, into the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the work of DW-AKADEMIE. As a starting point, an external evaluation agency was commissioned to assess the media development activities of DW-AKADEMIE (DW-A) in 2009. Extra funds for this major undertaking were granted from the Ministry of Econo-

mic Cooperation and Development, or BMZ, which funds about 80% of all DW-A projects.

The research was designed as summative evaluation, trying to assess DW-A activities in the years 2004-2008. All feedback-questionnaires from these years were checked again, all training participants from those years were contacted by the researchers and asked to answer a set of questions with regard to the long-term effect of the training experience. In addition, in-depth case studies were undertaken in three selected countries in different world regions, namely: Tanzania/Zanzibar, Colombia, and Vietnam, where DW-A had conducted a substantial number of trainings and completed long-term cooperation projects. In these countries, the researchers took a series of intensive stakeholder

interviews, with:
• training participants
• representatives of local partners
• external experts

In addition, involved trainers and resource persons were interviewed in Germany.

For the evaluation of the findings, the researchers then used the DAC criteria of:
• relevance
• effectiveness
• efficiency
• long-term effects/or impact
• sustainability
• coherence, complementary, coordination

The final evaluation report gives a number of valuable observations and recommendations, following the DAC criteria. However, it also states a general limitation to ultimately evaluate the overall impact of the DW-AKADEMIE's work: there is no coherent framework, no set of terms of reference, no policy from the top development policy makers in Germany, the BMZ.

The latest media assistance policy paper in Germany dates back to 1987. A media and communication division within the Ministry was abolished in the mid-nineties. GTZ and the political foundations with a rather strong tradition of media development projects in the seventies, eighties and nineties, scaled down their work tremendously and dissolved the respective departments. Training activities of DW-AKADEMIE and other players continued to be funded and carried out on big scale, which resulted in the misconception that training journalists is synonymous with media development.

New thinking and new coordination efforts came from within the media development community, from outside the ministry, since 2002. The Forum Media and Development,

FoME, is the result of the renewed effort to share experiences, to bundle and network media development activities and policies from within Germany. And to reflect on the international discussion on media and development in the light of technological changes (digitisation and Internet), of new research results, and of groundbreaking papers from UNDP, UNESCO, and the World Bank. The Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development BMZ came up with a policy paper on "Demokratieförderung", or Harnessing Democracy, in 2005, where media was at least mentioned, and implied as an integral part of democratisation. But still there was, and there is now, no explicit policy.

In a nutshell: the evaluation of DW-AKADEMIE results in a call for a fresh effort to formulate a policy on German media development. This might be the best result one can think of.

I just returned from Laos two days ago, where we run a long-term media development project. Together with local colleagues, we successfully launched a daily radio morning show in the southern province of Savannakhet exactly three weeks ago (21 September). The radio programme makes a total difference to what was on air in the country so far, and is like a small revolution. No government propaganda, no ministerial handouts read out on air, no "protocol news".

The programme is giving a voice to the common people in the province, tells their stories, picks their sorrows, plights, their successes and dreams, and tries to be relevant to their lives. The pilot project involves a lot of training step-by-step, team building, consultancy, coaching, and on-the-job-training. And it was for a great deal about switching minds of the local radio staff: from working as a mouthpiece of party, state and government to a reporter who detects and tells the stories of the Savan-
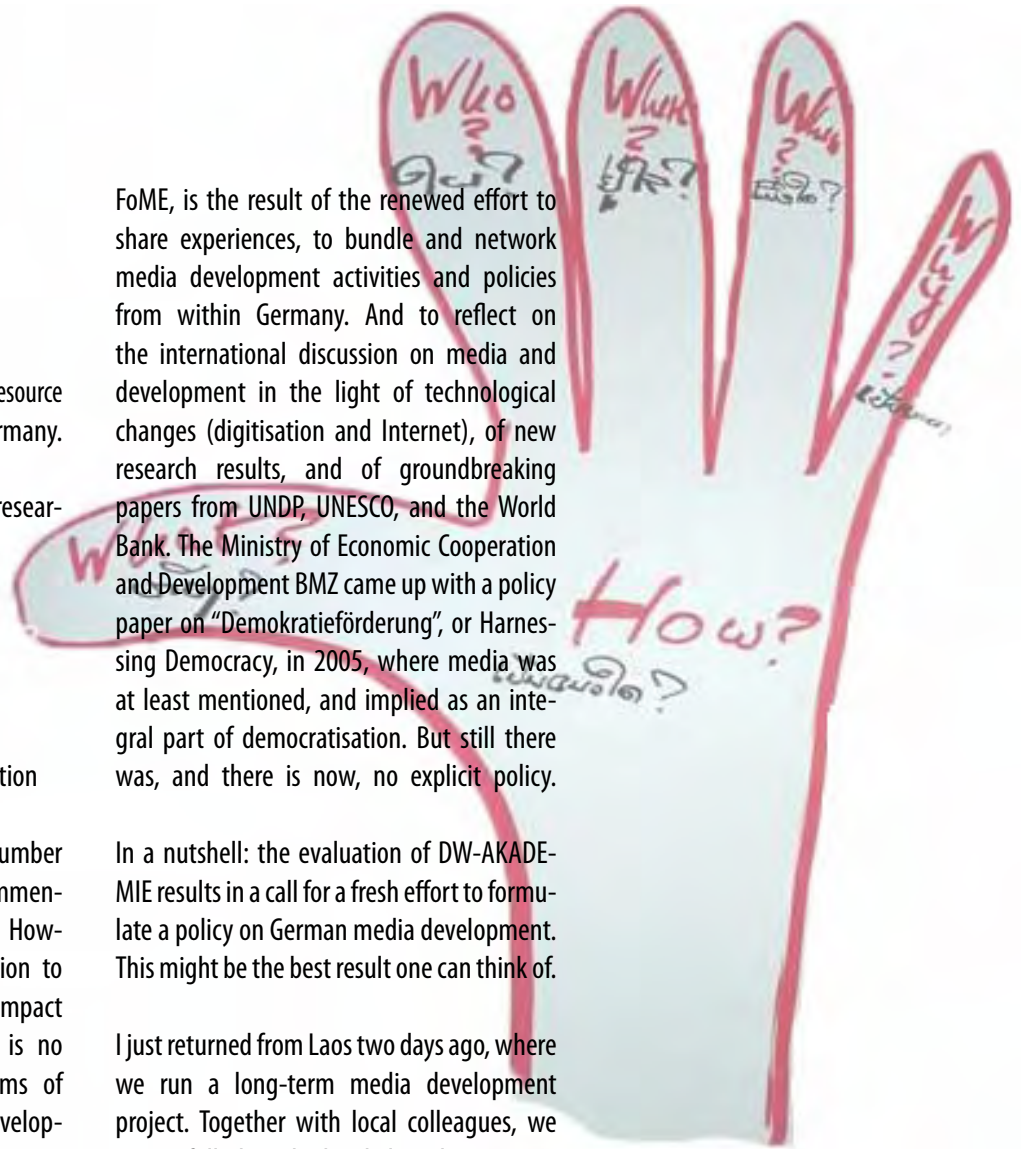
Visuals from the work with the Savannakhet (SVK) radio team: The fact-grabbing hand, showing the Who, What, When, Why and How of information gathering, in English and Lao

nakhet people, who talks to them, listens to them, puts their voices on air. The project also involved hours and hours of discussions and talks with the involved staff, with the radio management, with the authorities in the province and in the capital. Plus having a beer or two and dancing to Lao pop songs.

We wanted this to be a pilot project also in terms of M&E. We asked for additional funds, about 10 to 15% of the overall project budget, from the Evaluation Division of the Ministry, the BMZ. The request was not successful.

So we did as we had planned to do from the beginning. The idea was to have a set of simple and easy-to-handle M&E components integrated throughout the project, even without additional funds, though.

We planned to monitor and evaluate the ongoing project on two levels: First, with the direct beneficiaries, or those directly involved in the project: The journalists, reporters, staff at Savannakhet provincial radio, and second, with the indirect beneficiaries: The radio listeners, or the public.
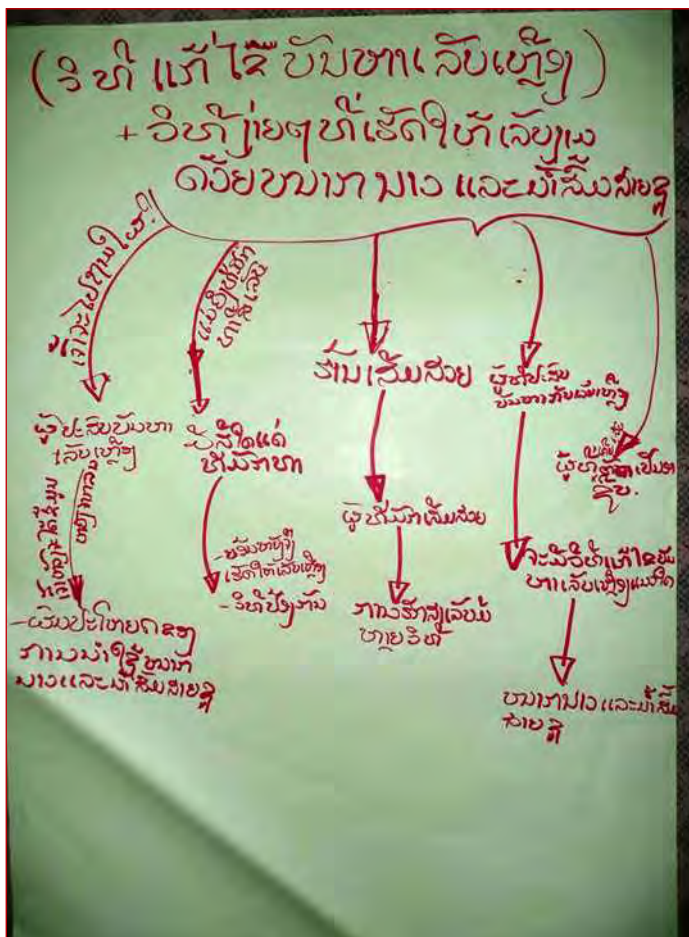
The journalists and reporters and other staff at radio – altogether 16 – underwent in-depth interviews, or guided interviews at the beginning of the project work. The interviews aimed at finding out about:



Another visual: The story development cascade, visualising the people connected to or involved in a story, and what they can be expected to talk about. A planning tool to establish who talks about what, before looking for interviewees. Drawn and written in Lao by a member of the Radio SVK team

• Life situation
• Job/career
• Likes and dislikes (room for improvement) regarding the actual work
• The ideal journalist (reporter/presenter/producer) in Laos
• Assessing (perceived) relevance of different jobs or positions in Lao society, including that of the radio journalist
• Wishes for the future, dreams, fantasies

There will be two more series of in-depth interviews with the same interviewees, after one year into the project (early 2010) and one year after the launch of the new morning show (September 2010). The interviews are conducted by external, independent researchers.

The radio listeners, the audience, the public: luckily, Laos is quite well researched in terms of media usage and media habits (baseline studies UNICEF 2003 and FES 2005). Only this year, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) commissioned a countrywide media habit survey, which, on top of national data, highlights the situation in selected provinces, including the province where our project is based, Savannakhet, in the south.

In the project, we started to look into direct feedback of listeners through call-ins, phone-ins. Virtually from the first minutes of the new programme, the phone in the studio kept on ringing. Some callers related to the new programme, expressed their surprise, and noticed that there are now so many different voices to be heard on radio. Someone from a far away province listened to a particular report, found that it was about the village of his parents and sent his greetings. Someone else wanted help to get him in touch with a chicken farmer who was interviewed in the programme about his business success. After spontaneously taking the calls

and haphazardly taking notes of requests and comments from listeners calling in, the team quickly started organising the process. A form for systematically taking notes of all callers and what they have to say, plus some demographic data, was designed.  The forms were printed, bound as hardcover and used in the studio, thus providing a complete record of all callers over time. Towards the end of every show, the book is taken by the presenters (two co-hosts), and interesting feedback and comments are immediately referred to and taken up in the programme.

The presenters at the same time repeatedly, on air, invite the listeners for their comments, their reactions, their concerns, their stories.

In addition, a flyer was designed by the team, then printed and distributed in town and beyond, at a circulation of two thousand to start with. The flyer advertises the new programme and again invites the audience, or the public, to react to the radio show, asking two questions:

• What do you think about the (new) radio programme?
• And what do you want the new show to talk about? Do you have a story to share with us, with other listeners? Come, talk to us, share your info, and let us know!

This is work in progress, we do not have the results yet, but it has been started, the process is on, and it develops as it proceeds. Finally, we will communicate and discuss major findings of the SIDA media habit survey, and develop a set of simple questions that can be used by radio journalists and reporters, whenever they are out in the field, in order to try to gather direct evidence of media usage and programme feedback.

All data, all of the knowledge gathered with such a multi-method approach, will then have to be appraised. I am convinced that this will give us lots of answers, lots of material to evaluate our work on the ground, and to come up with more ideas of how to evaluate and monitor in the future.



Taking interviews with workers at the Savannakhet salt factory
All photos: Helmut Osang

The Panos South Asia approach:

# Spheres of Influence

## By Lakshmi Nair & A S Panneerselvan

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### Media as public sphere

Having a vibrant media scene is a necessary prerequisite to human development and good governance. But, the time has come for us, media practitioners and support organisations, to accept and recognise that this is too complex to bring about on our own. It would be prudent to recognise the limitations of our sector, and create appropriate evaluation and impact assessment tools. The existing tools and methodologies are devised to give a macro picture of the overall environments but fail to clearly demarcate the roles played by various actors: state, judiciary, executive, civil society and media. Media is just one contributing factor, albeit an important one at that. Hence, it is imperative to track the spheres of influence wielded by the sector so that support organisations are not misled into tracking and measuring overall environments while attempting to quantify the impact that media support organisations have in the process of change.

German philosopher Jurgen Habermas propounded the theory of *Public Sphere* as an area in social life where people can get together and freely discuss and identify societal problems, and through that discussion influence political action. It is "a discursive space in which individuals and groups congregate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, reach a common judgement."[1]

He envisaged Public Sphere as "a theatre in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk"[2]. The Public Sphere mediates between the 'private sphere' and the 'Sphere of Public Authority' where "the private sphere comprised civil society in the narrower sense … the realm of commodity exchange and of social labour". The Sphere of Public Authority on the other hand deals "with the state, or realm of the police, and the ruling class". The Public Sphere criss-crosses both these realms and "through the vehicle of public opinion puts the state in touch with the needs of society"[3]

However, this theory fails to recognise multiple public spheres; those which form separated though connected entities based on belief, faith, socio-economic status, issues, language, gender and common experience. These entities operate subtly to form several spheres within. Even Habermas, after considerable deliberation, concedes: "The Public Sphere, simultaneously pre-structured and dominated by the mass media, developed

into an arena infiltrated by power in which, by means of topic selection and topical contributions, a battle is fought not only over influence but also over the control of communication flows that affect behaviour while their strategic intentions are kept hidden as much as possible"[4]

It is this spectrum of public spheres, where free wheeling ideas collide and coalesce, bringing forth debate and discussion that truly reflect in a vibrant, plural media of a region. While the burden of realising the developmental goals lies mainly with the state apparatus and other deliverable institutions, these *multiple spheres* influence societal and political change thus bestowing media with the role of an eminent catalyst.

## Media development *Vs* media *for* development

Media is, was and remains a catalyst. Hence, media organisations' role is that of enabling and empowering the catalyst to bring forth the *multiple public spheres* into the open. How do we evaluate the work of these media organisations that strive to bring these multiple public spheres to a common arena? In the past decade, there has been any number of attempts to create an effective evaluation and impact of communication initiatives. But, none of them recognised the intrinsic value of media development, as all narratives dovetailed media development into a utilitarian idea of media *for* development. The tussle between quantitative and qualitative evaluation continues, with new models often ending-up with modifications within the paradigm of *Communications for development,* without making the key quantum jump of looking at media development itself as a fully-fledged developmental activity. The fulcrum of most arguments continues to be the generalised state of affairs in a particular sector, country or region in which media ope-

rates. None of them offer the crucial insights that are imperative to justify and sustain the existence and toil of smaller media development organisations. And this divide between media for development and media development is not really captured by the indicators developed by various reputable institutions. The indicators for physical infrastructure are vastly different from the indicators for conceptual infrastructure.

## The Panos South Asia approach

As pointed out earlier, media is an intrinsic value and its value as an instrument or vehicle is purely coincidental. It is in this fulcrum of faith that we are at variance with others. And, to embrace this, one has to leave behind the nation-state perspective and look closely at the rippling eddies created by the functioning of small institutes in opening up space for plural debate and discourse. The catalytic role of media and media organisations in facilitating change, as opposed to the role of agency often thrust upon it, is another point we contest.



The need of the hour is to scale down impact assessment from global feel-good indicators like poverty reduction to achievable ones like spreading awareness, in a bid to help ordinary men and women make informed choices. "At its heart, development – if it is to be sustainable – must be a process that allows people to be their agents of change, to act individually and collectively using their own ingenuity and accessing ideas and knowledge in the search for ways to fulfil their full potential."[5]

Out of these challenges and the urge to have a home-grown understanding of our existence and worth, Panos South Asia over the past two years has been at work to document its *Spheres of Influence.* With no tangible deliverables and the diffused impact gestating and permeating over long periods of time, we decided to look at three frames of reference to gauge impact:

- A decade – because it gives a good time frame to study
- Themes where we have had a sustained engagement for over five years
- Specific Programmes

Humbled by the fact that total and direct attributions to change is completely out of scope, we track and document our reach within the media, our ability to bring multiple voices into the open, our ability to work in tandem with Civil Society actors, our efforts to bring academia to render subjects in depth and Media on to common platforms for jointly put out informed narratives on our select five thematic areas.

With our spheres of engagement being multiple, PSA is looking to measure our spheres of influence within five categories

- Media
- Communities whose voices are articulated through PSA's programmes
- Civil society partners
- Academia
- State Actors/Policy makers

With newer technologies entering the media sector, PSA integrated web and New Media into our programmatic content. It now straddles Print, Television, Radio and New Media. So, the widening reach of the organisation and the difference its activities make to these various sectors is also charted.

We learnt from experience that a bottom-down or top-up approach will not yield desired results in opening up more space for debate. However well the journalists imbibe and put to use the training and empowerment that Panos programmes infuse, it will not reach the desired impact of opening up more space for diverse voices on issues until and unless the gatekeepers - the editors and owners are sensitised to the issue and allow it.

With programmes targeting all three tiers of media from cub reporters through mid career journalists to editors/publishers and owners impact measurement of particular thematic areas have been made possible. Output monitoring, quantum and quality of space before and after the engagement for the issues discussed, responses etc. in print media/ viewership / listenership, timing / repeats in broadcast etc., have been documented to measure impact.

Career advancement of participants who have benefited from PSA's engagements have also been tracked as the higher up the ladder they move, the more space they get for decision making and bringing forth more debate on the topics. This way we look at it from the media and media organisations' perspective.

Our programmes work on a multi-pronged approach of training programmes, fellowships and gatekeepers' retreats for editors and owners. To make the monitoring and evaluation model flexible to incorporate the impact of different components that different thematic programmes use to reach their set goals, several options have been provided.

For programmes like Public Hearings and symposia, where state actors who are the final makers of policy changes, Civil Society organisations and activists who lobby for the change and media which facilitates open debate, thus catalysing the change, are brought together.

For Fellowship programmes however, it is an engagement between expert advisors and journalists that Panos South Asia mediates and facilitates. So, for thematic areas we look at the quality and response to outputs, testimonials from fellows on their experience and monitoring of the fellows' progress through the project cycle.

Our Thematic Areas also coalesce into each other organically. For example, outputs on access to treatment in regions under strife cannot be restricted to Conflict or Public Health. From there, we move on to look at the impact of our partnerships with five groups as to how they help create more space for the multiple Public Spheres:

• Our engagement and influence on media.
• On groups and communities whose voices find space in the public sphere, thanks to PSA's programmes.
• On Civil Society partners, like-minded organisations who help us plan, develop and implement our vision thereby becoming stakeholders.
• Academia who help clarify issues, guide and give more teeth to arguments that get placed in the public domain.
• With state actors like the policy makers who finally make the 'change'. (Though in this process, PSA humbly claims to be one of the contributors to the cause, as it would be pure bombast to claim the change is solely due to our interventions or programmes.)

In its decade long engagement, PSA has engaged with 38 languages across the region. We then went on to map and document the language impact with specific focus on the different types of media we engage with: Print, Radio, Television and Web Media.

While Monitoring and Evaluation of programmes have life during the project cycle, PSA strongly believes that impact assess-



ment in the areas we deal in can be fruitful only after the lapse of a certain period of time. Immediate impact assessment not only negates the imperative need for long term investment; it also defeats the basic purpose.

So for a particular programme, we will go by the popular mandate of monitoring through

the project cycle and evaluating on completion but impact assessment will be done after allowing enough time for the permeation to take effect.

To monitor fellowships in print programmes, we do look at the number of outputs and the languages in which they are published, with clearly documented data on circulation figures and readership. To make the quantum we deal with more credible, we take ten percent of the readership / circulation as our minimum assured readership while standard readings even by the advertising sector take it as fifty percent. Mapping it on a bar graph showing languages, circulation, readership and the minimum assured readership gives the quantitative analysis picture of the programme.

We also gauge efficacy by tracking the advisory panel to participant ratio in each of the programmes to ensure that it does not get spread across thinly and retains programmatic intensity. When it comes to new technology communication initiatives like Radio and New Media, the ratio of technical trainer to content trainer to participant is tracked.

However, for impact assessment of the same fellowship programme, with the lapse of time, there is more data to work with as in

• increased journalistic expertise translating into higher quality media outputs

• increase in space / time for debate on the topics in mainstream media

• these leading to better public awareness and increased involvement in the Public spheres

• awards / recognition for the outputs,

• career advancement of the journalists

• our engagement outputs as a source for other actors

• legislative / policy changes

For training workshops also, all these come into play along with regular questionnaires and follow-ups. Testimonials from stakeholders at various points on the project graph also give key pointers to the impact. Interviews with stakeholders and detailed desk review of project documentation worked towards closing gaps.

As all our projects fall within a well worked-out framework of five thematic areas, we look at overall programmatic impact of the various components like training, workshops, fellowships, media retreats, facilitating international coverage, exchange tours etc.

| ACTIVITY | TIMING | PURPOSE | RESPONSIBILTY |
|---|---|---|---|
| Monitoring | Throughout the project cycle | Stated objectives as per log frame on track; time lines adhered to | Programme Officers reviewed by M and E Officer |
| Evaluation | Mid-cycle and on completion | Mid-course corrections to challenges by change in strategy and methodology; Stated objectives, outputs achieved; | Senior Management and M and E Officer in discussion with stakeholders; External evaluators |
| Impact assessment | At least two years after project completion | Track Spheres of Influence of the programmes and the organisation. Map intended and unintended outcomes that flow from a programme. | M and E team in discussion with stakeholders and beneficiaries |

## Monitoring, evaluation, impact assessment

PSA's monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment distinguish clear phases in and after the project cycle. Our approach to Monitoring and Evaluation has strong roots in existing models and practices that are in use across the Panos network. However, it is in impact assessment that we differ conceptually from models in use. The difference is in the scales of measurement, the timelines and the ultimate goals. We staunchly believe in the catalytic role of media as opposed to being an agent in eradicating poverty or removing illiteracy. The impact we map is measurable and scaled down; the focus is on media as the beneficiary and we look at impact after a certain period of time has lapsed after project completion. The analytical data available from post-evaluation of a programme becomes our baseline to track impact.

## Monitoring

This objective process has life through the project cycle from clearing the concept to the final report and tracks whether the
• Why
• What
• How
are being followed as was conceived in the detailed Log Frame
• A participatory start-up workshop to determine details of activities, resources and sustainability helps.
• Systematic documentation and follow-up of activities
• Assess verifiable indicators in relation to achievements, constantly reverting to the project purpose and results

## Evaluation

• Has both qualitative and quantitative components, where the number of activities and

outputs, as well as their quality, is assessed.
• Looks at challenges and effects mid-course corrections so as to fulfil the stated objectives by even changing tools, if needs be.

In media where external factors play a key role, the circumstances at the beginning of a programme is most likely to change by the time the programme is implemented.

• Assimilate the best practices into a feedback mechanism to facilitate shared learning and add value for future programmes and the network.
• Take stock of the challenges, their cause and course and record it to prevent recurrence in future programmes.
• Look at efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.
• Evaluation Report serves as the baseline for the Impact Assessment which in a sector like Media and Communication takes time to permeate to even show up diffused results.

## Impact assessment

Taking the Evaluation Report as the baseline, track the pathway of change to which our programmes have been co-contributors by assessing as many of the following as is relevant to the programme:
• promoting access to information and resources
• raise public debate on thematic issues
• the defiance and departure from the dominant narrative
• media's efforts to defy any form of censorship thus rendering media a site for democratic dialogue
• questions raised in the Parliament and State legislature and legislative changes brought about by the outputs of our engagement
• policy changes at local / state / national level which have been effected
a) where no policy existed and new policies got framed
b) where clauses which gives more teeth and relevance to policy has been included

"Generating Debate" as a concept is part of the vision and mission of all Panos Institutes; hence it becomes a focus which will be broad enough and not restrictive. Annual plans have been drawn up for the five year period up to 2013 with Debate as the theme of focus. This also becomes the common minimum programme that every Panos Institute has undertaken to fulfil.

Panos South Asia strongly believes that impact assessment in the areas we deal in can be fruitful only after the lapse of a certain period of time. So for a particular programme, we will go by the popular mandate of monitoring through the project cycle and evaluating on completion but impact assessment will be done after allowing enough time for the permeation to take effect.

c) at the policy implementation level
• change on the ground
• bringing in multiple voices, especially those often unheard, into the public domain
• bridging gaps between the grassroots level and policy makers
• building awareness on peoples' rights
• encourage and empower initiatives that use media for empowering economically and socially weaker sections of society
• career advancement of our fellows and participants, thereby opening up more decisive space for the issues in question
• reviews / letters to the editor / follow-up articles and studies / republished / reprinted citations / awards / recognition for fellows for their work
• growing partnerships encouraging linkages between media, academia and civil society fraternities.

Analysis of this data will help arrive at a doable, realistic Impact Assessment of how the engagements with stakeholders like media, academia, civil society organisations, and activists lead to increased visibility for the organisation and its activities. These *Spheres of Influence* in turn translate into growing credibility for the organisation to engage in its catalyst mission of empowering media to herald change.

Our impact measurement tools have been in the smithy just over three years; we have used shared experience and our own resources to fund its forging. Data gathering and research are ongoing. We at Panos South Asia strongly believe a home-grown, within-the-sector approach is indeed necessary to gauge the essence, spirit and impact of small media development organisations like ours. It is a long journey; but we are confident of results with the help of like-minded organisations.

[1] Hauser Gerard. Vernacular Dialogue and The Rhetoricality of Public Opinion, Communication Monographs, June 1998.
[2] Fraser Nancy, Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy, Duke University Press.
[3] Habermas, Jürgen, The Stuctural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeoise society, MIT Press, 1989.
[4] Habermas, Jürgen, Further Reflections on the Public Sphere, MIT Press, 1992.
[5] The Case for Communication in sustainable development; Panos London;2007

USAID media sector programs:

# Assistance activities and evaluation approaches

## By Mark Koenig

Media sector activities supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other donors can be divided into three basic types:
(1) programs developing independent and professional media as the primary objective, or "media-as-an-end" activities;
(2) programs using media to communicate other development objectives, or "media-as-a-means"; and, in some cases,
(3) activities concurrently accomplishing both objectives, i.e., assistance that builds media-as-an-end while also conveying other development message(s).

### media-as-an-end

In the first category, media-as-an-end, USAID average worldwide support for developing independent and professional media has totaled over $50 million annually in recent years, with ongoing programs in over thirty countries in any given year. Tailored to local conditions, and most often managed by locally-based USAID missions and implementing organizations, these programs vari-

ously address an array of media sector development challenges, including:
• the professional training needs of media personnel,
• the economic self-sustainability of media outlets,
• legal enabling environments, industry association building, and/or
• other infrastructural development.

### media-as-a-means

In a second direction, USAID also supports the use of media to communicate a wide range of development-related messages, including dissemination of information to improve public health, education, agricultural production, economic development, freer and fairer elections, rule of law, and a host of other development-related areas. Because these media-as-a-means activities take many forms, it is difficult to estimate their overall budget size. But the scale of development communications is substantial. For example, USAID devotes approximately $100 million annually solely to health-related communications.

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## Combining means & ends to build capacity

In recent years, USAID has increased support to what might be labeled a third direction, which is to combine *media-as-a-means* together with *media-as-an-end* type programs.

Earlier USAID development communications practices focused on media buys to produce and disseminate media campaigns in support of various development objectives, such as increasing public awareness about better practices in health, agriculture, business, elections, civic activeness, etc. Such practices often failed to produce sustainable local media capacities to continue informing their audiences about important development-related issues following the end of the donor-supported media campaign.

Accordingly, USAID (and other donors) increasingly combine journalism training, media business and management training as core components of media campaigns about development and/or democracy issues. These are seen as ways to enable local media to have capacities as well as economic incentives to continue coverage of the selected issues on their own after the end of the donors' grants or contracts. One USAID-supported program example is Communication for Change (or C-Change), which seeks to create synergies among different kinds of mass communication activities, supporting health, education, environmental, and/or economic development-related media campaigns, while also building local media capacities to cover these issues on a more professional and self-sustainable basis.

## Measuring results

USAID undertakes evaluations of media environments and media sector programs on at least three levels of analysis: global, national, and program levels.

At a *global level*, for example, USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance (DG) commissioned a research team from the University of Pittsburg and Vanderbilt University to study the effects of assistance in the DG area. Controlling for as many variables as possible, the researchers examined correlations between budget levels for several types of DG assistance (elections, human rights, civil society, free media, and governance) and Freedom House democracy indicators. Interestingly, study results suggested that free media program spending levels were comparatively highly correlated with improved free media and civil society development indicators as well as with overall democracy indicators. (See Stephen Finkel et al., Deepening Our Understanding of the Effects of US Foreign Assistance on Democrracy Building: Final Report, Jan 28, 2008).

In the next stage of global level research, USAID/DG is contemplating a series of several dozen comparative country studies to test hypotheses regarding the effectiveness of different democracy-building strategies. Media assistance will likely represent one of areas subject to these detailed case study examinations.

In order to track year-to-year changes in *national level* media environments, USAID with other donors supports the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) to conduct the Media Sustainability Index (MSI) in Europe and Eurasia, the Middle East, and



Deepening Our Understanding of the Effects of US Foreign Assistance on Democracy Building Final Report

Africa. USAID finds the MSI to be useful for understanding major trends in a country's media environment, including legal-regulatory conditions, levels of journalistic professionalism, financial self-sustainability of media outlets, degree of pluralism, supportive organizational infrastructure, and other variables. For more information, please visit the MSI website.

At the *program level*, USAID builds measurement and evaluation (M&E) into most supported projects, including media assistance programs. Managers attempt to find a balance between creating a good system of program indicators, while not burdening implementing organizations with excessive costs of collecting data. In recent years, M&E systems have increasingly expanded to include not simply outputs (such as numbers of journalists trained), but also broader impacts and outcomes in media systems. In an attempt to identify the fullest possible range of possible program indicators, USAID commissioned *Management Systems International* to comprehensively catalogue the indicator systems used in the media sector. This study, a media sector "indicator gap analysis," will be completed in 2010, and will be made publicly available.

The "Public Sentinel":

# News media roles in governance reform

By Anne-Katrin Arnold

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The rise of accountability and transparency across many countries over the past decades has been extraordinary, as measured by international aggregate indicators of governance, press freedom, and transparency. But these same indicators now suggest that in many countries the advance of good governance has stagnated or even reversed.

The international development community faces persistent, multiple, and interwoven challenges in governance, transparency, accountability, and inclusive development. There is urgent need to improve the responsiveness, transparency, effectiveness, and accountability of governance institutions so that public services work for the poor as well as the rich.

The news media as an institution plays a vital role in addressing these challenges. A diverse and independent media sector can help increase government accountability and benefit the poor by enhancing the broadest possible societal participation and dialogue.

How news media can best play a constructive role in governance reform is addressed in a new book published by The World Bank's Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), *Public Sentinel: News Media and Governance Reform.*

## News media and governance: three approaches

This book addresses the issue of news media and governance through three broad approaches.

1. The normative approach asks *what ideal roles should media systems play to strengthen democratic governance and thus bolster human development?*

2. An empirical approach considers independent evidence derived from cross-national comparisons and selected case studies, asking, *under what conditions do media systems actually succeed or fail to fulfill these objectives?*

3. A strategic approach asks *what policy interventions work most effectively to close the substantial gap that exists between the democratic promise and performance of the news media as an institution?*

In *Public Sentinel*, a wide range of development specialists from academia and practice analyze these three questions, offer evidence, present case studies, and discuss recommendations for policy makers regarding media roles in a good governance agenda.

*Public Sentinel* identifies three ideal roles of the news media: watchdog, agenda setter, and gatekeeper in the public forum. The book examines how news media function as an institution against these ideal benchmarks, using systematic cross-national empirical analysis, detailed selected case studies derived from a wide range of low- and medium-income societies, and includes various types of regimes found in all regions around the globe.

Empirical studies of the effects of the news media in these ideal roles use a variety of methods. The watchdog function is analyzed in case studies, opinion surveys, and election studies, but often also relies on anecdotal evidence. Social and political change affected by the media is measured through changes in interest in or outrage over an issue parallel to media coverage about this issue, changes in knowledge about specific issues that are covered in the media, and changes in political engagement. Results indicate that investigative reporting can produce policy effects ranging from governments issuing reports to substantive reform[1]. On the other hand, media coverage has also been shown to increase public cynicism toward, and disengagement with, politics[2].

The agenda setting function of the media is well researched within the field of communication. Surveys and combinations of surveys with content analyses (cross-sectional and longitudinal) or document analyses examine correlations between the frequency of the coverage of an issue and public opinion data[3], the coverage of disasters and disaster

relief spending, and the relationship between media use and voting[4]. Results are mixed: In *Public Sentinel*, author Douglas van Belle finds that an increase in media coverage results in more disaster relief spending[5]. Representative surveys carried out shortly after the Russian Duma elections in 1999 and 2003 show a close correlation between vote choice and exposure to television news[6]. Voters who relied mainly on state television were significantly more likely to vote for



CommGAP aims to promote the use of communication to help governance reform programs work under real-world conditions, as well as promote the building of democratic public spheres.

Kremlin-supported United Russia than those who watched commercial television, which at that time still retained some degree of independence. As Susan Moeller argues in *Public Sentinel* that media often validate the agenda of governments, amplify the voices of officials, and help confirm their messages – even in democracies[7]. This gives government tremendous power in directing the public debate and selecting certain strategic choices and opportunities, while masking others. Empirical evidence from developing countries does not show a strong agenda setting role of the news media.

| Variable | Coefficient | Std. error | z | $p > \lvert z \rvert$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| *New York Times* coverage | 0.20 | 0.04 | 4.54 | 0.00 |
| Per capita GNP (lag) | −6.71 | 1.56 | −4.30 | 0.00 |
| Trade balance (lag) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.95 | 0.05 |
| U.S. alliance | 16.81 | 8.13 | 2.07 | 0.04 |
| Previous year's aid | 0.53 | 0.07 | 7.70 | 0.00 |
| Constant | 17.57 | 3.30 | 5.33 | 0.00 |
| | | | | |
| R-square | 0.42 | | | |
| Wald chi-sq (5 df) | 153.17 | | | |
| Prob > chi-sq | 0.00 | | | |
| Observations | 7 | | | |

**CommGAP** — Effect of *New York Times* coverage on Commitments of U.S. Development Assistance, 1985-1995

Source: Van Belle, Rioux, and Potter 2004

The gatekeeper function of the news media is only rarely subject of measurement. A small number of case studies, content analyses, and surveys measure the diversity of groups and views represented in media coverage, the correlation between press freedom and regime support, and again the relationship between media use and political participation. Due to the limited number of attempts to measure change affected by the news media acting as public forum, few general results can be reported. In *Public Sentinel*, Norris and Inglehart show that a pluralistic

environment actually reduces confidence in government – the stronger the restrictions on the news media, the more citizens trust those in power. On the other hand, there is some indication that information media increase political participation in the public forum, but effects are small[8].

*Public Sentinel* demonstrates that a critical gap exists between ideal media roles that are widely articulated in liberal democratic theory and the practices often found in many states. This gap needs to be remedied, and the book presents a wide range of effective policy interventions and programs that can be implemented by national stakeholders and the international community. These suggestions include:

## 1. Reform the role of the State

Three key areas were identified at the national level for helping media realize the ideal roles mentioned above.

● *Strengthen the framework of civil liberties and remove legal curbs on the media.* Any overarching constitutional principles, laws, or administrative procedures that inhibit the independence of the press (especially fundamental freedoms of expression and publication) must be reformed. Efforts should be directed toward respecting the rights of journalists and revoking punitive legislation against independent media (including punitive taxation, control of official advertising, control of printing presses, and licenses for the importation of newsprint).

● *Reform state broadcasting by turning state broadcasters into public service broadcasters.* State control of the media inhibits the capacity of the news media to be watchdogs, agenda-setters and gatekeepers. State-controlled broadcasters should be converted into genuine public service broadcasters

(PSB), which are editorially independent of government and protected against political and commercial interference. They should provide a wide range of programming to educate, inform and entertain the public, while taking into account ethnic, cultural, religious and regional diversity. Public service broadcasting should be governed by an independent governing board, and should be financed with public funding through specific mechanisms that protect their independence.

● *Establish effective and independent broadcasting regulatory agencies.*
Because some form of broadcasting regulation is unavoidable, it is crucial that bodies overseeing this process be truly independent. The powers and duties of oversight bodies should be determined by law. The oversight body should operate transparently and only in the interest of the public. The regulatory body should be required to include public participation, be subject to judicial oversight, and be formally accountable to the public. Finally, a regulatory body should be required to publish an annual report.

## 2. Use needs diagnostics and media performance indicators

Strong monitoring and evaluation frameworks promote a holistic, consistent and efficient approach to media reform. Systematic media audits and indicators that are sensitive to regional contexts should be administered and analyzed to inform policy interventions and program implementation.

Media indicators and audits should be incorporated into governance diagnostics and needs analysis. The state of the media system at the country level should be clearly understood prior to any strategic interventions. This diagnostic work can be informed by a set of disaggregated indicators, such as country profiles or quality of governance assessment frameworks.

## 3. Address problems of market failure

Liberal markets and competition are a mixed blessing for media roles in governance reform. They might remove one obstacle to watchdog reporting if state influence is curbed, but they may raise another if commercial pressures make the media reluctant to hold the powerful to account.

● *Make a pluralistic and diverse media system your overarching policy objective.*
Diversity should be achieved in the context of a regulatory environment encouraging a wide range of media ownership, outlets, contents, interests, and political perspectives. It is advisable for donors to support small independent media to offset the potentially negative effects of political and economic pressures on mainstream media outlets.

In the area of regulation of private broadcasting, several good practice suggestions have been offered:
* positive content obligations;
* special content rules during elections;
* no restrictions on broadcast content beyond those that apply to all forms of expression;
* codes of conduct and self-regulation;
* sanctions for breaches of content rules that are proportionate to the harm done;
* equitable frequency distribution between public service, commercial, and community broadcasters;
* "must carry" rules for cable and satellite networks; and
* provision of public access channels.

● *Strengthen media markets and media industries, and support media infrastructure*
The media sector needs to be regarded as an important development sector because it can be a massive creator of jobs and a generator of wealth, especially in developing countries.

The kind of economic development initiatives directed toward other economic and social development sectors need to be directed to the media sector as well.

● *Commission media sector studies and develop plans of action for sector development and to support institutions that will strengthen the entire sector.* Further suggestions to strengthen sustainable media markets include:

· tailor funds and bridge finance gaps that may exist due to late returns of donor investments;
· use existing finance schemes by increasing awareness of existing funding opportunities among the media sector;
· facilitate the funding of equipment;
· create mechanisms for media outlets to share technical facilities;
· identify opportunities to collectively purchase equipment;
· support equipment and skill upgrades.

### 4. Build the institutional capacity of the journalism profession

The ideal roles of the news media as watchdog, agenda-setter and gatekeeper have implications for the values, norms and professional practices of journalists. These roles also have implications for media standards of training, accreditation, organizational routines and professional associations.

Suggestions in this area include:

● *Prioritize institutional, not individual, capacity building*

The media system in each country must be considered one of the core institutions affecting governance. What kind of media systems will best help to deliver democratic governance? An institutional view of the media requires a holistic approach to media development. Piecemeal work usually concentrates on short-term efforts. Change will be hastened if professional development, economic sustainability, legal-enabling environment, and media literacy are addressed simultaneously.

● *Support sustainable professional development programs and expand institutional capacity*

Journalists need support with regard to professional skills, journalism ethics, and management skills. Professional development programs are most effective when they are sustained, especially through existing platforms of learning. Lasting solutions arise from building the institutional capacity of journalism, supporting professional associations, and supporting independent press councils for self-regulation.

### 5. Empower civil society organizations

The capacity of the news media to be effective watchdogs, agenda-setters and gatekeepers depends crucially on the vibrancy of associational life in a society. Organized groups help to inform and mobilize the news media on specific issues.

Encouraging links between news media and the rest of civil society is crucial. News media need the active support of groups in civil society in order to strengthen the commitment of each political community to free, diverse, and independent media. The impact of NGOs, community-based organizations, and social movements can be multiplied by the active support of free, diverse, and independent news media. Media watch groups or observatories are a good way of holding the news media themselves accountable, and encourage them to focus on the public interest.

## 6. Expand public access and build media literacy

Widespread public access is an essential condition for an effective media. The capacity of government to communicate with all parts of the territory it governs is fundamentally important to both state effectiveness and nation building. Access to news media plays a crucial role in creating a sense of community and is integral to competent citizenship. Formal media freedoms have little meaning if citizens cannot make use of the media.

● *Expand public access to new media and rights to information*

Close gaps in access to media (including the digital divide in information and communication technologies, as well as the skills and resources that are necessary to give widespread access to traditional broadcast media). Technological innovations can reduce some of the technological hurdles to information access in poorer societies (including availability of wind-up radios, solar-power batteries, wireless connectivity, US$100 rugged laptops, Internet cafés, community telephone and Internet centers, and cell phones with data services, e-mail and text messaging).

● *Support media literacy as part of building citizenship skills*

Support and scale up efforts to promote media literacy. Teach citizens knowledge and provide them with tools so that they can use the media as autonomous and rational citizens. Good governance remains a global challenge. News media can play an important role in promoting this common good. As the study makes clear, a rights-based regime that protects free expression and right to information, professional and vibrant journalistic practice, and wide access to news media are all required to assure that an informed

citizenry can take a leading role in its own good governance. *Public Sentinel* suggests critical interventions for governments and media development groups to bolster news media capacities on several levels. As was mentioned above, "strong monitoring and evaluation frameworks promote a holistic, consistent, and efficient approach to media reform."

CommGAP hopes that the media development assistance community, and users of the mediaME-wiki in particular, will contribute to the discussion of how this can best be done. And please visit our blog *People, Spaces, Deliberation* (http://blogs.worldbank.org/publicsphere) to join our exploration of the interactions among public opinion, governance, and the public sphere.

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*This article is adapted from the CommGAP policy brief accompanying the book Public Sentinel: News Media and Governance Reform, edited by Pippa Norris. The text of the article is partly based on the book's introduction, authored by Pippa Norris and Sina Odugbemi.*



The Democratic Public Sphere
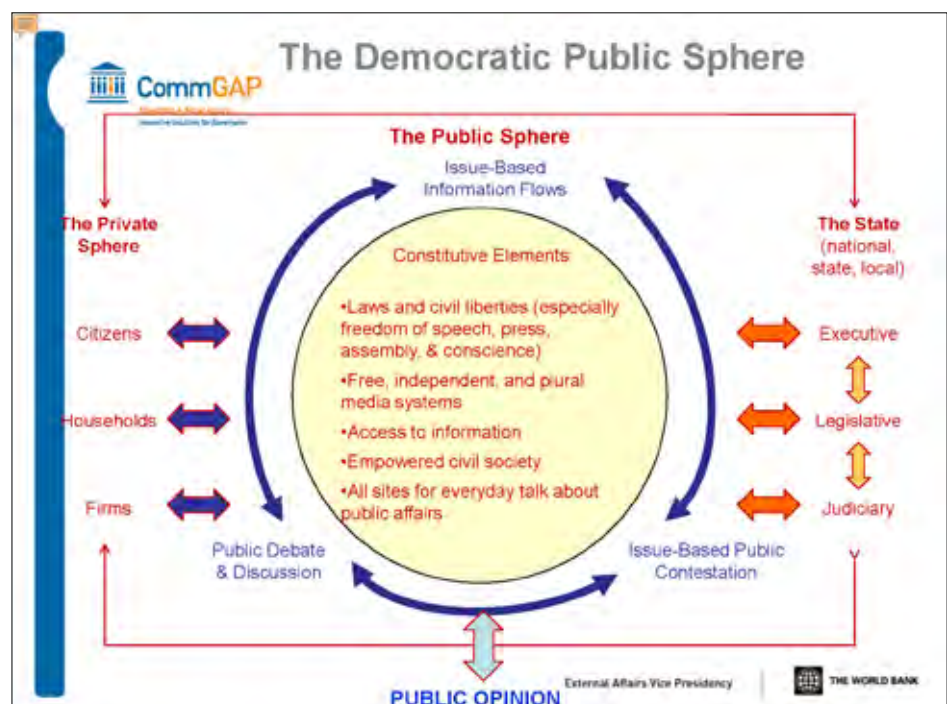
# Building Communication for Empowerment:

# C4E pilots assess media voice & inclusion

## By Birgitte Jallov

Communication underpins human development. It enables people to access, produce and transfer to others information that is important for their empowerment and progress. Communication allows people to arrive at their own understanding of issues, to consider and discuss ideas, and to engage in public debates. Communication empowers people to negotiate, develop and act on knowledge, and it facilitates the formation of an informed public opinion without which democracy cannot exist.

The *Communication for Empowerment* approach is rooted in the knowledge that one of the challenges facing developing countries is the lack of inclusion and participation of poor and vulnerable groups in decisions that affect their lives. Through inclusive participation, communication as a tool and a methodology can make development strategies more effective, more sustainable, and more pro-poor and gender sensitive.

Measuring change in media development is the theme of this Symposium, but before measuring this change, it is essential to know whether people are, indeed, reached by media. *Communication for Empowerment* is a strategic assessment tool to ensure appropri-ate information and communication – voice – also for vulnerable and marginalised communities and persons. The kind of media support emerging from such analysis would be an important driver to securing the participation, ownership and accountability necessary to further human development in general and to reach the Millennium Development Goals in particular. A growing body of evidence suggests that everyone must engage in order to achieve these goals, but without appropriate information and opportunities to participate in dialogue and debate, this cannot happen.

### Identifying the need for appropriate information and voice

In 2006 the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre (OGC) developed a practical guidance note as a part of the UNDP Access to Information (A2I) mandate, and in recognition that producing information alone is insufficient. To reach particularly fragile and vulnerable parts of the population, special measures have to be considered.

To turn the theory and thinking into practice, the UNDP OGC, in cooperation with the *Communication for Social Change Consortium*

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(CFSC), decided to operationalise and test the C4E method described in the practical guidance note through elaboration of a process framework and a number of tested techniques and tools. With *United Nations Democracy Fund* (UNDEF) and UNDP funding, a three-year project that carried out pilot projects in three African and two Asian countries was concluded in March 2010.

## Overall aim of *Communication for Empowerment*

C4E is an approach that places the information and communication needs of people who are poor and marginalised at the centre of media support. C4E ensures that media have the capacity and capability to provide the information that marginalised groups want and need. When such media are in place, they also provide a channel for marginalised groups to discuss and voice their perspectives on issues that concern them.

Numerous high level forums across the globe highlight that to reach the Millennium Development Goals, it is necessary to empower everyone, including vulnerable and traditionally marginalised groups, and there is a growing recognition that participation by all requires adequate information and communication.



The objective of the present development process was for a process and tool to emerge, which could be used by governments, by UN agencies and by others, when carrying out strategic assessments in preparation of longer-term

development plans such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PPRSPs) or United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). Based on the C4E assessment, adequate planning and budgeting for information and communication channels should be possible – and move the concern and commitment from the area of rhetoric to practical realisation.

## Objective of the information and communication needs assessment process

To meet the needs identified above, the assessment - or audit – process set out to (i) identify information and communication needs of vulnerable groups; (ii) identify the degree to which these needs are met; and (iii) identify how these needs are met. The assessment process would thus identify (i) information and communication channels available; (ii) the role, importance and potential of each of these; and (iii) generate strategies and means to meet unmet needs.

## Testing the audit methodology

Based on consultations with UNDP partner countries, three African and two Asian countries were identified as pilot countries for the C4E process, namely Ghana, Madagascar and Mozambique in Africa and Lao PDR and Nepal in Asia. Aside from the initiating partners of this process, the UNDP OGC and the CFSC, the national UNDP country office was the core driver of the C4E pilot process in each of the five countries.

The work set out to operationalise the overall audit methodology and to carry out formative revisions and adaptations to produce a generic strategic tool, which could be made available for national and local needs assessment processes. In each country, the research process started with a desk study, mapping the existing media and the overall media

situation in the country, and with the formation of a national background group, a consortium of stakeholders including the media and media associations; civil society, government, UN agencies as well as other multi- and bilateral partners. The role of this stakeholder forum was to oversee and drive the process in the longer run, ensuring that the recommendations emerging from the research be implemented and to find adequate ways of carrying on the C4E process beyond the pilot test phase.

Following this formative process, the national research was carried out in three representative pilot sites including[1]:
• Questionnaire-based interviews with 30 persons in each pilot district [women and men];
• Focus group discussions with marginalised parts of the population [men and women separately];
• Group discussions with civil society leaders, with elected leaders, with traditional leaders separately;
• Interviews with representatives of the local media – where relevant;
• Key informant interviews with identified personalities.

The data emerging was turned into a national report, which was being scrutinized by the national stakeholder forum in validation workshops, and by the organisations behind the research.

At the national level the findings were national reports identifying strategic responses to identified needs: pilot projects to fill identified gaps, and launching a national stakeholder group that could facilitate the continued process of fundraising and implementation.

At the global level, the results were (i) documentation to advance understanding of information and communication needs; (ii) a framework and set of tools developed to introduce into national strategic planning processes; and (iii) the introduction of information and communication centrally in national planning.

**Timeframes for communication for empowerment process:**



## Key learning from application of the C4E tool in five countries in Africa and Asia

The pilot studies indicate that the C4E tool is a flexible instrument that can be adjusted to reflect particular national circumstances. In addition to placing vulnerable and marginalised people at the centre of the process, the C4E mechanism enables involvement by a range of development actors including government, media, research organisations and civil society organisations. [2]

Analysis of the findings point to the C4E tool as effective in identifying the range of information that people living in poverty want

and need, and for suggesting how various media can enhance provision of that information. It also is a very useful tool to assess the communication channels available. Importantly, the analysis also indicates that in most countries, primarily due to lack of confidence and capacity, poor people do not yet much use the media to exchange information, communicate their views or participate in public dialogue. Rather, they continue to rely on traditional communication forums such as village meetings and the market place.

The findings from the studies suggest important linkages between information and communication and delivery of public services/livelihoods/development, and provide a basis for considering strategic options on the way forward in a range of sectors including HIV/AIDS and health.

Step-by-step guidelines on applying the C4E tool that have evolved during the course of the pilot studies may be of benefit to other countries seeking to promote more inclusive governance and development processes.

Factors viewed as supporting the implementation of the C4E tool in-country include: linking the assessment and research to existing civil society strengthening and information projects, as well as grassroots initiatives; building on existing dialogue processes at local and national level; a committed UNDP country team; and strong support from UNDP's regional offices.

The C4E approach was conceived to improve the capacity of media to meet information and communication needs of vulnerable people and marginalised groups. The research findings indicate that promoting and improving the capabilities of inclusive media, such as community radio, may not be sufficient to enable poor people to use and participate in these communication channels, if community radio is not consciously integrating all groups in the community and building local ownership.

The results of the pilots suggest that the C4E tool needs to make provision to include more specific support for citizen empowerment. For example, either by supporting the community radio directly to become more inclusive and better anchored in the community, or by using local NGOs, Community Based Organisations (CBOs) or other intermediaries to develop interactive programme formats and reporting styles. These processes can help marginalised groups use the media, or be linked more directly to civic education initiatives.

A stocktaking of research findings from each of the five pilot studies reveals a number of themes/issues that are common to more than one pilot country. While some highlight emerging trends and others reinforce existing learning and challenges, all have important implications for the third pillar of the communication for empowerment tool – designing appropriate programme interventions to fill information and communication gaps. They include:

a) The dominant role of radio, particularly community radio, as an information medium for marginalised groups and vulnerable people;

b) the limited confidence and capacity of many people living in poverty to use media to communicate;

c) the importance of mixing traditional and new information technologies in strategies

designed to improve democratic governance and reduce poverty;

d) the importance of a safe public space in providing support and expanding opportunities for communication and participation in decision making process – with community radio as the medium of strong preference and most powerful capacity to facilitate this, when available;

e) the growing importance of mobile telephony;

f) the importance of a supportive legal and regulatory environment for the media;

g) differential access to the media by men and women.

Below is a brief description of core findings for each of these areas.

## Dominance of radio as information medium for poor people

Perhaps not surprisingly, the studies in each country confirmed the continued pre-eminence of radio as the medium of choice for marginalised people to access information. Several reasons were cited for this preference, including: the relatively low cost of radios and the easy availability of radios and batteries in the market place[3]; broadcasting in local languages, and; a high degree of trust in the content. In some localities with access to community radio and/or FM stations, two-way communication through participative radio programmes was cited as a key factor.

Community radio meets the accessibility and appropriateness criteria widely regarded as essential if communication technologies are to contribute to poverty eradication. However, findings from Ghana, Laos and Mozambique indicate concerns over sustainability of this medium.[4]

Problems noted included lack of funds to make programmes and replace equipment, limited programming, reporting skills of journalists, and sometimes complex relationships with local authorities.

Limited confidence and capacity to use media to communicate and participate in public life

Most of the country reports highlight low levels of literacy and limited confidence and skills as a significant barrier to poor people using media to participate more fully in community and public life. While community radios in Ada (Ghana), Khoun (Laos PDR), and Dondo (Mozambique) were seen to bridge the discomfort by being familiar and trusted community spaces, some of the research findings indicate that even if a communication mechanism is available, the possibility for engagement cannot be taken for granted. More attention must be given to creating the pre-conditions of voice through raising awareness and building confidence and capacity to speak out. This point is made explicitly in the Madagascar report, which states "radio alone is not able to effect long term change in people's attitudes and practices and needs to be accompanied by face-to-face support and training".

Most of the pilot studies suggest ways of improving the ability of marginalised people to use media. Recommendations from Madagascar include the establishment of facilitated village listening groups to help villagers listen actively to programmes and then discuss and debate issues raised in those programmes. These groups can also be used for developing action plans to address key issues facing the community. In Laos, where the government plans to make increasing use of the internet to deliver development information and promote growth, the pilot study recommends the use of development intermediaries[5] (*infomediaries*) as an essential link between poor rural communities and information delivered across the internet. In Nepal, Ghana and Mozambique community radio support centres and networks aim to fill


Elected leaders


Traditional leaders


Civil society leaders


The local media


Focus Group Discussions

this role of facilitators. The Ghana pilot also advocates the use of communication practices such as *participatory theatre/theatre debates* to build confidence and help disadvantaged groups participate more effectively.

**Merging traditional and new communication channels**

The analysis of the data confirms the paramount importance to marginalised groups of traditional communication mechanisms and suggests that new information and communication technologies should not supplant traditional information channels such as village and church meetings. Rather any communication strategy should strive to reflect the best "mix and match" of new and traditional technologies to meet the needs of local people.

Traditional and religious leaders are held in high esteem by Ghanaian society. Research in Ada, one of the research locations in Ghana, found that the Chiefs had adopted community radio as a new tool to help them carry out their traditional leadership role. They saw it as a stronger "megaphone" to help them get closer to local people. The Laos study highlights the need to consider a wide spectrum of communication channels to promote development throughout the country. It makes clear that in some circumstances, loudspeakers will be a cost effective short-range information channel, till proper radio coverage is set up.

**Importance of public spaces in promoting two-way communication**

A number of the reports mention the importance of a safe public place for people to come together to discuss issues. Such spaces are especially important for helping to overcome the relative isolation of poor women by bringing them out of their domestic confinement. People in all pilot countries placed high priority on face-to-face communication. This point was raised by respondents in the three research locations in Ghana. Residents of Bonsaaso, the most remote area, complained that the lack of such a space was a demotivating factor in organising meetings. In the urban suburb of Nima women in the Mothers Club place a high value on the physical space of their office, which "has brought us together closely". In Ada – as elsewhere – some people saw community radio as providing a virtual space for the community to come together. In Mozambique, over 80 percent of those interviewed said they use meetings in churches, schools and other public places to discuss issues of general interest to the community. Priorities to emerge from a meeting held to analyse the rural communication system in Laos included the need to establish information centres at all levels. The Madagascar study recommends a network of regional communication centres to support local communication initiatives.

**Growing importance of mobile telephony**

Mobile telephony is growing fast in all pilot countries and the extent of usage varies from country to country. Access to mobile telephones is the highest in rural Nepal. Increasing competition within the sector is likely to encourage further expansion into rural and more remote areas and reduce the cost of handsets, making them more accessible to poor people.

In Ghana, the use of mobile phones is now commonplace in many parts of the country. Importantly, there is increasing interaction and synergy between mobile telephony and radio [both FM and community radio stations] as a growing number of people use their mobiles to have their say on various "call-in" radio programmes. Amongst the most popular programmes are those where local

politicians and government officials explain/defend their policies to local people who are encouraged to call in with questions or comments. These types of call-in programmes provide opportunities for ordinary people to engage in governance and development processes.  The link between radio and mobile telephony is also evident in call-in programmes on Khoun community radio in Laos where calls from mobile phones account for the majority of the high volume of calls to the station.

To overcome current access problems in remote areas of Laos and Madagascar, recommendations from the studies include establishing mobile phone access points in villages/communities to link to specific community/FM radio programmes.

While mobile phone networks covered the three research sites in Mozambique, survey findings indicate that for most respondents the technology has not yet become an important communication mechanism. The studies suggest that integrating mobile and FM/community radio in this way offers significant potential for enhancing two-way communication.

## Importance of supportive legal and regulatory environment

Most of the pilot studies highlight the importance of a supportive legal and regulatory environment to sustain a pluralist and professional media capable of using communication as an empowerment tool. Legal and regulatory frameworks that protect and enhance community media are especially critical for ensuring vulnerable groups' freedom of expression and access to information.

Media in some of the pilot countries face particular challenges, such as strict libel laws to curb media critics.  Of the five pilot countries, only Nepal has a freedom of information law,

although freedom of information legislation is awaiting passage by the Ghanaian parliament.

## Differential access by women and men

Who decides which programmes to listen to within the household differs from country to country. The Mozambique and Madagascar studies suggest that although men generally own the radio, all family members can decide whether to turn on the radio and what to listen to. In Mozambique, mostly women listen to radio, as men are often working outside the home.

The Ghana study suggests a correlation between gender, literacy and the media [radio]. It points to a significant literacy divide between men and women with a large percentage of women in the three pilot areas having no formal education. Radio, TV and other communication tools, invariably owned by men, are associated with literacy, status and power. Research findings from all three Ghanaian communities indicate that women have limited control over access to and use of radio, with men taking decisions on which programmes to listen to and when to listen.

**Findings and Recommendations:**

1. Regulatory framework nowhere fully adequate
   - Advocate, organise & mobilise change
   - Support civil society and media organisations in this work

2. Community Radio the most adequate, effective medium
   - Establish where there is none
   - Communitarize FM stations where OR not possible
   - Strengthen existing stations at best through
   - Support to national CR networks:
     - Institutional capacity: strategic management, sustainability, equipment
     - Capacity building
   - Create environment of support around CRs: local, national

3. Support local, regional information and communication centres
   - Community Information Centres / Community Multimedia Centres
   - Organise people around these listening groups for instance

4. C4E Leadership
   - Stakeholder platform Civil Society, Media, Government, UN, Bilaterals
   - Develop women's organisations to encourage participation

5. Encourage greater connection between national public radio, community

## The way ahead

The pilots confirm that C4E has the potential to be a significant driver for increasing citizen participation in policy formulation and in broader governance and development processes. It is important that priority is now given to refining the C4E approach and strengthening the tool in line with the findings from the pilot studies.

## Recommendations:

### Revised Communication for Empowerment framework

Use the pilot project to produce a revised framework for the C4E approach and tool that balances support to media with greater emphasis on creating the preconditions for voice through citizen empowerment. A revised framework would also incorporate a more explicit gender dimension and provide more guidance to addressing gender-related issues at local level. The framework should analyse and identify opportunities for promoting stronger national ownership of the C4E app-roach.

### National level C4E leadership

Identify appropriate organisations nationally to have a C4E stakeholder forum promote and monitor the C4E processes, bringing recommended improvements forward in structures and capacity building, and embedding C4E thinking and practice in national and local level planning.

### Role of UNDP in promoting C4E

Use UNDP regional governance teams to promote: (a) better understanding of C4E among UNDP country offices, governments, media and CSOs; (b) the inclusion of C4E in national programmes, including media, A2I and information and communication technologies; (c) the provision of relevant support to media and CSOs which become directly involved in C4E processes; (d) support to regional community of C4E practitioners to serve as key resource persons at country level; (e) strengthened national networks and support centres to have capacity to support the emergence of sustainable management and structures of community media for a longer term perspective; (f) national platform(s) for coordination and synergy among national C4E stakeholders.

### Collaboration between various actors to address identified gaps

Promote and coordinate effective linkages with other organisations working on information and communication specifically to consider how emerging issues and challenges identified during the project might best be addressed. For instance, how best to merge traditional and new communication channels to meet the needs of marginalised groups and vulnerable people, and how to promote innovative use of technologies that would provide cost-effective services to poor and marginalised.

[1] *For more information and additional links, see the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre's Web site: http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/overview/ogc_communication_empowerment.html*

[2] *A full global, final report on the C4E process will later be available together with detailed national findings on the UNDP OGC and the CFSC websites. This summary was extracted from the global report process.*

[3] *Respondents in Madagascar, Mozambique and Ghana mentioned that the cost of replacing batteries was an important item in the household budget.*

[4] *Participants at the 5th UN Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development (1995) identified accessibility, appropriateness and sustainability as three essential criteria for communication technologies to contribute successfully to poverty eradication.*

[5] *These could be NGOs/CBOs, teachers, health workers, agricultural extension workers or radio broadcasters.*

# Media in fragile environments:

# The USIP Intended-Outcomes Needs Assessment methodology

By Andrew Robertson,
Eran Fraenkel,
Emrys Shoemaker,
Sheldon Himelfarb

The USIP Intended-Outcomes Needs Assessment (IONA) methodology is a process to help NGOs, donors, and policymakers determine which kinds of media interventions can most effectively address issues affecting a fragile society. Using a three-stage process, IONA enables an assessment team to analyze the causes of social fragility, interview members of that society to understand what changes are desirable and possible, and generate a portfolio of media programs that balance the needs of the society in conflict with the capabilities of that society's media.

**Rationale for IONA methodology**

The end of the Cold War accelerated the use of media in peacebuilding. Without the discipline imposed by the two competing superpowers, competing ethnicities emerged as a source of major conflicts in the post-Cold War world. First in Rwanda in 1994 and then in the Bosnia in 1995, ethnic cleansing and genocide became the defining characteristics of savage regional conflicts. In both cases, media played a disturbing role in accelerating

the bloodshed. In response, the international community seized upon media as a policy tool with potentially great power to mend the causes of conflict.

Consequently, the past fifteen years have been a period of intensive experimentation in the application of media to peacebuilding. In Bosnia, the United Nations mandated regulatory changes curtailing hate speech; in Macedonia, United States Agency for International Development funded children's programming teaching conflict-resolution techniques; in Burundi, foreign nongovernmental organizations established a news organization staffed by both Hutu and Tutsi reporters and intended to deliver unbiased and independent news. Substantial funding has been injected into various conflict zones to support media interventions. They have not, however, always been effective.[1]

Evaluations of projects in the Balkans and elsewhere reveal various reasons why media interventions intended to promote Western democratic principles and media systems free

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By investing in an IONA-based planning study, donors can direct scarce resources to the well-defined activities that will generate the highest return.

from government control have not always achieved their objectives:

- Media alone cannot create social or political change.[2]
- Media intervention strategies have been designed quickly and under far-from-optimal conditions, such as during violent conflict.[3]
- Media practices are subordinate to political will rather than independent of political influence.[4]

Although all these observations are true, they are inadequate as operational explanations. If media alone cannot create social change, what else should intervention designers have used to complement media-based activities? If media interventions must be designed quickly, how can we accelerate effective intervention planning? And if media activities occur in a politicized environment in combat zones, how can those politics inform the design of media interventions? The problem is not limitations of the media or the uncertainties of a conflict environment, but rather that interventions are developed using methods that cannot fully accommodate these constraints. What media scholar Robert Manoff observed at a USIP conference in 1997, is just as true today: media interventions for peacebuilding are characterized by the absence of a deliberate and systematic assessment methodology to determine the precise purpose of the specific intervention, why the intervention is needed, and exactly what must be achieved.[5]

IONA seeks to address this problem by enabling a systematic definition of the target society's needs, the intervention's goals, and the criteria for successfully reaching those goals. IONA is intended as a tool with which experts can determine what media strategy will most effectively reduce conflict in a given society. Using IONA assessment teams should return from the field with a deep enough understanding of how media investments will affect critical political and social problems. Additionally, with information acquired using IONA, funders can develop Request for Proposals (RFPs) that communicate clearly what needs to be done, what success looks like, and how success will be measured during the implementation stage. By investing in an IONA-based planning study, donors can direct scarce resources to the well-defined activities that will generate the highest return. Furthermore, by using IONA for intervention design, donors can avoid those conflicts of interest in which implementers develop interventions that better serve their capabilities than the target society's needs. By defining both how media consultants partner with donor organizations and how they identify potential media interventions, IONA seeks to ensure that both the donor organization and the target society get the media interventions that they need.

The community of consultants and experts that serve media donors also benefit from IONA. For those performing assessments, IONA offers a standardized approach that enables a rapid and efficient design of media interventions, a desirable outcome for what are typically fixed-price consulting engagements. For implementing organizations, a well-defined RFP based on an IONA study by a donor can eliminate those uncertainties about desired outcomes that often lead to donor-implementer conflicts. Finally, should IONA become the standard for planning media interventions for peacebuilding, and interventions were to become more effective, it is reasonable to imagine that donors will look to media interventions more frequently as a means for reducing conflict.

## Benefits of the IONA methodology

IONA offers a systematic process for integrating conflict and media assessments. Table 1

### Table 1: Media assessment problems and IONA solutions

| Media assessment problem | IONA solution |
|---|---|
| **Assessments treat the media as a discrete, limited set of practices.** Insufficient attention is paid to the social, economic, or political environment in which media exist and operate. Consequently, non-media factors undermine an intervention's effectiveness. | **IONA seeks to understand the media in its broad social, economic, and political context.** By considering media and non-media factors in the design of media interventions, IONA formally integrates a needs/conflict assessment (supporting the design of interventions that have a clear purpose) with a media assessment (supporting the design of interventions that are realistic and possible). |
| **Assessments imprecisely define outcomes.** A methodology that produces poorly defined or overly ambitious objectives tends to result in interventions that are reactive or opportunistic rather than proactive and strategic. | **IONA precisely identifies the outcomes and the means to attain them.** Outcomes are defined as specific changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of target groups and are enabled by a well-defined set of activities. |
| **Assessments focus on activities and processes, not outcomes.** Because short-term *outcomes* of activities are easily measured, they are frequently confounded with the *objectives of the intervention* that these activities are meant to achieve. | **IONA explicitly ties media intervention outcomes to specific activities.** This approach enables intervention managers to measure and track aspects that are relevant to intervention outcomes. |
| **Assessments lack a common methodology, which hinders effective coordination among implementing organizations.** Lacking a common understanding among organizations in the field regarding an intervention's goals, implementers duplicate effort and even work at cross-purposes. | **IONA enables effective coordination among implementing organizations.** This methodology for the collection, organization, and analysis of data improves the quality and timeliness of results. Standardized data structures facilitate comparison across and between intervention studies. |

compares the problems embodied in current methods for media assessment and the advantages obtained using the IONA solution. IONA is **systematic and rigorous.** The methodology for the collection, organization, and analysis of interview data improves the quality and timeliness of results. Standardized data structures facilitate comparison across and between intervention studies. Because the methodology enforces information consistency, data collected during field interviews are entered into the framework and are immediately available for analysis. This improves both the quality and the timeliness of the analysis and its results. Further, as an **integrated** tool that combines a needs assessment with a media assessment, IONA generates interventions that are both purposeful and possible. It is **outcomes oriented.** By recommending interventions that

Because IONA is designed to develop media interventions to support social change, the assessment team must begin with an understanding of what impact the media is currently having in the society under study.

have been assessed as both purposeful and possible, IONA helps increase the effect of donor investment. Finally, IONA is **formative.** It helps donors make sound decisions about media interventions before human or financial resources have been committed to implementing an activity.

IONA is intended to be accessible and useful to those organizations that implement media interventions in conflict-affected environments. With repeated use, media intervention practitioners and donors will create a large database of case studies from societies in crisis that can be analyzed to discern qualities of successful and unsuccessful media interventions in particular contexts. IONA tools, instructions, and other resources can soon be accessed at the USIP website.

**Overview of IONA methodology**

To improve the effectiveness of media interventions, the IONA process builds interventions that are both purposeful (that is, they address issues of high importance) and possible (they have a high likelihood of success). For media interventions to reach their objectives consistently, they must be predicated on the answers to a set of three questions:
- What are the capabilities of the media sector in the society under study?
- What are the most important problems that people in a fragile environment say confront their society?
- For each problem, which solutions are practicable in that society, and which kinds of media interventions are most likely to facilitate achieving that solution?

These three questions can be further elaborated to the following:
1. What media exist?
2. How do those media affect their audiences?
3. What social problems cause instability and require change?

4. Which groups in society are most affected by these problems?
5. What activities will most likely realize the desired changes?
6. Who will make the desired change take place?
7. How can the media be used to facilitate the desired change?
8. How can the media be changed to enable the desired change?

IONA provides a systematic approach to collecting and analyzing the information necessary to answer these eight questions and create a portfolio of important and effective media interventions.

Questions 1 and 2 above define a baseline of the media capabilities in the society. What are the primary media channels? What segments of society do these channels reach? What kind of content is broadcast within those channels? How does that content affect different segments within the audience? Because IONA is designed to develop media interventions to support social change, the assessment team must begin with an understanding of what impact the media is currently having in the society under study.

Questions 3 and 4 allow the assessment team to identify the purposeful or important problems in the target society. That is, what media interventions can be designed for this society that target the problems identified? In most cases, these questions will surface issues where media's capabilities should be used as a tool and applied to create social change. In the case of media, though, these questions will identify issues that prevent it from being an effective tool for social change and thus make it a target for social change.

Finally, questions 5, 6, 7 and 8 enable the assessment team to develop a media strategy that is possible by identifying a set of activities that offer the best chance of overcoming the

problems facing society and bringing about the desired changed.

To answer these questions, IONA uses a three-stage process shown in figure 1. In the first stage, *Defining the Assessment*, the assessment team works with the donor organization to scope the assessment, develop a best guess as to the nature of the media landscape and conflict environment, and create an interview strategy to test these hypotheses.

As a general rule, IONA requires assessment teams to do much work early in the assessment process, leaving the later stages for validation and testing. In the second stage, *Interviewing Respondents*, the assessment team enters the field to confirm what it has learned about the media and determine the important issues confronting the target society and the corresponding objectives that will address these needs. By the end of the second stage, the assessment team has developed a complete understanding of media capabilities and potential intervention objectives. In the final and third stage, *Designing Media Interventions*, the assessment team develops media interventions by specifying those activities that will most likely realize the assessment's objectives.

In terms of how it collects and frames data, IONA does not distinguish between media and other institutions that play either a positive or negative role in society. As an object of assessment, therefore, the media undergo the same kind of examination and analysis as other social institutions. In assessing which tools to use to address conflict-related issues, however, it is important to recognize that media can simultaneously create problems and be part of the solution to other problems. In addition, media are only one of various tools that may be required for solving a conflict issue.

Likewise, IONA does not presume that media-based solutions are superior to others or that the media can or should replace other approaches in addressing a problem. We believe that IONA enables the assessment team to design media-based solutions with the greatest chance of achieving their objectives. At that same time, because IONA builds interventions based on issues identified in a conflict/needs assessment, the assessment team understands where and how their intervention can – and should – be effectively integrated with other kinds of interventions.

### Figure 1. IONA staging

STAGE 1 Defining the assessment
1. Define the scope of work
2. Profile the media landscape
3. Identify issues
4. Create an interview strategy

STAGE 2 Interviewing respondents
1. Validate media profile
2. Validate and rank issues
3. Contextualize issues of high importance
4. Convert reported needs into intervention objectives
5. Enroll in-country experts

STAGE 3 Designing media interventions
1. Finalize objectives
2. Design media interventions that meet objectives
3. Validate interventions
4. Report results

### The IONA framework

At the core of the IONA methodology is a data framework designed to capture social change. During a media assessment, the assessment team uses the IONA framework to organize both information learned regarding social transformations that have already occurred in the target society and also – and

IONA does not presume that media-based solutions are superior to others or that the media can or should replace other approaches in addressing a problem.

more importantly – to identify transitions that need to occur in order to reduce conflict and build peace.

The framework is comprised of six sets of components that define the desired social transformation. Shown in figure 2, these components are (1) the transformation from problem to objective (or need) defined in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (KAB), (2) obstacles that block that transformation, (3) facilitators that enable it, (4) position on the change ladder, (5) level of analysis, and finally (6) solutions activities; that is, activities designed to enable these changes and eliminate obstacles.

*Figure 2. IONA Framework*
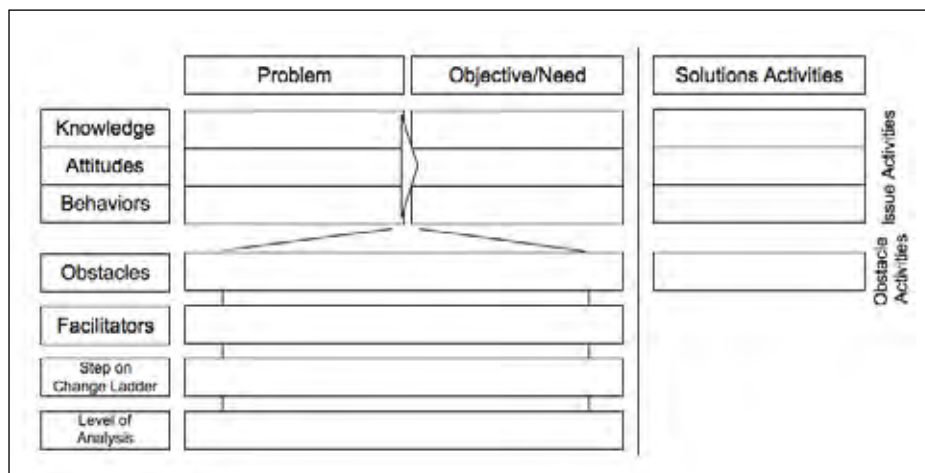


### Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors

In describing the transformation of an issue from a problem state (one that causes conflict) to an objective state (one that builds peace), both the problem and objective states are defined in terms of the KAB of targeted groups in a society.[6] Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors (KAB) are defined as follows:

• Knowledge is what people in the target society know be true based on cognitive rather than emotional responses.

•Attitudes are what people in the target society believe. These are often the reasons why

certain knowledge is deemed important or why people engage in certain behaviors.

•Behaviors are what people in the target society do. Behavior is knowledge and attitudes made manifest in context, though not always with deliberate intent.

Although knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors can be interconnected in various ways, IONA does not assume a causal relationship among them. It cannot be assumed, for example, that knowledge alone leads to behavior change. A smoker who learns that smoking causes cancer will not necessarily stop smoking. At the same time, it cannot be assumed that someone who has stopped smoking after exposure to anti-smoking media campaigns has stopped because of the campaigns. To design a media campaign that yields its intended outcome, the field team must identify which change in knowledge, if any, has the greatest likelihood of motivating which kinds of change, if any, in attitudes or behaviors.

Because the IONA framework structures input data (transformations that have happened and transformations that respondents hope will happen) and output data (transformations that will actively build the peace), the desired state in a transformation is termed either a need or an objective. A desired transformation described by a respondent is a need. After considering multiple interviews that report similar or conflicting needs, the assessment team synthesizes these findings into an objective that respects the needs of the different respondents and their communities.

### Obstacles to change

It is often the case that an intervention with objectives at the personal level will be stymied by risks or obstacles experienced at the group level or that intended outcomes sought at

the group level are thwarted by obstacles occurring at the structural level. Defined broadly, obstacles are individuals, groups, or institutions that endorse political, economic, social, and cultural practices that limit the possibility of a change taking place. To design successful media interventions, obstacles to change must be identified and then convinced, marginalized, or overcome.

Of particular importance are the social sanctions and risks that stakeholders face by participating in social change. Unlike most obstacles, which can be overcome by interventions designed to dispose of them, sanctions and risks are frequently based upon non-negotiable values that may pre-empt other considerations, such as group membership or identity. Without an understanding of the sanctions and risks faced by stakeholders, the resulting media intervention will likely fail.

### Facilitators of change

Facilitators are people, institutions, values, experiences, tools, or events that enable identified objectives to be met by the intervention. A successful intervention does not require the identification and use of all facilitators; however, understanding relevant facilitators will increase the likelihood of a successful outcome.

Identifying where change has been successful in the past or where tangible gains have been generated as a result of social action are two basic strategies for uncovering facilitators. Successful facilitators for change in the past may be powerful facilitators for change against the current problems. At the same time, they may not be. Because an effective media intervention may be based on a strategy unimagined by respondents, the assessment team must also test hypothetical intervention strategies to identify new facilitators.

### Position on the change ladder

Social change does not occur abruptly. Put another way, it is unlikely that current behaviors, no matter how problematic they may be, will be discarded without careful thought and testing. Thus, societies, groups within societies, and individuals move through a process of consideration, evaluation, and testing. An assessment team will develop more effective media interventions if it understands where in this process a society or group within the society sits with regard to an issue.

The IONA framework posits social change as an incremental, nonlinear, four-stage process that culminates in permanent change (see table 2).[7] Nonlinearity means that at any stage of change, a person or community may decide that it is not possible or desirable to proceed and may return to a previous stage until a more opportune moment arises to try moving forward again.[8]

### Table 2
### Four-Step Change Ladder

| | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 | Step 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Current state of stakeholders in society | Existing in the status quo | Knowing what's wrong with the status quo | Knowing an alternative to the status quo | Having changed the status quo |
| Action to reach next step | Questioning the status quo | Considering alternatives to the status quo | Trying alternatives to the status quo | |

Field interviews enable the assessment team to understand the stage the target group is at with regards to an issue, as well as what interventions could be realistically implemented to help move the target group to the next step in the process. Combined with an understanding of what may prevent movement (obstacles), or what may accelerate

A well-designed and executed assessment will identify the levels of society that need to be targeted and the precise objectives for each level addressed by the intervention.

movement (facilitators) along the change ladder, the team uses this information to develop interventions better suited to a society's current capacity for change.

The change ladder and the concepts embedded in it are a critical part of the interviewing process. Because the assessment team is investigating sensitive issues that drive conflict, it is important that the assessment team does not alienate respondents by beginning the discussion suggesting that little has been done to address the problem. The IONA interview process starts by assuming that the society is in Step 4 of the change ladder and works backward toward Step 1. By assuming the best, the assessment team shows the respect that encourages an engaged respondent.

**Levels of analysis and intervention design**

In most cases, the various problems that comprise an issue exist simultaneously at different societal levels. Problems must be defined and addressed at all relevant levels in a coherent and coordinated manner for an intervention to achieve its intended outcomes. A well-designed and executed assessment will identify the levels of society that need to be targeted and the precise objectives for each level addressed by the intervention. The IONA methodology posits three ways in which KAB occur in a society.

**1. Individual level.** This refers to changes in KAB that affect how people in the target society conceive of themselves as individuals. For example, an intervention may illustrate the deleterious effects of ethnic stereotyping, with the objective of changing each individual's attitudes and behaviors in relationship to individuals from other ethnic groups.

**2. Interpersonal / group level.** Interventions at this level affect shared, assumed, or expected KAB that people or groups in the

target society have for formal or informal groups. A strategy often used in interventions on this level changes group KAB by targeting the group's leadership or other key members. For instance, as a way of de-escalating conflict, one member of an editorial team may convince his/her colleagues to stop using language offensive to certain communities.

**3. Societal/structural level.** This is the most difficult level at which to effect change because it targets how people in the target society conceive of themselves as a society. Generally, these are institutional interventions that affect society as a whole, such as passing and enforcing laws that ban hate speech in the media.

IONA requires the assessment team to understand how problematic KAB manifest at various levels of society. Are KAB held by an individual? For example, "I am a Kurd, not an Afghan, so why should I vote in the coming parliamentary elections?" Are they shared by a certain group? "We mullahs believe that that only we have the right to interpret Islam because we are mullahs." Or are the KAB involved in the problem engrained institutionally in society? "The law does not permit people of mixed race to vote." Because problems may manifest at multiple levels in a society, likewise, media interventions must comprise activities that address those levels.

**Solutions activities**

Here the assessment team describes the actual activities that enable transformation in KAB: developing radio dramas with particular themes and target audiences, building radio infrastructure to broaden the reach of media to illiterate audiences, broadcasting a round-table discussion among mullahs showing that in Islam a wide range of opinions exist on the issue of educating girls.

There are two types of solution activities: issue activities and obstacle activities. Issue

activities directly address the KAB that define the problem and enable the transformation to the objective KAB. Obstacle activities transform KAB that block social change. To extend an example from above, if the issue activity is building radio infrastructure in rural areas, an obstacle is sabotage of the facility by partisans.

Obstacle activities would be, in addition to enhanced security features at the broadcast sites, facilitating discussion with community leaders and designing pertinent programming to ensure strong community support for the radio towers.

## Conclusion

USIP's Intended-Outcomes Needs Assessment methodology guides assessment teams to design purposeful media interventions that have a high likelihood of success. The IONA three-stage assessment process enables the creation of a portfolio of media and non-media activities that effectively address the root causes of conflict.

At present, the IONA frame has been implemented as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Native function in Excel enables the creation and management of an IONA database with rudimentary search, sort, ranking, filtering, and comparison functionality. It is still in the prototype phase. This prototype will demonstrate proof-of-concept, allow estimates of a custom tool's effectiveness, and provide useful input to the custom tool's specification process. Researchers interested in using the spreadsheet should contact USIP's *Innovation Center for Media, Conflict and Peacebuilding* to receive a copy of the tool.

USIP intends to develop a software tool to manage input and analysis of the large amounts of data associated with an IONA-based assessment project. USIP will use the insight developed from the Excel-based pro-totype to develop user-friendly, custom software to support IONA data management and analysis.

### Endnotes

[1] Aaron Rhodes, Ten Years of Media Support to the Balkan—An Assessment, Media Task Force of the Stability Challenges to Conventional Media Intervention Planning (Amsterdam: Stability Pact for South East Europe and Press Now, 2007).

[2] Craig LaMay, "Democratization and the Dilemmas of Media Independence," International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law 8, no. 4 (2006).

[3] Shanthi Kalathil with John Langlois and Adam Kaplan, Towards a New Model: Media and Communication in Post-Conflict and Fragile States (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2008).

[4] Gadi Wolfsfeld, "The News Media and Peace Processes: The Middle East and Northern Ireland," (United States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C., 2001).

[5] Robert Karl Manoff, "The Media's Role in Preventing and Moderating Conflict," (presentation, United States Institute of Peace Virtual Media Conference, Washington, D.C., April 1–2, 1997).

[6] Application of the KAB model in the healthcare field has enabled marked changes in social behavior in areas as different as reducing under-aged smoking and promoting safe sex practices among gay men. A large body of literature is available on communications for health-behavior change, especially regarding HIV/AIDS. Among the pertinent lessons learned is that this articulated process of change is applicable across cultures and geographic areas. AIDS interventions using the media have been conducted all over the world, including Africa, Southeast Asia, and the United States. For example, see Karoline Moon, "Knowledge, Perceptions, Attitudes, and Practices of HIV/AIDS: A Comparative Study of Behavior Change in Commercial Sex Workers and Truck Drivers in the Dindigul and Coimbatore Districts of Tamil Nadu, India," (master's thesis, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 2002).

[7] The authors wish to acknowledge Joseph Petraglia for his direct contribution to the development of our Change Ladder paradigm. Working on issues of health-related behavior change, Petraglia has created a method that he calls "pathways to change." Joseph Petraglia, Christine Galavotti, Nicola Harford, Katina A. Pappas-DeLuca, and Maungo Mooki, "Applying Behavioral Science to Behavior Change Communication: The Pathways to Change Tools," Health Promotion Practice 8 (2007): 384–393.

[8] For example, after fifty years of Communism (status quo), the populations of Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and others had to consider a variety of political alternatives. They decided that their best choice was free-market capitalism, and voted accordingly. Ten years of capitalism (desired change), however, did not produce the benefits that were expected, especially economic benefits. The same voters, consequently, decided to return their former communist politicians to power, but under the rubric of Social Democrats (return to status quo).

USIP intends to develop a software tool to manage input and analysis of the large amounts of data associated with an IONA-based assessment project.

Evaluating media for peacebuilding:

# Measuring the impact of the moving image

## By Nick Oatley*

**Nick Oatley joined Search for Common Ground (SFCG) in July 2008 as Director of Institutional Learning. He is responsible for ensuring that Design, Monitoring and Evaluation are an integral part of SFCG's work and also for developing approaches for wider programme and organisational learning and development. As Director of Institutional Learning at SFCG he is committed to capturing the results of the work of SFCG. In the media area, he has been involved in work with the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Global Communications Studies, the Seminar für Medien und Kommunikation at the University of Erfurt in Germany and Washington State University's E. Murrow School of Communication to develop a methodology to measure the results of SFCG's peacebuilding TV drama series. He was an academic for 12 years and a Civil Servant in the UK government for eight years before moving to the US and joining SFCG.  As an academic in Bristol he led a project advising central government on how locally funded programmes could monitor and evaluate projects addressing social and economic development.**

Media is increasingly being used as a tool for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. However, measuring the results of this work is challenging and fraught with methodological and practical difficulties. This article sets out *Search for Common Ground's* approach to measuring the results of our TV work. It will set out how we approach the development of our programs, the theories of change that inform our work in this area and the challenges that are posed. Three mini-case studies will be provided to demonstrate the approaches we have taken – *Nashe Maalo* (a children's TV program developed in Macedonia), *The Team* (a soap opera based on the theme of soccer being rolled out across 19 countries) and *The Station* (a soap opera based on a fictional TV station in Nigeria).

### Search for Common Ground

At *Search for Common Ground*, our mission is to transform how the world deals with conflict. Where violence exists human rights are abused, economic development is stifled, and misery abounds. It is in everyone's best interest to resolve conflicts peacefully. Our approach is to understand the differences and act on the commonalities.

Established in 1982, Search now has offices in 20 countries, with 425 staff, 85% of whom are local nationals. In 2008 we worked with 575 local partners in community, national, regional, and international programs that are actively transforming conflict on the ground across the globe. *Common Ground Productions* (our media arm) reached over 100 million people through radio programming with 303 local partners and locally-produced television series in 12 countries to promote ethnic, religious, and regional understanding. Our staff trained over 15,000 people globally in conflict resolution in 2008.

*Search* has a varied Toolbox that we use in our programming, but one of our core areas of work and strategic priorities is to use media to prevent and transform conflict and build peace (http://www.sfcg.org.).
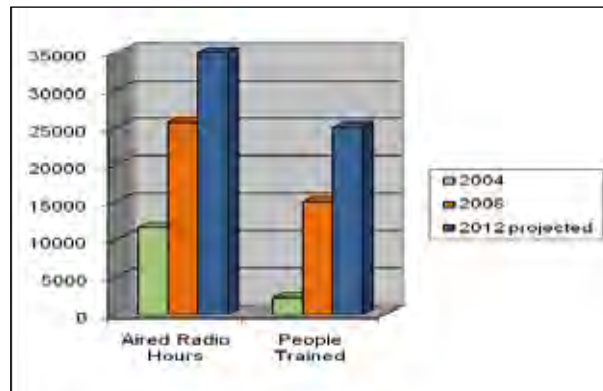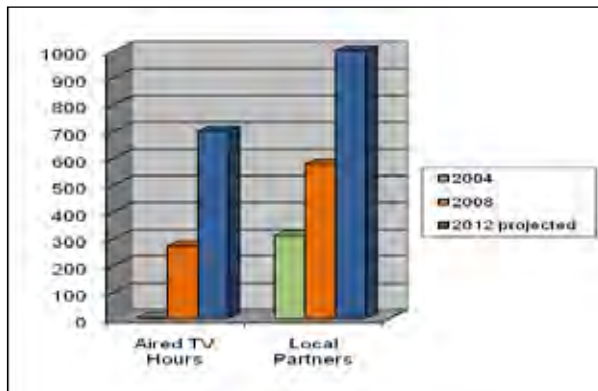
Development
of Search for
Common Ground

## Why use TV?

The impact of the moving image and TV soap operas to change peoples' attitudes and even behaviors is well documented. Sabido's early work in this area (http://www.comminit.com/en/node/201243) and the evidence from the field of Behavior Change Communication (BCC) (particularly the health sector) shows strong support for the notion that TV is a powerful medium for social change.

The various forms of media have an important role to play in conflict transformation (COMMGap 2008)[1]. Media covers a wide array

of forms of communication and includes radio, TV, print-based media, and the internet. SFCG's is recognized as one of the world leaders in the use of TV/radio episodic dramas to transform conflicts.

We believe TV has the ability to convey persuasive messages that violence is not inevitable and that peaceful solutions can be found. We strongly believe that with positive messages TV, appropriately supported by other activities, can positively influence mass attitudes and behaviors and that by using these tools of popular culture, we can reach out both to the elites and the population at large. SFCG

seeks to use TV work in conjunction with other activities to deliver a holistic approach to building peace on four dimensions as the matrix below shows

Our President and Founder, John Marks, has described it in this way:

*"Our basic premise is that well-crafted, entertaining programming can have a profound impact on how people think about themselves, their neighbors and their society. As an organization, we specialize in producing television and radio programming that delivers high-impact, educational messages."*
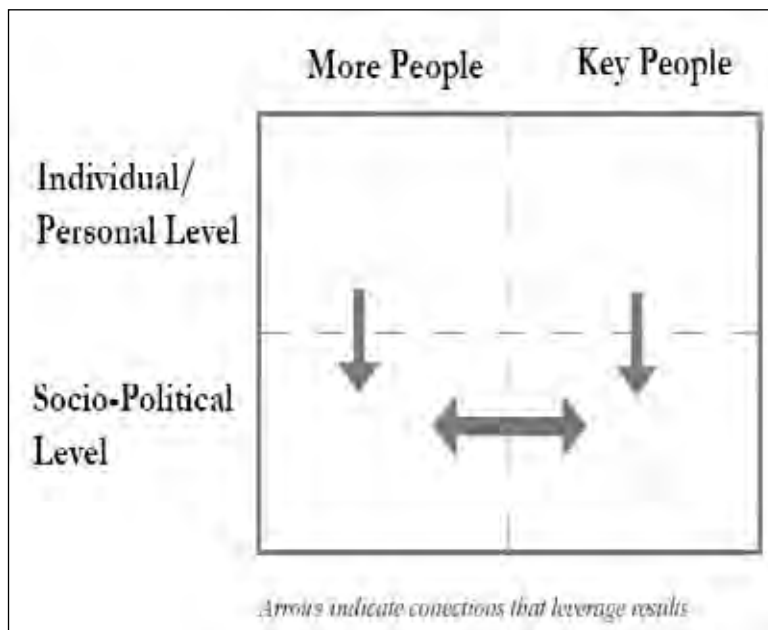


Source: USAID Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM)

### The challenge

In spite of the evidence that TV can bring about social change, the COMMGap report cited above, reflects on the use of BCC in post-conflict environments and comments "One of the problems with amassing a comprehensive body of research on Behavior Change Communication in post-conflict environments is that many of these donor initiated assessments are intended for internal purposes only and remain unpublished.

The published work that does exist tends to consist of implementing organizations' own evaluations of their projects (such as those of *Search for Common Ground)* and one-off case studies, which are relevant in the specific country examined but not generalizable across a wider sample. For this reason, there are few hard conclusions that have emerged with respect to, for instance, the cumulative impact of BCC programs on conflict mitigation and peacebuilding in the long-term."[2]

So there are clearly gaps in our current state of knowledge about the impact of our work that adopts a BCC approach. So what are some of the challenges in amassing a more credible body of evidence that more accurately captures the results of our TV work? What is it about a television show that inspires a change in the attitude or behavior of people toward one another, particularly when violent conflict has threatened the stability of a country? Is the change transitory or permanent? Does an uptick in the conflict make a difference? How do the differences in conflict impact the possibility of change? How do we capture the change in a way that is measurable?

These are some of the major questions we ask ourselves when attempting to measure the results of our TV programs. Indeed measuring and then *attributing* social change to viewers having seen our programming is a major challenge and one with which we grapple with each time we try it. Yet it is essential that we document the results of our work not only to increase the effectiveness of our programming but to be accountable both to our donors and to our beneficiaries.

One can identify a number of different challenges relating to the use of TV for peacebuilding. These can be categorized as challenges for content, production and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

## Challenges for content:

• Balancing entertainment with education; e.g. we want to show, not tell and act, not instruct

• Creating realistic characters and situations in conflict zones means there will be some violence – from spousal abuse to riots; how to peacefully resolve such issues without sacrificing verisimilitude? How to avoid simplification of problems?

• Coaching comparatively new writers who have learned some bad writing habits – they tend to tell, not show and succumb to sensationalism

• Making sure that we follow up with a solid outreach program that builds on what the audience has seen integrating approaches

## Challenges for production:

A shortage of technicians
Worn out/lack/maintenance of equipment
A lack of places to shoot other than locations e.g. no sound stages
A shortage of producers and production managers (very critical)
Not enough commercial distribution outlets – most are government owned and controlled

## Challenges for M&E:

• Being clear on what we actually need to measure

• SFCG is about "Transforming the way people deal with conflict…"

• Carry messages to intended audiences to bring change in knowledge, attitudes and behaviors

• Is it that linear? Different theories

• Dealing with the intangible dimensions of peacebuilding interventions (relationships, emotions, identity, values)

• Issue of "attribution" – so many factors influence change

• How do we define success and what level of change?

• How to administer surveys when literacy levels are low (self-administered surveys will clearly not work – we have used pictures and cartoons to depict scenarios to elicit answers)

• Time required for participants to be involved in the cohort methodology can be significant. Maintaining participation can be a challenge

• How many episodes should people be exposed to before one would expect to see a change and what digestion time should be allowed (the time after viewing)

If we focus on the challenges for M&E, there are a number of opportunities for addressing these challenges as set out in the table below.

## Our approach to these challenges

At *Search*, we have an *Institutional Learning Department* dedicated to ensuring that our programs are monitored and evaluated

| CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES TO MEASURE RESULTS | |
|---|---|
| **CHALLENGES** | **OPPORTUNITIES** |
| • Measuring a moving target - context changes and SFCG intervention also changes to respond to it<br>• Measuring the effects — Behavior Change Communication — limitation of quantitative studies<br>• Working in volatile environments — issues of access, trust, context specific tools<br>• Measuring behavior change without ethnographic observation<br>• Push from donor to show impact and to attribute the results to one intervention | • Document context changes, share them with donors & actors to have a better understanding of our interventions<br>• Develop rigorous qualitative approaches (MSC, Case studies…) & strengthen use of attitude surveys<br>• Be innovative about how we conduct research to measure change in volatile environments<br>• Use tools that can show a behavior tendency (Role play & behavior scenarios) & use innovative methods (MIT action lab, cell phone tech etc.)<br>• Educate donors - move away from attribution to contribution |

effectively. Our monitoring and evaluation (M&E) specialists develop tools, in collaboration with local experts who understand the cultural context in which we work. In addition, we employ external evaluators who challenge our assumptions and provide an independent assessment of the results of our work. We also work with communication specialists in the Annenberg School of Communication at Pennsylvania University, Washington State University and Zeppelin University in Germany to develop new cohort methodologies for measuring the results of our programs.

At each stage of our program development, we consciously build in appropriate methods to shape our design, monitoring and evaluation of our programs (see diagram below). Much of our methodology is drawn from *Behavior Change Communication* (BCC), which presents a framework to promote and sustain behavior change through appropriate combinations of messages and media.

Pioneered in the public health sector, BCC was developed to bring about change at the individual and/or community levels. BCC differs from traditional information, education and communication programs by going beyond one-way information flows, which are not sufficient to produce behavioral and attitudinal change.

Experience has shown that providing people with information and telling them how they should behave ("teaching" them) is not sufficient to bring about behavior change. While providing information to help people to make a personal decision is a necessary part of behavior change, BCC recognizes that behavior is not only a matter of having information and making a personal choice. Behavior change also requires repetitive messaging and a supportive environment that will enable people to initiate and sustain positive behaviors.

Recent experience from the field of social marketing as applied to social change programs shows that in addition to information and persuasive messaging promoting new attitudes and behaviors, individuals need opportunities to share views with their peers, feel reassured about expressing new attitudes and trying out new behaviors. In addition, the environment will contain many barriers to changing attitudes and behaviors, and we also need to find ways to remove these barriers that may prevent people from acting differently (e.g. through the development of new skills, engaging local governments to change practices, create community projects/actions, etc.).

The overall goal of our television production methodology is to infuse programs with themes and subtle, yet compelling, messaging that promote co-existence and understanding. The idea is to deliver a series of messages and ideas that have a pronounced impact on the audience and that, through community outreach activities and removal of barriers to change, will ultimately lead to a positive shift in societal norms, attitudes and behaviors.

At the start of a program (design) we articulate intended outcomes, that shape and guide our work and we may identify key indicators that will be tracked through the lifetime of the project. We will also develop theories of change to articulate how we imagine the intended outcomes will be achieved. I have attached at Annex 1, a list of theories of change that underpin our work in our TV soap opera – *The Team*, which is discussed further below.

Normally, we undertake baseline studies to establish benchmarks at the start of the project. We may find it useful to conduct listenership surveys to understand and estimate audience exposure, listenership frequency,

preferences, and so that we may benchmark knowledge, attitude, and behavior gains later in the project. Since each series is developed within a specific cultural context, we establish specific objectives in each country. We work with local partners, not only to understand our target audience, but to determine where the leverage points for connecting with that audience are. We ensure that we are able to measure immediate "results" through monitoring outputs and outcomes and conducting

mid-term (internal) & ex-post evaluations (external).

We use a variety of research tools that are intended to encourage viewers to identify and articulate various parts of the conflict. Focus groups and audience surveys are designed to tease out and identify any potential change in knowledge, attitude and behavior in order to help viewers articulate shifts as they occur. For example, the InterMedia focus group re-

**DESIGN**

Context Assessment
- Gaps in current peacebuilding efforts and how media can assist in addressing them
- nature of the conflict
- the local media landscape
- the potential impact of peacebuilding organizations
- potential partners and institutional implications.

- Development
- Target audience and access to different media
- Risks, costs and funding considerations
- Story lines, character sketches, concepts and pilot episodes are researched and pre-tested with target audiences in order to re-calibrate materials for maximum relevance
- Periodic strategic planning sessions involving all staff and major partners
- Clear objectives & indicators

**MONITORING**

- Descriptive statistics
  - Ratings
  - Number of viewers

- Popular Reaction
  - Viewer panels
  - Focus Group Reports
  - Press coverage/ Reaction of popular Press
  - Quotes
  - Letters
  - Texts

- Baseline Study/Survey
  - Conflict Mapping
  - Knowledge, attitudes & behaviours

- Unintended Outcomes
  - Additional showings
  - Requests for vernacular radio
  - Actors Reactions

**EVALUATION**

- Key informant interviews
- Gather evidence on realisation of 'intended outcomes'

- KAB Surveys, Skills Assessment, Pre/Post Tests, Indices
- Association between exposure to programming and changes in knowledge, attitudes, behaviour

- Content Analysis, Pre/Post Tests, Key informant Follow Up Interviews, Policy Analysis
- Journalistic Principles
- Scenario Exercises
- Professional Norms, Standards

- Impact Assessment
- Randomised Control Group Study (the Gold Standard BUT expensive - not used by SFCG)

- Unintended Outcomes
- Most Significant Change (MSC)

port on our Ukrainian radio drama, *Our Street* found that the questions posed after viewers saw the show elicited the following:

> "…*listening to the drama series exposed them [viewers] to specific ways to deal with potential conflicts and introduced them to skills that might be helpful in resolving various disagreements.*"

## Nashe Maalo, Macedonia

In addition to focus groups, our evaluation teams have created other ways to monitor and evaluate our media work. A rigorous pre- and post-test methodology was used in our Macedonian children's TV series, *Nashe Maalo (Our Neighborhood)*, which showed very positive impacts on children's views of themselves and others, overcoming negative stereotypes of minority ethnic groups in Macedonia. Prior to viewing, only a minority (30%) were willing to invite a child from another ethnic group into their home. After viewing only eight epi-

sodes – and we produced 41 episodes, in all – this number increased to 60%. This was a significant behavior change, and it was found in all the target groups (ethnic Macedonians, Albanians, Roma and Turks). You can view clips of this program on Youtube.

## The Station, Nigeria

In 2009 we completed a study that we conducted in collaboration with experts in communications from the Universities of Pennsylvania, Washington State University and Zeppelin University in Germany that showed that our TV drama, *The Station*, in Nigeria, engendered intense narrative engagement and enjoyment. Perceived realism and character liking was also high. The results from our pre- and post-testing found that watching the series reinforced the positive attitudes represented in the show; acceptance of the other, social responsibility, youth empowerment, gender empowerment and preference

Nashe Maalo showed very positive impacts on children's views of themselves and others, overcoming negative stereotypes of minority ethnic groups in Macedonia.

of dialogue over violence. Thus, the most important attitudes targeted by the educational goals of the series were achieved.

The cohort study includes three components that are standard to evaluations. First, a baseline is conducted to establish a benchmark for measuring change during exposure to radio or television programs. In the second component, focus groups and observations feed into formative research. The third component consists of an evaluation to be conducted at the end of the pilot so that changes can be captured.

Once the baseline data has been analyzed, the research team starts to expose the groups of participants to a series of episodes. After exposure to each, a focus group discussion is held during which the knowledge, attitudes and self-reported behavior of the participants are observed and recorded. The baseline involved questionnaires consisting of attitude statements with a five-point, Likert scale response designed around four main themes:

### 1. Conflict resolution
(violence vs. dialogue) Key message: Violence doesn't solve anything – dialogue helps

### 2. Empowerment
Key message: Do something to be taken seriously and make those in power listen to you. Exercise your rights, make yourself heard. Summon energy and courage to break out of oppressive social structures.

### 3. Tolerance & mutual respect
(ethnicity, religion) Key Message: Our diversity is an asset not a liability (tolerance and respect vs. prejudice and ostracism)

### 4. Social responsibility/civic engagement
Key message: Individuals, as members of a community/society, have responsibilities for the good of the larger group (individualistic behavior vs. social benefit)

The Team – an episodic series – asks a central question: can Kenyans find ways to put the past behind them in order to have a better future?

The attitude survey was designed and administered to a control group (which is not exposed to the show) before the study begins, as well as the experimental group that is exposed to the show. Surveys are conducted again after the experimental group has been exposed to a number of episodes over a period of time.

The data analysis compares the results between the two groups to highlight any significant variations in attitude shifts. The third phase of the approach, a summative evaluation, takes place after exposure to the last TV episode. It follows the same protocol and uses the same survey as during the baseline and involves interviewing both the cohort group and the control group. In this way, the research team is able to compare results and attribute change.

The schema below depicts the Cohort Study process.

## The Team, Kenya

As a response to the effects of the post-election violence in Kenya in December 2007, *Search for Common Ground* and *Media Focus on Africa* (MFA) developed and produced a TV and radio drama, *The Team* – an episodic series which asks a central question: can Kenyans find ways to put the past behind them in order to have a better future?  The series presents a microcosm of Kenyan society in which members of a fictional football team, who come from different ethnic groups and social classes, are challenged to overcome their fears and biases so that they can see one another as individuals not as members of "the other."  The central metaphor for the players – and for Kenya – is:  If they do not cooperate, they will not score goals, and they will lose. The series sends a strong message that the sins of the past cannot be rectified by retributive violence today.

[Note:  Search for Common Ground is an open source organization, and descriptions of M&E methodologies and guidelines, along with copies of past evaluations, can be found at http://www.sfcg.org/sfcg/sfcg_evaluations.html.]
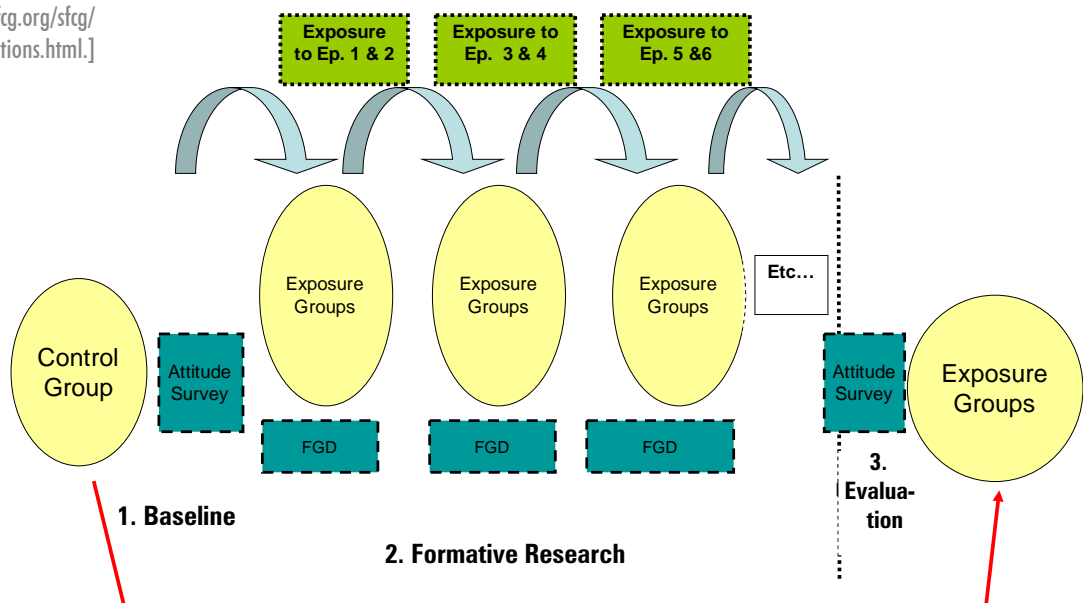


*Compare the attitude survey of the control group with the attitude survey of the groups that have been exposed to the show. The control group will not be exposed to the show to avoid sensitization.*

*The Team* in Kenya is part of a large program supported by UK DFID which focuses on improving Governance (The Governance and Transparency Fund). We plan to produce and air TV and radio versions in up to 19 countries around the world.  For the program in Kenya we developed 13 indicators covering Accountability & Responsiveness (aspects of the Capability-Accountability-Responsiveness Framework adopted by DFID).

The *University of Peace* is undertaking in-depth evaluations in four countries, including baselines and a final evaluation. The approach consists of surveys (over 300 people were interviewed), focus groups, mobile cinema discussions, and case study work.

We are evaluating the contribution of the drama production together with outreach activities to changes in policy, practice, behavior and power relations and the connection of these changes to governance.

The mid-term evaluation found that **The Team i**s reaching a mass audience:

• *The Team* was consistently rated among the ten most popular shows in Kenya with a viewership of 2.8 million, which translates to a 25 ratings share.

• In addition, the episodes on *Radio Jambo* had a listenership of 270,000 Kenyans. Young males (15-35), the target demographic group, represented the largest single listener group.[3]

• 73% of respondents reported that they watched or listened to *The Team* (39% of respondents reported that they watched all 13 episodes of the first season).

The results also showed that **The Team is changing attitudes and the conflict dynamics**:

• Survey participants were able to identify tribalism/tribal differences as a main issue addressed in *The Team.*

• 64% of respondents said that these issues affected them very much (64.2%).
• 98% of respondents said that *The Team* was effective in addressing these issues.

• 29.2% stated that *The Team* was very effective in the way that issues were addressed. It was found that the series is effective because it resonates deeply with aspects of daily life in Kenya; stimulates learning and reflection, and changes viewpoints on certain issues; provides knowledge of how to solve some of the problems addressed; triggers subsequent movements, particularly among youth; and is effective in reaching a wide population.

• As an integral part of the project, mobile cinema screenings were used to trigger discussions that have inspired citizens to take positive action. Participants reported that:

— They are more open and accepting of others, particularly from other tribes;

— The screenings and subsequent discussions helped them develop individual confidence and self-discipline and learn how to accept responsibility for their own actions;

— The series reached a wide spectrum of people in remote areas without access to television.

In small ways, the **TV show and outreach is also changing lives:**

The objectives of *The Team* focused on affecting change among and between citizens, civil society organizations and government agencies with regards to governance and the rule of law. The evaluation identified several cases where citizens demonstrated how they changed and/or transformed their actions

## Individual transformation

*Hassan Sheer is a youth who had participated in post-election violence during 2007-2008. Influenced by his peers and caught up in the moment, he had organized the looting of his neighbor's businesses. He felt remorseful after the fact and wanted to apologize to his neighbors; however at the same time, he did not have the confidence to do so and was fearful of being victimized. He began to withdraw from the other youth in the community and fell into a depression. The mobile cinema screenings provided him the safe space to share his experience with other participants. Through the screenings, he worked up the courage to confess and apologize to his neighbors. Initially they did not receive his apology well, however with persistence, he eventually asked for forgiveness, and thankfully, they granted it. He claims that The Team's programming changed his life, and his neighbors commented that they wished they would have had the opportunity to participate in the mobile screenings.*

## Institutional transformation

*The Legal Resource Foundation (LRF) is an independent, Kenyan-based human rights organization. The coordinator of the LRF attended the mobile cinema screening of* The Team *drama and was very impressed by the approach the show takes on addressing the issues affecting the common Kenyan citizen. The coordinator was subsequently inspired to implement a similar LRF project that focused on sensitizing the public on their rights and using alternative ways to resolve conflict. To date, the LRF has trained two paralegal and five peer educators on the issues addressed in* The Team. *They are planning to conduct counseling sessions a few hours before the mobile screening sessions with the aims of attracting more youths and reaching a greater audience. The organization also plans to take The Team drama to different locations in the province to continue creating awareness and reach populations who suffer at the hands of social injustices and human rights abuses.*

and behaviors as a result of, or with the contribution of The Team.

The following are two examples of such cases of action and transformation at different levels of society:

### Summary and reflections

So measuring the results of media is possible. It involves careful planning, significant resources and the adoption of particular M&E tools. It is best achieved using mixed methods (baseline survey, follow-up survey, key informant interviews, case studies, and focus groups). We have tried to establish control groups in some of our work to establish comparisons with exposure and non-exposure groups, but recognize that it does not meet the rigorous standards of randomized control group trials.

There are still a number of methodological challenges that we are still grappling with. As we have tried the traditional approach to monitoring and evaluation of our media programs, we have become aware of the **complexity of the BCC model** and recognize that

we need to add two other dimensions that we need to be aware of and measure as we proceed with our work.

Traditional approaches to BCC work rests on the assumption that exposure to TV dramas will bring about a change in knowledge, which in turn brings about a change in attitude, which then (over a longer period of time) may produce a change in behavior. This may be depicted by the diagram below:

Exposure $\longrightarrow$ K $\longrightarrow$ A $\longrightarrow$ BC

We have realized that we need to add two additional dimensions to this heuristic. One is to ensure that we are creating spaces for interpersonal interactions – social spaces – in which people can come together and talk about new ideas, to feel safe in expressing views that may be counter to the norms of their tribe, ethnic group or clan. Ideally, community leaders would be brought in to this space to model the expression of new views and attitudes. In addition, we need to identify the barriers that need to be removed before people are able to safely express new views or behave in a different way. These may involve new laws or challenging traditional customs, or countering rumors, and establishing new norms. These may be depicted as shown below:

Exposure $\longrightarrow$ K $\longrightarrow$ IC $\longrightarrow$ BR $\longrightarrow$ A $\longrightarrow$ BC

One other thing we have realized as we have been developing our approaches to measuring the effects of our media work is that the traditional approaches do not capture **unintended or unexpected outcomes.** This is a difficulty with an approach based on assumptions that the social world works according to linear Newtonian causality represented by log frames, the specification of intended outcomes and the use of baseline and formative evaluation methodologies that measure

inputs, outputs and outcomes through baseline surveys and post-activity evaluations.

These approaches may work well in relatively simple environments and with less complex interventions, but they do not always fit well with the complex environments in which we work nor can they accurately reflect the innovative approaches represented by media-led interventions.

Recently, we have become increasingly interested in a very different approach that has been articulated as developmental evaluation. This comes out of the same stable as Most Significant Change and Outcome Mapping approaches to evaluation. Michael Quinn Patton's recent publication, *Developmental Evaluation*[4] is a great summary of this approach. The principles of this approach are rooted in complexity theory characterized by interdependent systems and complex, non-linear dynamics which are unpredictable. This recognition calls for contingency based evaluations that take a participatory approach to evaluation and seek to identify significant changes as they emerge throughout the project[5].

We will not abandon the traditional approach to evaluation (donors will not allow this), but we will seek to embrace complexity in the search for what works and how best we can capture the results of our work.[6]

### Endnotes

*1 COMMGap (2008) Towards a New Model: Media and Communications in Post-Conflict and Fragile States. Shanthi Kalathil with John Langlois and Adam Kaplan. World Bank Washington DC*

*2 COMMGap Towards a New Model: Media and Communications in Post-Conflict and Fragile States. Shanthi Kalathil with John Langlois and Adam Kaplan (2008) p. 10*

*3 Synovate. Television and Radio Programs Analysis. 12/1/2010*

*4 Developmental evaluation: Applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use by Michael Quinn Patton (Guilford Press, 2010)*

*5 A developmental evaluation primer. Jamie Gamble. (2008). Montréal: The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation;  DE 201: A Practitioner's Guide to Developmental Evaluation by Elizabeth Dozois,*

*Marc Langlois and Natasha Blanchet-Cohen. Montréal: The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation; AEA Annual Conference professional development workshop on Developmental Evaluation, with Michael Quinn Patton, November 8-9, San Antonio.*

*6  Howard, Ross, Francis Rolt et al. The Power of Media: A Handbook for Peacebuilders. European Centre for Conflict Prevention, in cooperation with ECCG and IMPACS. 2003.*

*7 InterMedia Focus Group Report A Focus Group Evaluation Conducted in Simferopol and Sevastopol, Crimea Prepared for Search for Common Ground, Washington, DC and Ukrainian Center for Common Ground, Kyiv,  Ukraine 3–5 October 2002*

*8 Synovate. Television and Radio Programs Analysis. 12/1/2010*

*9  Developmental evaluation: Applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use by Michael Quinn Patton (Guilford Press, 2010)*

*10 A developmental evaluation primer. Jamie Gamble. (2008). Montréal: The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation;  DE 201: A Practitioner's Guide to Developmental Evaluation by Elizabeth Dozois, Marc Langlois and Natasha Blanchet-Cohen. Montréal: The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation; AEA Annual Conference professional development workshop on Developmental Evaluation, with Michael Quinn Patton, November 8-9, San Antonio.*

Annex 1.
Theories of change for the episodic drama – The Team –
and integrated programming (Source: USAID 2009)

## 1. Inside out peace

The three theories in this family all focus on the construction of inclusive identity at the level of individuals. When this inner transformation takes place among key actors and/or enough individuals, they can influence societal patterns, identity groups, institutional performance, and other key actors toward constructive conflict engagement

| Theory | Statement | Description | Illustrative activities |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Shifts in consciousness** | If key actors and/or enough individuals undergo constructive shifts in their consciousness, then their commitment and capacity for the peaceful resolution of conflicts will increase and can influence social change in that area. | This theory focuses on how a transformative experience such as a personal epiphany, deep cognitive dissonance, or psychological development can alter an individual's deep consciousness structures – understanding of him/herself and relations to others–, resulting in a greater individual capacity and commitment to peace building. Enough individuals experiencing this shift can generate social change toward resolving constructive conflict management. | Personal transformation/ consciousness-raising workshops or processes; psychological therapy; meditative activities; nonviolent direct action and related acts that challenge assumptions or raise consciousness. |
| **Values** | If key actors and/or enough individuals on all sides of the conflict are given opportunities to discover shared values, then inclusive „value identities" can form and provide a basis for pursuing constructive conflict engagement together. | The theory focuses on the role of "value commitments" in how people conceive of themselves and form inclusive identities across a conflict divide. The aim is help groups of individuals discover values (e.g., peace, justice, ethics) they share, which can generate an inclusive, deep, often spiritual connection that can help them shape social change toward constructive conflict engagement and address unconstructive actions by one's own group | Inter-faith and inter-ethnic dialogues and encounter groups; intra-group dialogues on values; faith-based initiatives; informal inter-group social gatherings and meetings. |
| **Social identity salience** | If individuals and groups in a conflict setting can shift towards more multifaceted, complex identities, then the relationship of self to other will be constructed in new ways that allow more constructive inter-group relations to develop for conflict resolution. | The theory addresses the tendency of individuals and groups in conflict settings to emphasize the conflict identity and see "the other" as enemy in absolute terms. The aim is to provide experiences of safety, psychological development, and cognitive dissonance that shift the salience of conflict identity to be contextualized within a more multifaceted identity of the whole person and whole inter-group relations. This shift will create openings for constructive engagement with "the other" in conflict resolution. | Single-identity work; personal transformation workshops or processes; dialogues and encounter groups, re-humanization initiatives; direct personal experience with "the enemy"; media content showing individuals and groups experiencing positive shifts from exclusive to more inclusive identities. |

## 2. Attitudes towards peace

The three theories in this family all target attitudes about a situation. They focus on altering perceptions, attitudes, and social norms concerning the costs of violent conflict and the benefits of tolerance, coexistence, and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

| Theory | Statement | Description | Illustrative activities |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Key actor attitudes** | If key actor attitudes change to favor peaceful solutions to the conflict, then they will seek peaceful solutions. | This theory focuses on the crucial role that key actors play in articulating and mobilizing grievances. The aim is to alter the way key actors evaluate the benefits and costs of violence; either persuading them that costs of inciting violence outweigh the benefits or, alternatively, that peaceful means exist to address grievances. | Diplomacy or advocacy that focuses on options or alternatives, including potential incentives for choosing peace over violence; media campaigns targeting key actors; training-based programs that introduce new ways to view/ evaluate the situation |
| **Mass attitudes** | If enough people's attitudes change to favor peaceful solutions to the conflict, then they will prefer that key actors seek peaceful solutions to conflicts and will resist mobilization to adopt violence. | This theory focuses on the perceptions of the mass of people embroiled in a conflict about the relative costs and benefits of violence as a solution. Those judgments are influenced by a number of factors, including perceived depth/ seriousness of grievances or perceived power of resilience factors. Changing these perceptions/attitudes is expected to reduce support for violence. | Advocacy campaigns, including the use of mass media, that target perceptions of grievance, tap into social or institutional resilience, or generally promote peaceful resolution of conflict; mobilization of grassroots groups to advocate for peace |
| **Culture of peace** | If war-torn societies focus cultural, media, and education resources on changing people's attitudes and social norms to support the peaceful resolution of conflicts, then a culture of peace will emerge that promotes coexistence and resists mobilization to adopt violence. | This theory focuses on fostering a cultural shift from violent to peaceful approaches to handling conflict. The aim is to generate a „culture of peace" by leveraging education, mass media, arts, and culture resources in that direction. It is a longer-term process of transforming the attitudes and social norms that supported violent conflict resolution in the past. | Peace education; advocacy campaigns and socialization processes that stress tolerance and peaceful resolution of conflict; establishment of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms; peace media capacity building and content; cultural peacebuilding activities (e.g., theatre, music, art). |

# Summary:

# Responses to the pre-conference questionnaire

## Thomas R. Lansner

As part of the preparations for the conference *Measuring Change II: Expanding Knowledge on Monitoring and Evaluation in Media Development* 18 participants responded to a pre-conference questionnaire. The aim was to gather and increase understanding of perspectives and priorities on conference themes among a range of media development practitioners, researchers and funders. An initial summary of the responses was presented orally to conference participants, and has since helped inform development of the mediaME initiative.

A broad consensus among respondents argues that improved and expanded monitoring and evaluation of media development assistance is required to gain and share knowledge that will make such assistance both more valuable and more cost-effective. Collecting, systematizing and sharing experience that can guide programs and projects and help media development and media practitioners enhance their own work is a shared goal. Strategic research that might link media development assistance to larger societal change is seen as a very important, but more difficult challenge.

The need for donors to recognize the need for and to better fund monitoring and evaluation of media development assistance was another common theme.

## 1. Can you briefly describe the principal approaches & tools used in your media development assistance M&E?

Respondents described a wide variety of approaches and tools used to monitor and evaluate their media development efforts. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were discussed. "'Output' indicators are the simplest, such as how many journalists trained for how many hours," explained Mark Koenig of USAID. "So-called 'outcome' indicators try to measure a higher level of effects, such as various ways to measure improved quality of journalism (e.g., content analysis that measures increased diversity of sources, attribution of sources, verification of facts, more coverage of public affairs-related issues, etc.)."

For implementers, funder guidelines were important in deciding what sort and what level of M&E would be undertaken. For example, Sue Folger and Irina Negreyeva of Internews Network in Ukraine wrote that "Since we are USAID-funded, we use USAID guidelines and have developed a performance monitoring and

evaluation plan (PMEP) in accordance to our program goals and objectives and approved by USAID". According to USAID's Mark Koenig, "Each USAID media assistance project must have an M&E plan and report on program results. Susan Abbott of the Annenberg Center, remarked that its M&E often "depends on funder and what template they use or require [and] depends on funding available. We often work as sub-contractors, so we go with what the prime contractor does."

Dr. Jan Lublinski reported that the World Federation of Science Journalists uses *Outcome Mapping* as a general planning and monitoring framework, and plans to combine it with logframes in the future.

Lavinia Mohr explained that the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) uses a modified logical framework approach in a four-year program planning cycle that includes expected results and indicators and annual reviews that capture progress towards expected results. Before a project begins,

partners are asked to describe expected outputs and outcomes. The final report format seeks to measure achievement against the outputs and outcomes. It also asks about challenges, difficulties, and/or failures in carrying out the project and how those issues were addressed. Face to face partner consultations are very helpful, Mohr writes. External program evaluation is also sometimes used. Several respondents reported using media monitoring as an evaluation tool, to gauge impact of specific projects or to gain "a broader picture of a media situation in the country," as Elena Cherniavska of the Institute for Democracy, Media and Cultural Exchange described.

Internews Network in Ukraine uses several methods to monitor activities and planned indicators: surveys and focus groups (sub-contracting out to marketing and sociological companies); available research data provided by international organizations and sociological groups; and grantee reports, that may include quantitative data such as media monitoring results, and number of trainees and publications and webmetrics. Internews Network also captures success stories and anecdotal feedback from viewers, local partners, broadcasters, and trainees

Search for Common Ground is increasing use of SMS messaging and emails to gather feedback on its broadcast programming, says Nick Oatley, as well as "focus groups and key informant interviews to gauge the effect of our media work." Pre and post viewing questionnaire surveys are administered to test groups, and mobile cinema screenings with discussion groups after the showings capture immediate audience feedback.

The African Media Barometer (AMB) developed by fesmedia Af-rica and the Media Institute for Southern Africa is a tool for assessing the media landscape of a given country according to Rolf Paasch, director of fesmedia Africa. This baseline information shapes recommendations for the planning of media programs and activities in the respective countries. The next round of AMB assessment, based on the same indicators, measures changes in the media landscape.

As an umbrella body, the Global Forum for Media Development is working with its members to develop new tools and approaches to M&E. GFMD Director Bettina Peters says these include "a manageable tool in terms of time and money" for assessing country-specific media landscapes that is based on indicators from IREX's Media Sustainability Index and UNESCO Framework indicators, focusing on quantitative indicators.

As an academic researcher, Dr. Lee Becker of Grady College at the University of Georgia, USA, has employed field experimental design and simple correlational designs in addition to documents analysis and observational techniques and the extensive use of structured and semi-structured interviews and content analysis.

**2. What is the typical percentage spent for M&E in your programs/projects?**

Respondents said that fixing a "typical" percentage spent on M&E is sometimes difficult, because it is not always broken out as a budget line, might be part of the work of several staff, and can be affected by the nature of projects, for example, ones that include audience surveys that might be considered part of M&E. The estimated percentage ranged from two percent to "a project at the moment where the M&E allocation is ten percent of the total budget, at the insistence of the donor." The typical percentage seems to be about five percent. However, the responses indicated that there is little consistency in budgeting for M&E, and funder wishes can be influential.

**3. Do you face constraints of philosophy, finance or capacity in improving M&E activities? Have you identified cost-effective ways to meet these challenges?**

The value of M&E was recognized by consensus, and the need for "more info on practical M&E tools" and the lack of "ready effective tools suitable for media impact assessment" were cited as challenges. Some respondents cited funding as a significant obstacle to expanding M&E activities. Large-scale surveys of media impact, for example, are very costly.

The Global Forum for Media Development has argued for more investment into M&E by donors, writes its director, Bettina Peters. The aim is to move from simple M&E of projects (i.e. impact of a given project on its target group) to M&E of programmes, and to measuring impact on media landscapes in a country where several or many media development programs are supported.

Building acceptance for enhanced M&E among media development implementers can be difficult. As Lavinia Mohr of WACC pointed out, some project partners see planning, monitoring and evaluation as a task that is external to the real work of getting on with the project, and even to monitoring progress. Gabrielle Minkley of the Institute of Development Studies noted that creating an internal culture of participating and carrying out M&E

has been a challenge, often because of a lack of staff capacity to carry out M&E activities across the organization.

Nick Oatley of Search for Common Ground explained that "embedding a reflective culture based on M&E within our organization" has been a conscious and active process based on recognizing design M&E as an integral part of SFCG's work. "We want to know – and share with others – "what works," so that our performance can be improved, our successes can be replicated, and failures avoided," writes Oatley. An Institutional Learning Team (ILT) was launched at SFCG's Washington headquarters in 2002, with its goal "to mainstream DM&E throughout the organization and, ultimately, across the whole field of conflict prevention." SFCG has developed a series of tools and methodologies for our field staff, including interactive training modules and templates, to help translate DM&E theory into practice, and developed a *Manual for practitioners* that has been downloaded over 3500 times.

From a research perspective, simple data that is easily compiled, such as the number of journalists trained or number of media assisted may signify little, according to USAID's Mark Koenig, who says the biggest challenge is the comparability of M&E data across countries. "We may have a decent understanding of the results of a media program in country X," he wrote, "but summing up the results of 40+ media programs in 40+ different countries becomes a more problematic challenge."

Lee Becker of the University of Georgia added an important caveat regarding the premise for media development M&E. Some see evaluation as a means to confirm an effect or outcome. An evaluation should be a test of a hypothesis of an effect. "It is important that the design should be one that allows for a falsification of the expectation of an effect," Becker wrote. Willingness to identify and accept deficiencies and to learn from failures should be a core value of M&E. The suggestion that at least some M&E "should be carried out by an organization other than the contractor/implementing party" could facilitate this.

## 4. How are your M&E findings shared internally?

Respondents described using memos and presentations, newsletters and face-to-face meetings to share M&E findings. WACC mentioned that full final reports are retained in the project information management system to which all staff have access. Search for Common Ground produces a Summary of Findings that is posted together with the FULL evaluation on its public website.

## 5. How does your M&E contribute to your institutional learning and inform new work?

Respondents reported that M&E activities contribute to institutional learning and shaping new work in both concrete and informal ways. Sue Folger and Irina Negreyeva of Internews Network in Ukraine, wrote that "a large part of the current three-year cost extension was developed on the basis of M&E results and findings from our five-year media development program."

Others noted that results in annual reports are explicitly included in preparation of new annual plans or that, as SFCG's Nick Oatley described, lessons from evaluations are taken up in a "Utilization Plan which reflects on the findings and recommendations and develops a plan of actions to carry forward in to the next programming cycle."

Media development M&E does contribute to institutional learning at USAID on an informal rather than systematically organized way, wrote Mark Koenig. Among the best forums for sharing program results are global training seminars for USAID democracy officers, which typically take place for five days twice each year. Media development is but one of a wide range of USAID democracy assistance activities

The institutional uptake for organizations can differ according to their size and the diversity of programmes in which they are engaged. A.S. Panneerselvan and Lakshmi Nair of Panos South Asia say that shortcomings are discussed frankly in team meetings "to make sure they do not recur in future programmes. The findings used to fine tune future programmes to ensure maximum impact."

Dr. Jan Lublinski of the World Federation of Science Journalists, observed that "On several occasions, the monitoring data or the mere fact that we were monitoring enabled and sped up necessary shifts in the programme."

Marjorie Rouse of the Internews Network also raised a very practical aspect of designing M&E, noting, "Whenever possible the M&E is designed to both meet funder requirements and also provide guidance to program implementation and important information to local partners on the media market." For example, viewer surveys can serve as an M&E tool as well as inform partner broadcasters and professional associations.

## 6. How are your M&E findings shared externally?

Narrative reports sent to donors and publicly available but less detailed annual reports were mentioned, as well as publishing full evaluations or summaries on organization websites, and in-person presentations to donors and at conferences.

Lavinia Mohr explains that project partners' self-evaluation findings are incorporated in news stories published on the WAAC website and distributed to a monthly news bulletin listserv, adding "Formal external evaluations are shared with grantees and donors." WACC also hopes "to produce a publication setting out some of what it and its partners have learned about best practices, and factors contributing to or detracting from success."

Gabrielle Minkley of the Institute of Development Studies reports that IDS hosts an informal network of development organizations working on M&E of research communications. The Communications Initiative website has many media development reports, and the Global Forum for Media Development is a growing as a forum for sharing M&E information.

Mark Koenig writes that at USAID there is little emphasis on sharing results of individual country programs externally, but at an informal level, donors share program results on an as-needed basis.

Some findings, such as IREX Media Sustainability Index, or the African Media Barometer, are intended to be widely disseminated. Rolf Paasch, director of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's fesmedia Africa, observes: "The AMB-Reports are shared on the fesmedia website and presented in public forums, at a press conference and then distributed to NGOs, parliaments, state ministries and foreign embassies."

Academic research is shared through scientific conferences and in scientific publications, Professor Lee Becker writes. The International Association for Media and Communication Research has a "Journalism Research and Education" section that is particularly receptive to research regarding media development.

## 7. Do grantees and funders take up opportunities to offer feedback on your M&E findings?

Grantees whose work is evaluated seemed much more likely to respond to M&E findings, "particularly when they disagree with some of the findings, or they find mistakes," while feedback from funders is described as less frequent or rare. There appears to be little systematic effort to gather and learn from M&E findings.

An exception mentioned appears to be DFID-sponsored a meeting with representatives from several projects to collect overall experience and learning results, followed up by a meta-evaluation on a range of research communication projects they had funded.

## 8. What are the two biggest challenges to your M&E activities?

Time and resources and M&E know-how — the need for cost-effective M&E tools — were cited as general challenges by several respondents. Convincing grantees and partners of the needs for and benefits of M&E was raised as another challenge. Improving cooperation in media development is also seen as a crucial prerequisite to effective M&E. It was also noted that increased attention is needed to understanding the impact of web-based communications.

Shira Loewenberg, a consultant who has worked on media and conflict resolution projects, notes that M&E is often not considered in program design and development, with evaluation commissioned *after* program has begun and been running. This means there are no built-in indicators for more thorough (and potentially quantitative) results.

Mark Koenig of USAID emphasizes the funder concern that "attaining and maintaining comparability of data" is very difficult. There are few long-term data streams from individual projects, and turning findings from individual countries into meaningful global-level results is problematic.

Lee Becker of the University of Georgia warns of lack of "receptivity to findings that programs do not have big effects. Donors and program providers believe they are making a difference and want data to support that. The effects probably are smaller and more nuanced than they desire. It is hard to get them to understand that null or minimal effects are normal, and that the lack of an effect is not the result of a poor evaluation design."

Mary Myers, a freelance consultant/adviser to DFID/France Cooperation Internationale for "Media for Democracy and Transparency in the D.R. Congo," notes that a very practical obstacle "is the time and cost of researching the *rural* audience." Myers

also lists that attributing changes to a specific project and having the patience needed to discern changes over a long period of time as important challenges, points also raised by A.S. Panneerselvan and Lakshmi Nair of Panos South Asia, who write it is difficult to convincingly claim "attribution to our work, especially when you know that there are other players involved in achieving the change, and the time lag between the completion of the programme and the material change on the ground."

Lavinia Mohr of WACC adds that "Establishing cause and effect within a relatively short timeframe when searching for media development impact in a complex environment with multiple deter-minants" is a serious challenge, adding, "Most M&E approaches have been developed in fields other than media development. Adapting them to media development is not always easy," and "Finding external evaluators with relevant expertise and subject knowledge can be a challenge."

GFMD Director Bettina Peters says that moving from relatively simple project evaluation to program impact evaluation is a crucial challenge. "This carries with it the need for better cooperation among donors and media development practitioners," she writes and offers a very useful hypothetical example of a program aiming to improve freedom of information in a given country. "One would first measure the current state of freedom of information through indicators such as the existing law, how it is applied, whether anyone can make a request, how it is processed, current level of governance, etc. Then a media development programme aiming to improve freedom of information would be carried out (involving a wide range of partners and activities including advocacy, test cases, media stories, surveys among citizens etc). At the end of the [long-term] programme, another assessment of freedom of information in that country with the same indicators as the first study would be carried out to see whether the programme had the desired impact."

## 9. Can you describe briefly two specific challenges to your M&E activities that are related to your particular work [e.g., conflict, science]?

Assembling meaningful indicators that can produce reliable and comparable results is a core challenge. Another is the multiplicity of factors that affect media environments, media development projects, and observed change [or lack thereof] were cited by several respondents as specific challenges. This is especially difficult if no baseline data is available for a specific project. External developments such as elections, economic changes, political rivalries, or conflicts all may have effects on a media development project, and complicate evaluation of its successes, or failures.

For example, Panos South Asia's "conflict programme in Sri Lanka stands out as an example of the limitations of the media programme on Peace and Conflict," write A.S. Panneerselvan and Lakshmi Nair. "The day after we concluded our Media and Peace programme in Sri Lanka, the ceasefire between the government and the rebels came to an end and the war started. At one level the programme was successful in the sense that it got all its stated outputs in time. But the fundamental aim of Peace did not happen."

Even simple access to journalists and audiences can be problematic in conflict zones or little-developed areae. Work in the Democratic Republic of Congo is hampered in a major way by insecurity and lack of infrastructure, with very few roads in a vast country, which makes on-the-ground audience surveys very expensive, according to Mary Myers, a freelance consultant/adviser working there. And Rolf Paasch, director of fesmedia Africa, faces difficulties in assembling and representing an adequate expert panel (for the Africa Media Barometer) under often challenging logistical and political conditions, which means that panel members must sometimes work anonymously for fear of retribution.

A distinctive challenge mentioned by Dr. Jan Lublinski of the World Federation of Science Journalism involves a mentoring project for science journalists that relies heavily on distance communication and e-learning. "Distance evaluation", he says, "is an even greater challenge than distance learning".

Lavinia Mohr writes that WACC has found it can "measure change but not directly correlate cause and effect" in its largest effort, the Global Media Monitoring Project, the largest sustained advocacy initiative in the world on gender responsiveness and gender equality in the media. It operates primarily through a network of volunteer organizations and people in over 125 countries. "Its impact depends on its influence among even more people with whom WACC often has no direct contact and may not even know of," Mohr says. We are seeking low cost ways to capture broader interim impact on change agents. We do occasional Internet searches to see who is using the project resources and products. They are being used in many ways by organisations with whom WACC have never had any direct contact, including translations we did not know existed. These low cost Internet searches

for impact can be done only in a small number of languages read by staff members."

## 10. What are some M&E Resources (Books, articles, web-based resources, software) that guide your M&E work?

### Books / online publications

Rossi, Peter H.; Lipsey, Mark W.; Freeman, Howard: *Evaluation: A systematic approach (7th Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004.

National Research Council: *Improving democracy assistance, building knowledge through evaluations and research.* Washington: National Research Council of the National Academies, 2008.

Patton, Michael Quinn: *Utilization-focused evaluation (4th Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008.

Cracknell, Basil E.: *Evaluating development aid: Strengths and weaknesses.* Sage Journals Online, January 1996.

Church, Cheyanne; Rogers, Mark M.: *Designing for results: Integrating monitoring and evaluation in conflict transformation programs.* Search for Common Ground, 2006. http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html

Kusek, Jody Zall; Rist, Ray C.: *Ten steps to a results-based monitoring and evaluation system: A handbook for development practitioners.* World Bank, 2004.

Panneerselvan, A. S.; Nair, Lakshmi: *Spheres of influence: we communicate, therefore we are.* Kathmandu: Panos South Asia, 2008.

Jones, Robert; Young, Valerie; Stanley, Chris: *CIDA evaluation guide.* Ottawa: Canadian International Development Agency, October 2004.

DFID Central Research Department**:** *Monitoring and evaluation. A guide for DFID-contracted research programmes*. London: Department for International Development, May, 2006.

### Designated websites & platforms

The Communication Initiative Network
http://comminit.com/
Outcome Mapping Learning Community
http://outcomemapping.ca/
Monitoring and Evaluation News
http://mande.co.uk/
DFID – Department for International Development
http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Media-Room/Publications/Evaluation-studies

GSDRC Governance and Social Development Resource Centre
http://www.gsdrc.org/go/gateway-guides/monitoring-and-evaluation
The International Development Research Centre
http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26266-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

### Peace building websites include:

Berghof Handbook for conflict transformation (Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management)
http://www.berghof-handbook.net/
Global Partnership for Prevention of Armed Conflict
http://www.gppac.net
Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR)
http://icar.gmu.edu/
USAID Natural Resources Management & Development Portal
http://www.rmportal.net/
USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse
http://dec.usaid.gov/
USAID Evaluation Resources
http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/evaluation_resources.html
United States Institute of Peace
http://www.usip.org/
UN Peace and Security
http://www.un.org/en/peace/index.shtml
UN Peace Portal
http://www.peacebuildingportal.org

### Further websites that include resources on DM&E:

The American Evaluation Association
http://www.eval.org
(membership required to access all resources)
International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE)
http://www.ioce.net
(membership required to access all resources)
IDEAS (International Development Evaluation Association)
http://www.ideas-int.org
Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) – World Bank
http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/
Network of Networks for Impact Evaluation (NONIE)
http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/nonie/
Poverty Impact Evaluations Database
http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/EXTISPMA/0,,contentMDK:21534261~isCURL:Y~menuPK:412159~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:384329,00.html

OECD Evaluation Resource Centre
http://www.oecd.org/pages/0,3417,en_35038640_35039563_1_1_1_1_1,00.html
OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation
http://www.oecd.org/site/0,3407,en_21571361_34047972_1_1_1_1_1,00.html
3ie (International Initiative for Impact Evaluations)
http://www.3ieimpact.org/

## 11. Can you list a few other M&E resources that we should all know about?

### Books/online publications

Ambrose, Kaia; Roduner, Daniel: *A conceptual fusion of the logical framework approach and outcome mapping.* Outcome Mapping, Paper No. 1, May 2009.

Haight, T.; Buonaiuto, M.; Kane-Potaka, J.; Ruppert, S.: *Evaluating the impact of your website: A guide for CGIAR centers to evaluate the usage, usability and usefulness of their websites.* Rome: ICT-KM Program of the CGIAR, 2007.

Hovland, Ingie: *Making a difference: M&E of policy research*. Overseas Development Institute (ODI), working paper 281, July 2007.

Mosher, Andrew: *Good, but how good? Monitoring and evaluation of media assistance projects*. Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), 2009.

Harkness, Janet A.; Braun, Michael; Edwards, Brad; Johnson, Timothy P.; Lyberg, Lars E.; Mohler, Peter PH.; Pennell, Beth-Ellen; Smith, Tom: *Survey methods in multinational, multiregional, and multicultural contexts*. Wiley, May 2010.

Groves, Robert M.; Fowler, Floyd J.; Couper, Mick P.; Lepkowski, James M.; Singer, Eleanor; Tourangeau, Roger: *Survey methodology.* Wiley, 2nd edition July 2009.

### Designated websites & platforms

Association for Progressive Communications
Gender evaluation methodology for internet and ICTs.
http://www.apcwomen.org/gem/
McNamara, Carter: *Basic guide to program evaluation.* Free Management Library
http://managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm
Department for International Development
Monitoring and evaluating information and communication for development (ICD) programmes
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/icd-guidelines.pdf

## 12. Can you share some examples of specific M&E reports from your organization?

fesmedia Africa, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
http://www.fesmedia.org/Paasch_PerceptionsAndRealitiesInAssessingMediaLandscapes_2009.pdf

Global Forum for Media Development
http://www.gfmd.info/index.php/tools/
http://gfmd.info/index.php/tools/gfmd_toolkit_for_assessing_media_landscapes/

Institute of Development Studies
http://ids.ac.uk/go/knowledge-services/about-us/evaluation
http://ids.ac.uk/go/knowledge-services/about-us/evaluation/output-to-purpose-review

Internews Network
Kids' Crossroads: A Pan- Caucasus Media Project, Building Cross-Cultural Ties Among Youth.
www.internews.org/pubs/pdfs/kidscrossroadsfinal1sc.pdf

Cohen, Jon; Zivetz, Laurie; Malan, Mia: Training journalists to report on HIV/AIDS: Final evaluation of a global program. 2008.
http://www.internews.org/pubs/health/lv_manuals/lv_evaluation.pdf

Local Voices: Preliminary findings from radio content analysis, January 2004 .
http://www.comminit.com/en/node/69734/38

World Federation of Science Journalists
el-Awady, Nadia; Lublinski, Jan: Using the outcome mapping framework: How to build a reporters network, in "Measuring Change". Aachen, 2007.
http://www.cameco.org/files/measuring_change_1.pdf

SjCOOP Technical Report
http://www.wfsj.org/files/file/projects/SjCOOP_Technical_Report.pdf

Search for Common Ground
http://www.sfcg.org/sfcg/sfcg_evaluations.html

University of Georgia, USA
Hollifield, C. Ann; Becker, Lee B.; Vlad, Tudor: The effects of political, economic and organizational factors on the performance of broadcast media in developing countries. Athens, GA: University of Georgia, 2006.
http://www.grady.uga.edu/coxcenter/Activities/Act_2005_to_2006/Materials05-06/Egypt/IAMCR2006_Pol_Com_Final_version_v2.pdf

Tudor, Vlad; Balasescu, Madalina: Few educators, many media and journalism programs: Journalism and mass communication education in Romania after the fall of communism. Athens, GA: University of Georgia, 2007.

http://www.grady.uga.edu/coxcenter/Activities/Act_2006_to_2007/Materials06-07/Paris/Chapterlv9.pdf

## 13. Can you suggest M&E reports that you believe are particularly useful as examples of best practice?

BBC World Service Trust
Dissemination Series
http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/research/reports/2008/03/080320_research_impact_reports_dissemination.shtml

Communication for Social Change Consortium
Measuring_Change: A Guide to Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation of Communication for Social Change
http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/measuring_change.pdf

The World Bank
World Development Report 2002: Building Institutions for Markets. Chapter 10: The Media.
http://www.fao.org/righttofood/kc/downloads/vl/docs/ch10.pdf

## 14. What M&E approaches and tools can help us understand the impact of media development assistance on societal change?

This final question was the broadest and most difficult issue to address. Rolf Paasch of fesmedia Africa pointed out a "methodological problem with the term of M&E being used here since it does not differentiate between monitoring the actual media situation and evaluating our own approach." As he observed, answers could refer "to our monitoring and assessing of the real media landscape."

Susan Abbot of the Annenberg Center suggested that what is meant by societal change must be determined before the que-stion is answered to understand the normative objectives implied by "societal change".

The degree of people's trust in media is a type of larger change that might be measured by surveys, suggested Sue Folger and

Irina Negreyeva of Internews Network in Ukraine, although others again raised the problematic nature of attributing any change to a specific program or project in the complexities of socio-economic and political events.

This wariness is widely shared, and Lavinia Mohr of WACC suggests that a participatory approach, action research and outcome mapping might be most useful in seeing broader effects. Mary Myers, consultant to DFID/France Cooperation Internationale in DR Congo, also suggests participatory M&E as well as anthropological approaches.

Global Forum for Media Development Director Bettina Peters asked what area of societal change is being addressed: "More democracy? More participation in decision-making? Changes in behaviour, for instance, on rights of women or HIV/AIDs or fighting poverty?"

Peters argued that the influence media development can have in different areas must be measured in different ways, but set out common, underlining factors: "The role of media development is to create or strengthen free, independent and pluralistic media, which in turn has a positive impact on democracy (pluralistic debate, informed citizens making informed choices, participation in political decision-making, checking those in power) or on changing behaviour by empowering citizens to have a voice via the media and to have ways of their voice being heard. The underlining factor is therefore empowerment and involvement of citizens in decisions that shape their lives. Media plays a key role in this in modern society by providing information and giving voice to people's concerns."

If we recognize these roles, we need tools to measure whether media (i.e. all the different media available from the newspaper to the blog) actually does this, Peters continued, "and this means that we have to pay more attention in M&E to feedback from citizens." This requires detailed, comprehensive and costly surveys that include baselines and follow-ups.

Professor Lee Becker of Grady College at the University of Georgia USA. sees making claim for causation for a particular intervention as the most difficult challenge, and advises a high level of caution. Demonstrating impact at the individual level is easiest, and organizational change also can be documented with some success, he writes: "But societal level change is difficult. Through the use of indicators, however, and across time, some evidence of

change is possible." The process must be rigorous, however. "Carefully constructed case studies using comparisons of before and after and with control cases can be very helpful. The important point is to understand the nature of evidence one can gather, to understand that documentation of an effect is likely to take time, and to understand that science is cumulative, built on a large number of replications."

## Respondents

Susan Abbott, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, Center for Global Communication Studies

Lee B. Becker, University of Georgia, USA

Elena Cherniavska, IDEM

Sue Folger, Irina Negreyeva: Internews Network in Ukraine

Mark Koenig, USAID

Shira Loewenberg, Independent consultant

Dr. Jan Lublinski, World Federation of Science Journalists

Gabrielle Minkley, Institute of Development Studies

Lavinia Mohr. WACC

Mary Myers, freelance consultant/adviser to DFID/France Cooperation Internationale for 'Media for Democracy and Transparency in the D.R. Congo.'

AS Panneerselvan/Lakshmi Nair, Panos South Asia

Nick Oatley, Search for Common Ground

Rolf Paasch, fesmedia Africa, FES

Marjorie Rouse, Internews Network

# FoME Mission Statement

The German "Forum Media and Development" (Forum Medien und Entwicklung) is a network of institutions and individuals active in the field of media development cooperation. It serves as the German platform for the exchange of experiences, research and further elaboration of concepts. It facilitates the dialogue between media practitioners, development politics and the scientific community.

The members of the German "Forum Media and Development" advocate the human right to freedom of speech. They are convinced that free and independent media are essential for the development of liberal democracies. Free and independent media ensure that all groups of society can participate in public opinion forming. At the same time they demand transparency and accountability from political, social and economic players. This is also of particular importance with regard to poverty reduction and the promotion of sustainable development. Therefore, the German "Forum Media and Development" endeavours to strengthen the importance of media aid in the context of development cooperation.

The activities of the Forum include:

- exchange of information and experiences among the members
- exchange with media representatives from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe
- cooperation in carrying out joint projects, research and evaluations
- coordination and representation of the interests of the non-governmental organisations that are concerned with media development cooperation – at national, European and international level
- further elaboration of the political and strategic framework of the German media development cooperation
- advice to the German government and its implementing organisations.

The founding members of the Forum Media and Development:

Dr. Christoph Dietz, Catholic Media Council (CAMECO)

Evelyn Ehrlinspiel, Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES)

Dr. Hartmut Ihne, Center for Development Research (ZEF)
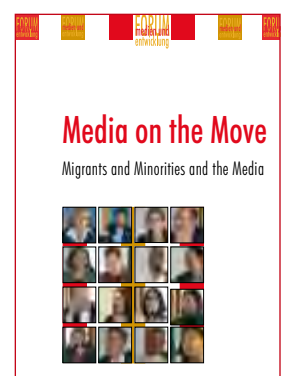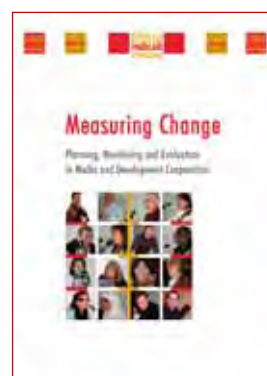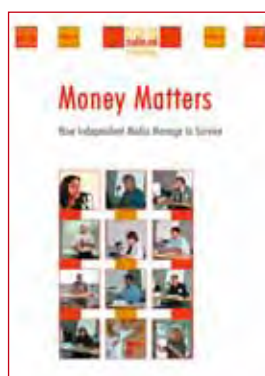
Andrea Sofie Jannusch, CAMECO

Jörgen Klußmann, Evangelical Academy of Rhineland

Michael Lingenthal, Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS)

Dr. Helmut Osang, Deutsche Welle Academy

Frank Priess, KAS

# FoME Conference Reports

### Begegnungen 19/2005

Jörgen Klußmann (Hrsg.)

## Democratization -

### a central task of media development cooperation

Symposium Forum Medien und Entwicklung
Bonn, Mai 2005

## Money Matters

How Independent Media Manage to Survive

## Measuring Change

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in Media and Development Cooperation

## Media on the Move

Migrants and Minorities and the Media

# FoME Wissenschaft / FoME Research

## Demokratieförderung

Neue Ziele in der deutschen Medienentwicklungszusammenarbeit?

Von Carolin Sickinger

FoME Wissenschaft Nr. 1

## Community-Radios in Benin

Rahmenbedingungen – Problemfelder – Potentiale

Von Tilo Grätz

**FoME Wissenschaft No. 2**

German
Media
Development
Cooperation

## A Survey

### November 2010

FoME Research No 3