

# media matters

Perspectives on Advancing  
Governance & Development from  
the Global Forum for Media  
Development

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# Foreword

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In 1991 I was privileged to launch Mali's first independent FM station 'Radio Bamakan'. Fifteen years on, my country has one of the most vibrant independent radio sectors in Africa. In Northern Mali, for instance, community stations now cover in depth the annual official performance review of their local communes.

The mayors of poorly performing communes who have had their budgets reduced are said to avoid recriminations from their constituents who listen to these radio broadcasts. Independent media has been described as the lynchpin or connective tissue of democracy. The experience of Mali certainly provides strong evidence to support this.

*"A central objective of the African Union is the promotion of democracy, popular participation and good governance."*

The Africa Union (AU) is Africa's premier institution for the social and economic integration of the continent. A central objective of the Union is the promotion of democracy, popular participation and good governance. Improving governance lies at the heart of the new vision for the revival and

development of Africa - the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) - adopted by the member states of the Africa Union. In parts of the continent there are signs that a new generation of liberalised media is starting to play an important role as a watchdog, and a public platform for debate and the mediation of conflict. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the member states have formally adopted the effectiveness of independent media in informing the public as a key indicator of progress in creating honest, transparent and accountable government.



It is no easy task to create the conditions for the independent media sector to remain autonomous from government and corporate interference and relevant to the growing needs of their audiences.

It is even more of a challenge to document the positive impact that healthy media systems are making on progress towards the 2015 international development targets, the Millennium Development Goals. The publication **Media Matters** represents a significant achievement in both of these areas. Blending arguments from leading academics with the experiences of media assistance professionals, it presents a cogent case for weaving media and communications assistance into the very fabric of development policy.

*“ Media Matters has significant implications for all policy-makers concerned to see no country is excluded from the political , social and economic benefits that free and independent media bring.”*

The UN's lead contributor to **Media Matters**, Under-Secretary General Shashi Tharoor, argues that ‘in the modern globalizing world, information sows the seeds of prosperity, and those without access to information are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to building a better future for themselves and their children’. **Media Matters** has significant implications for all policy-makers concerned to see no country is excluded from the political, social and economic benefits that free and independent media bring. It merits, therefore, careful analysis and a concerted and concrete response. This needs to come not only from the policy community in Africa, but from the full range of bilateral and multilateral agencies engaged on all our continents in the global partnership for development.

**Alpha Oumar Konaré, Chairperson, Africa Union**

# Executive Summary

**Media Matters** is about the central role of the media in effective development. Following a year long collaboration between media development practitioners and leading social, political and communications scientists, Media Matters presents *five* core messages to the international development community. The messages are grounded in academic rigour and the seasoned analysis of field professionals.

## Media Matters : Five Key Messages to Policy Makers

**1 The New Governance Agenda:** Independent media are integral to good governance. Media and press freedom indicators are being included in governance monitoring frameworks. But development agency engagement in media and communications assistance remains fragmented and marginal. Media support needs to be mainstreamed far more effectively across both policy and practice.

**2 Media, Governance and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):** Independent media systems have a positive impact on governance, democratic transitions and the 2015 MDG targets. A growing body of empirical evidence exists to demonstrate this. New communications technologies are reframing relationships between media, citizens and the state. Community media empowers those poorest communities who will benefit most from achieving the MDGs. However, research on the impact of media and communications on the poor needs to be strengthened.

**3 Counterbalance to Extremism:** Independent media systems that are inclusive and responsive to diversity play a key role in preventing the exclusion of voices that breed extremism. Healthy public spheres can host a wide range of views which can dilute intolerance. Policy makers should increase support for media assistance programmes to widen access for moderate voices and balanced discourse. And donors should engage systematically in media development in countries affected by extremism, as this threatens progress on the MDGs.

**4 Media and Global Issues:** the lack of local media coverage of the external driving forces of change on poor countries - international trade, climate change and global health for instance - is generating deficits in governance through continued public disengagement in these issues. These deficits can be tackled, however, through concerted media and communications strategies, that include assisting developing country journalists to cover processes such as the next phase of the Kyoto Protocol.

**5 Strategies for Healthy Media Systems:** a global media assistance community exists that has its own history, experience base, metrics and research agenda. Development agencies need to engage with this sector with more urgency in order to harness the proven contribution that media development can make to the MDGs; through established strategies such as support to media policy and legislation, the development of journalism associations, the provision of affordable capital, professional training and the capacity-building of indigenous media assistance organisations.



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In October 2005 the first global gathering of the media assistance sector took place in Amman, Jordan, under the patronage of King Abdullah II. The inaugural Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) drew together over 425 representatives of media assistance organisations from 97 countries. Supported by a range of agencies and foundations including DFID, the SDC and the Ford and Knight Foundations, the GFMD also attracted high-level representation from the UN and the World Bank.

Media assistance aims to strengthen regional, national and local media systems and institutions in ways that serve the public interest. Examples of media assistance include support to regulatory reform, journalism training and media business management. It also covers support to community media, citizen journalism and media for sustainable development - on health and environmental issues, for instance - in ways that ensure that people are able to access information and to express their own opinions and priorities in the public arena.

### **Communication is a critical missing link in development policy and practice.**

A major point of consensus at the GFMD was the need for the media assistance sector to argue more cogently for its place within the framework of international development. The pioneering work of the World Bank Institute had made the case for the role of the media in economic development in its publication 'The Right to Tell'. The GFMD called for the role of media and media support strategies to be examined more broadly against the wider canvas of the development agenda, encapsulated by the set of international targets, the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

***Media Matters is the response to that call.***

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### **Media Matters has four key aims:**

**1** To help development policy makers and practitioners understand the relevance of vibrant, independent media systems to their wider goals;

**2** To highlight work on the evidence of the relationship between media, communications and the development agenda;

**3** To flag key global and regional trends and opportunities in media assistance;

**4** To map the media assistance sector, its growing body of literature, and the emerging international research partnerships that will help define its priorities to 2015.

# Overview

Media Matters draws together thinking and analysis that covers the breadth and depth of the media development landscape. The opening section, **'Why Media Matters: Global Perspectives'** gathers the work of several thought leaders on major trends that cut across both the communications and development policy arenas; this is followed by an examination of the current debate that is engaging researchers, development professionals and media assistance experts alike, namely **'How Media Matters: Measuring its Impact'**. The third section, **'Challenges in Media Matters: Practitioner Experiences'** presents a range of regional and sectoral case studies, and the final section forms a guide to current information sources and studies of the field of media support, in **'Mapping the Sector - Literature, Surveys and Resources'**.

## 1

### **Why Media Matters: Global Perspectives**

The rise of an information and communications economy and culture, and the relevance of media and media assistance to international development, form the focus of this first section of Media Matters. How and why is media important in international development, and what contribution can it play in achieving the Millennium Development Goals?

#### **The Global Information Economy and Culture**

In Information Equality David Hoffman, President, Internews Network, describes how the new networked information economy is creating a new wave of egalitarianism that - underpinned by adequate investment and a pro-poor policy framework - holds enormous promise for social and political development.

Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary General for Communication and Public Information, United Nations, outlines how new communications technologies are a key driver of globalisation, but also how the Information Divide runs across technology, gender, governance and content. He is concerned that the globalised media is dangerously lacking in authentic voices from the developing world. He calls for a media that recognises and embraces the diversity of the real world, warning that 'the alternative to this recognition may be terrorism, which has so dominated our headlines in recent times.'

#### **Theories of the Public Sphere and Young Democracies**

How media contributes to the development of democracy and to an inclusive public sphere is a vital question when considering the role of media in development. Thomas Jacobson, of Temple University explores this theme by looking at the challenges that young democracies face in developing the social norms and cultural processes that underpin deliberative politics, and the complex information flows that media systems need to facilitate if governments are to remain responsive to citizens. Jacobson characterises the latter as 'a requirement that is related to, but separate from, the news media's important role in facilitating governmental transparency and accountability. It is the additional requirement that media represent public opinion in a way that accurately expresses the voice of citizens across the full range of their interests.'



The failure of the public sphere to fulfil that role in terms of voice, and representation on gender is brought out starkly by Gender and Media expert Margaret Gallagher's overview of the results of the 2005 Global Media Monitoring Project, a snapshot of gender representation of women and men in the news media, produced by WACC in 2005. The analysis of nearly 13000 news stories from 76 countries leads her to conclude that 52 % of the World's population are barely present in the news. She asks 'as long as half the world's citizens are so marginal in the media, how can the media fulfil its watchdog role on behalf of all citizens?' Flagging the centrality of Goal 3 of the MDGs (Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women), she underlines the discrepancy between the adoption of the good governance agenda by the international development community, on the one hand, and its failure, on the other, to address the current and potential role of the media in influencing social and gender relations.

### **The New Accountability Agenda**

How media relates to the governance and accountability agenda in international development is discussed by James Deane of the Communication for Social Change Consortium. He explains that a stream of agreements, declarations and reports - from the 2005 Paris Declaration of the OECD Development Assistance Committee on Aid Effectiveness to the Africa Commission Report of the UK Government - now underline the vital importance of in-country ownership and accountability of governments to their populations in meeting the MDG targets.

The 2006 3rd Global Monitoring Report (GMR) of the World Bank, for instance, - which tracks on an annual basis progress on the 2015 targets of the MDGs - cites media as a 'crucial pillar of good governance and the critical link in the accountability chain between the government and the governed'. In addition, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) in its latest White Paper, *Eliminating World Poverty: Making Governance Work for the Poor*, points to the necessity to 'strengthen civil society and the media to help citizens hold their governments to account.' DFID has backed this up by the creation of a £100 million Governance and Transparency Fund.

Deane welcomes such developments but flags the major discrepancy between these policy advances and the low status that support for independent media has in terms of international donor engagement, finding that the responses of development agencies remain 'generally marginal, inconsistent, fragmented, unstrategic and short-term.'

New digital systems create major opportunities to advance health, education and social inclusion in the developing world, according to Christian Sandvig of the University of Illinois. He uses several examples to explore the political dynamics of spectrum licensing. Sandvig maintains that access to spectrum is a foundation of development, and that unlicensed pro-community use of new technologies should be encouraged. He notes that often the social entrepreneurs behind these operations 'are called pirates because they don't have the government's permission to transmit, but they haven't stolen anything.'

This section ends with the challenging of ten myths by Daniel Kaufmann of the World Bank Institute, who argues that freedom of the press should no longer be viewed solely through a political lens, but should be looked at through a governance and development prism. He rejects the view 'that the international community and the World Bank can do little in the field of media. We suggest this is not the case.'

## How Media Matters: Measuring Its Impact

Evaluating the impact of media, and of media assistance, on development outcomes is the focus of this section. The challenge of producing robust data to substantiate the claims of media development professionals and to guide policy makers in their investments in media assistance is a central issue for both groups.

### The Great Evidence Debate

Many respected thinkers reject the notion of simple cause and effect linkages between media and development impact, according to research by a team from the Annenberg School of Communication, University Pennsylvania, who surveyed over 20 leading academics.

'What would a physician reply if he was asked for empirical evidence that the nervous system 'made a noticeable impact' on the functioning of the human body?' commented Claude-Jean Bertrand, Professor Emeritus at the University of Paris; and 'What economic, social and political developments have occurred in the absence of media and communications systems?' asked Richard Porter of the University of Illinois.

Warren Feek of the Communication Initiative picks up Porter's theme by arguing that many of the major social or political movements of the 20th Century - from the suffragette movement in the UK to the, the Indian Independence Movement and the American Civil Rights Movement - took place in the context of private and public argument - debate, analysis, dialogue - that was generated by public and private media. He acknowledges that, however compelling these precedents may be, measurable impact data - and above all data relevant to the 2015 targets - is still needed. Feek links empirical evidence with each of the MDG targets and outlines eight key areas that need to be mainstreamed into international policy if the MDGs and effective poverty reduction strategy (PRS) programmes are to be achieved.

### Testing the Impact of Liberal Media Landscapes

Pippa Norris, Harvard University and the Democratic Governance Group, UNDP, takes the empirical process several stages further. In presenting a detailed study of the link between media and good governance, she acknowledges the claims made by many that liberal media landscapes strengthen democratisation and good governance. She concludes that even after deploying a battery of economic and social controls the study confirms 'many of the assumptions about the role of independent journalism. including the core argument that the free press matters both intrinsically and instrumentally.'



## **Indexing Initiatives and Standards of Good Practice in Monitoring and Evaluation**

How to measure the development of media systems and their relationship with broader development indicators is a key question, and a number of contributors present possible instruments that are available to policy-makers and practitioners.

Mark Whitehouse of IREX presents the Media Sustainability Index (MSI) system that is in use in 38 countries in Europe, Eurasia and, most recently, the Middle East. The MSI allows the measurement of the development of the media consistently across time and between countries. Assessing five years of application of the MSI, Whitehouse states that initial concerns that the index would not be applicable between regions and widely diverse media systems – i.e. countries with dominant state broadcasters, others with strong private markets or with print or broadcast biases - have proven to be unfounded.

After reviewing the indicators applied by a range of organisations Antonio Lambino, Alexandra Tebay and Sarah Buzby, of the Annenberg School for Communication, propose an organising framework for monitoring and evaluation work at the macro level of the media development sector based around three categories: 1) Journalistic Practices and Management; 2) Industry Structure and Access to Media; and 3) Legal and regulatory Environments. They also propose a 'toolkit' approach to monitoring and evaluation methods, from which policy-makers and practitioners should draw selectively. They call for greater collaboration between media development professionals and social scientists stating that 'bridging the practical and theoretical dimensions in media development is essential in making valid and reliable evidence - based claims with regard to the impact of media'.

Alan Davis, of the Institute of War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), argues for the creation of an assessment platform that can take in both the micro dimensions, for example individual media support projects, and macro dimensions, for example of entire media systems. He calls for a collaborative process to create good practice standards on the micro level, modelled on the Sphere project, which developed standards across the humanitarian sector in the 1990s. On macro level indicators, he calls for the creation of an index that might build on existing indices but would relate media sector influence on a scale to the six dimensions of governance as identified by the World Bank, i.e. i) voice and accountability; ii) political instability and violence; iii) government effectiveness; iv) regulatory quality; v) rule of law, and, vi) control of corruption.

### Challenges in Media Matters: Practitioner Experiences

*Cross Cutting Issues*

#### 1. Enabling Environment

Monroe Price, of the Annenberg School at the University of Pennsylvania, and Peter Krug of the University of Oklahoma College of Law discuss the interaction of formal law, administrative process and the broader enabling conditions for the effective functioning of healthy media systems. Bad law is not the greatest threat to media freedoms, rather administrative acts which apply the law arbitrarily or beyond its proper legal boundaries. Moreover, audiences need 'a special kind of literacy..that encompasses a desire to acquire, interpret and apply information as part of civil society'. This is essential for the broader enabling media environment. However, more research is required to decode how the many elements of the enabling environment for independent media can be linked to phases of national political transitions.

#### 2. Media Democratisation

How independent media contributes, or not, to democracy and governance is one of the most pertinent questions facing policymakers in this sector. Through a series of compelling case studies, Ann Hudock of the Asia Foundation presents a challenging analysis of the notion that independent and economically sustainable media necessarily or by definition contribute to democracy, and calls for new strategic measures beyond support to mainstream media in ways that give greater voice to marginalised groups. Hudock shows how the maturing of the democracy and governance field, the events of 9/11 and the emergence of new technologies that are threatening the pre-eminence of traditional media outlets have fundamentally altered the context for the provision of media assistance.

Marcelo Solervicens of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) presents a dynamic picture of the growth of community radio as a medium for participatory communications and amplifying local voice. He suggests that three key developments are influencing the growth of community radio; the first being the growing crisis in the legitimacy of mainstream mass-media; secondly technological breakthroughs that are making local radio broadcasting more accessible through FM transmitters and satellites, and thirdly, the massive influence of the Internet. Solervicens suggests that community broadcasting is now a vibrant 'global sector', and a valid new information technology of the poor and marginalised. He shows how despite challenges of regulatory legitimacy, access to radio spectrum and economic sustainability, community broadcasting is uniquely placed to facilitate the achievement of the MDGs through its accessibility, affordability and ability to provide voice, information and identity to the poorest communities.

#### 3. Journalism Representation and Press Freedom

The link between the poverty alleviation agenda and press freedom is explored by Christopher Warren of the International Federation of Journalists. He convincingly argues that core concerns of journalism unions around the world - such as collective voice, the promotion of professionalism, safety and ethics, the combating of corruption, fair wages and labour rights - must be integrated into the poverty alleviation agenda in order to support press freedom and sustainable poverty alleviation. 'Through supporting local journalists' trade unions, press freedom is strengthened. And through strengthened press freedom, poverty alleviation becomes a more achievable aim.'

#### **4. Affordable Capital**

The challenge of how local independent media remain financially and editorially autonomous in emerging democracies is examined by Sasa Vucinic of the Media Development Loan Fund (MDLF). He outlines the reasons why affordable capital is not available to media businesses, and the experience of the MDLF in tackling the issue of undercapitalisation through its US\$50 million loan portfolio. He calls for such initiatives to be scaled up, as they represent a drop in the ocean of demand for low-cost capital from the sector. He further emphasises how access to external affordable capital and innovative financing instruments lie at the heart of ensuring the independence of the non-state media sector, as media companies need financial independence to remain as insulated as possible from local political and economic assaults.

#### **5. Tackling Global Issues**

Teresa Hanley, John Barnes and Murali Shanmugavelan, of the Panos Institute London, explore the many obstacles facing media in developing countries in covering global issues, such as climate change, international trade negotiations or global governance of ICT. They identify seven challenges facing Southern journalists in covering these issues - ranging from resources, access to information and the difficulty of crafting stories to meet their own editor's demands. They conclude that the lack of coverage of these issues brings with it serious implications for governance and policy makers: 'Limited media engagement may contribute to reduced public support for policy decisions which at first sight do not seem to be widely beneficial in the short term – such as the allocation of funds to enable adaptation to climate change - but are crucial in the long term, setting up a situation where development may be hindered.'

According to the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group, the global health sector has become the lead global sector in terms of mobilising of multilateral partnerships such as the Global Fund to Fight TB, AIDS and Malaria and Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisations (GAVI). However, Ron MacInnis of Internews Network explains how both global and national public health frameworks are doing little to develop the indigenous capacity of media professionals (journalists, editors and owners) to report on health in an informed and appropriate manner. He outlines a global survey of 422 organisations engaged in health journalism support around the world, and a series of country profiles undertaken by the Health Journalism Partnership (HJP), a consortium of Internews Network, Panos London and the International Centre for Journalists. The HJP found that 61% of journalism support organisations had budgets that did not exceed US\$20,000 in 2005. The country profiles identified a number of needs that were holding back the ability of the media sector to generate informed local health focused news, feature stories and talk-show programmes. MacInnis cautions that addressing these needs will require considerable time and resources in what should be viewed as 'a revolutionary way to put public health discussions in the hands of those most affected.'

#### **6. Media Assistance in Challenging Environments**

Developing effective strategies for media assistance in challenging environments should be a priority, according to Andrew Stroehlein of the International Crisis Group. Despite the challenging in operating in contexts such as Burma, North Korea and Zimbabwe, he argues that policy-makers should not be diverted from developing concerted strategies that will create the conditions for balanced information flows when authoritarian regimes finally collapse. He takes the case of Uzbekistan and proposes a series of interim and preparatory measures for media assistance in the context of potential political crisis. He proposes that 'rather than lament the lack of opportunities, policymakers ought actively and generously to pursue the lifeboat strategies that will help societies ride out the rough waters toward which they inevitably seem headed.'



Natural disaster zones present particular challenges and opportunities in information and communications support to affected communities. Adnan Rehmat of Intermedia explores this issue through a case study of the 2005 South Asia earthquake. In this study he shows how emergency media assistance in the previously state-controlled information environment of the Kashmir and the North West Frontier Province aided relief effectiveness, by generating higher performances in government responsiveness and opened up the public sphere to a diversity of voices. However, he also warns how short-term donor funding horizons combined with government closure of emergency FM broadcasters have undermined the proliferation of moderate voices, at a time when intolerance is re-emerging in the earthquake zones.

## II. Regional Trends

Media Matters commissioned five regional experts to profile the media assistance landscapes in Africa, the Eurasia, Latin America, the Middle East, and South East Asia. Although hugely diverse regions within themselves with highly uneven levels of press freedoms, the following key shared trends emerge from their analyses:

- **Media independence is being undermined by a potent combination of economic and legislative measures.** Kavi Chongkittavorn of the Nation newspaper and the South East Asia Press Alliance relates how Thailand's most respected Thai language newspaper has faced numerous hostile take-over bids. Likewise, Manana Aslamazyan, Internews Russia, relates how the authors of the Russian media law written at the start of the transition period in 1990 were unable to see what protections independent media currently needs from the economic pressures - monopolisation of ownership, taxes and buy-outs, for instance - that the government is applying directly or via proxies to consolidate state control.





- **Low pay for journalists, low professional standards, and insufficient resources for investigative coverage are pervasive.** African newsrooms, for instance, face a high turnover of staff, and are hemorrhaging experienced practitioners, who are pursuing more lucrative careers as public relations officers, according to Jeanette Minnie of Zambezi FoX.

- **The rise of new media is corroding the economic models and dynamics of established media.** Jaime Abello of the Fundacion Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano finds, for example, that in many parts of Latin America, the internet is reframing the relationship between media and audiences and heightening a perception in the continent that traditional mass media operate more as ‘power-players than as services to their citizens.’

- **Local media and local political and cultural systems are running behind satellite media.** The Middle East is witnessing, according to Ibrahim Nawar of the Arab Press Freedom Watch, a clash between conservative and religious TV channels on the one hand and channels carrying video clips, dance and Western music. The result is the creation of a growing chasm between two groups, one being Westernised, the other being driven to a highly defined interpretation of what traditional values are.

- **There exists a body of evidence about effective media assistance work across all five regions.** From the success of on-site news room training on elections coverage undertaken by Gender Links in Southern Africa to the groundbreaking work in Brazil of ANDI in increasing informed media reporting of the rights of children and adolescents, it is evident that impacts of central concern to the MDG agenda are being made.

These advances are occurring in the wider context of successful defences of press independence, such as that of the victory of the Mathichon newspaper in Thailand. The efforts of dedicated journalists to hold their governments to account through the kind of investigative reporting that resulted in the first imprisonment of a government minister in Malawi for the misuse of public funds are testimony to the positive change that the sector is catalysing. These gains, although not negligible, remain isolated and vulnerable to reversal, and in order for them to be consolidated, replicated and scaled up, concerted support to the professionals working to achieve them is required.



## 4 Mapping the Sector: Literature, Surveys and Resources

A professional sector, with a presence in all the global regions, equipped with its own literature, its own mapping processes and a growing set of research partners now exists.

Adam Rogers, United Nations Capital Development Fund, tracks the history of scholarship on communications from the early classic work of Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Schramm in the 1950s and 60s. He traces two dominant theoretical frameworks - the diffusion theory, with its emphasis on mass media dissemination of messages, and the participatory model with accent on 'horizontal methodologies involving access, dialogue and participation'. These two approaches are now being increasingly combined by practitioners, and should encourage development agencies to view media as an instrument of diffusion, participation and, finally 'participatory diffusion'. An example of the latter would be the promotion and validation of good practice by communities through community radio. Rogers concludes that development agencies could do much more to strengthen independent media and to enhance their abilities to contribute to the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals.

The media assistance field is now getting the survey literature it deserves according to Ellen Hume of the University of Massachusetts, who describes how a failure to identify media assistance as a distinct sector of development - and document media development interventions - once made assessments of the international landscape difficult. Work commissioned by the Knight Foundation has helped build a more accurate picture of the field, but much more is needed as 'the history of media development, and evaluation of its merits is not being preserved.' International needs assessments and research programmes are generating new partnerships. In Africa in 2006, for instance, an unprecedented number of media practitioners, media assistance organizations, owners and academics took part in an assessment of the Africa media development landscape as part of the Strengthening Africa's Media (STREAM) consultation facilitated by the UN Economic Commission for Africa. The initiative was supported by the Open Society Foundation and the UK's DFID, who have also commissioned a major regional knowledge-sharing process, the Africa Media Development Initiative, a partnership of the BBC World Service Trust with a group of leading African universities and communications researchers.

Global research networks, guided by social and political scientists are emerging that are starting to track the relationship between media and the international development agenda. Susan Abbott of the Annenberg School for Communication encourages both the practitioner and policy community to take advantage of their growing focus on the sector: "in making the case for why media matters, the growing interest of the research community and its international networks should be harnessed to advance the field for scholars, practitioners and policy-makers alike."

**Mark Harvey**, *Editor*, Media Matters





# Why Media Matters: Global Perspectives



## Section I: Why Media Matters: Global Perspectives

# Information Equality: the Third Revolution

**David Hoffman**, *President, Internews Network Chair, Management Committee, Global Forum for Media Development*

*“The democratisation of the wealth of information will be the organising principle of the 21st century.”*

We are at the beginning of a world revolution in communications and information technologies that will put media at the forefront of change in the developing world.

Humankind’s evolutionary advantage is our unequalled ability to organize socially through our use of language. We do not fare well as individuals in Nature. Through common language we successfully compete with predators and adapt to the vagaries of Nature as social animals. Ironically, however, it is through the private, individual creation and accumulation of wealth that humankind has proven itself most efficient. But the tensions that develop from the unequal divisions of wealth and privilege have been the stuff of history and have led to periodic movements for social equality.

In modern times the two great waves of egalitarianism were the democratic revolutions of the 18th century and the socialist revolutions of the 20th. Ironically the democratic revolutions, by increasing human freedom, led to a vast increase in financial wealth and ever greater disparities in income; while the socialist revolutions, hobbled by the bureaucratization and ideological rigidities of Communism, failed by comparison in the creation of financial wealth and led to a decrease in human freedom.

Today a third wave of egalitarianism is rising - the information and communication revolution. It is less prescriptive than its predecessors, but is rapidly spreading through innovation and applications. By its very nature, it has neither central command nor ideological design - the Internet was originally designed to defeat nuclear attack by distributing connections equally across a network, and the growth of peer-to-peer technologies now marks the growth of the Internet. Governments have had a hard time trying to understand and get ahead of it in order to regulate and control it. It is highly entrepreneurial and, at the same time, remarkably free and unfettered. In its innovative stage it requires astonishingly little capital and yet has accumulated capital on a scale unprecedented in human history, as witnessed in the Silicon Valley explosion of the 1990s, and present day valuations of companies such as Google and Skype.

The third great egalitarian revolution holds enormous promise for social development. The democratization of the wealth of information will be the organizing principle of the 21st century. The speed, creativity and capital accumulation of the information revolution will overwhelm and transform the political, economic and social structures of both capitalist and socialist societies. In Marxian terms, the productive forces will push aside the old productive relations.

*“Efforts to improve information access will have to focus on the development of local media where most people get their news.”*

Much was said about the "digital divide" and there remains a great deal of debate about whether it is increasing or decreasing.<sup>1</sup> But certainly poverty of information remains a fundamental challenge for human development and reducing information poverty must become central to any development strategy, as surveys show, which link the growth of telecommunications networks to GDP growth in over 18 countries.<sup>2</sup> Unequal access to information inhibits the growth of civil society and good governance, increases corruption, fosters conflict, degrades the environment, exacerbates problems in public health, and increases poverty.

Amartya Sen has written that "freedom is the means and the end of development".<sup>3</sup> By increasing freedom - through elections, open markets, and access to information and education - the sum total of human development is increased. Further, we begin to understand human development as a measure of human freedom - free from war, poverty and repression and free to fulfill our human potential.

In the developed world, with its ubiquity of media, we tend to take information access for granted. But there are many places in the world where people are unable to receive any information at all from outside their communities in their own languages. There currently are several projects to map the media landscapes in Africa and Asia that will identify these "information black holes" and, hopefully, lead to their alleviation. In totalitarian states and countries with relatively fewer political freedoms, limiting access to information is essential to government repression. Where state run propaganda and misinformation dominates the information space, conflict and xenophobia are more likely to fester. As Amartya Sen has also famously argued, "no substantial famine has ever occurred in a country with a democratic form of government and a relatively free press".<sup>4</sup> The same is true in public health, the environment, and education - any complex social and political issue where access to information is a necessary part of any solution.<sup>5</sup>

Any efforts to improve information access, however, will have to focus on the development of local media where most people get their news. From a development perspective, these community radio stations, local private broadcasters and print outlets provide public interest news and information that citizens often don't get from traditional broadcast media - information that facilitates civic engagement, better health, environmental awareness and peaceful resolution of conflicts. Here the situation is improving but still uneven: in many countries in Latin America and some in Africa, for example, the community radio movement is well advanced with hundreds of stations in a single country, while in others, most notably India with its vibrant national democracy and half million villages, it hardly exists at all.

From its beginnings, the field of media development was seen by the international donor community as an adjunct to communications for development, media as a means to deliver social marketing messages, particular content, in sectors such as agricultural or health extension programs. More recently, however, there is a greater awareness that the very process of open media deserves to be supported in its own right, as the ramifications of Marshall McLuhan's dictum "the medium is the message", now more than 40 years old, gradually sinks in. Improvements in media directly increase indicators of social development across the board. The World Bank, in particular, has begun to recognize the central role that media play in development and there is increasing interest at the Bank to create a global media development index that would be considered before awarding Bank loans.

In recent years a great deal of research and attention has been devoted to the relationship of corruption and poverty. There are statistically relevant correlations between the level of corruption and national income and the corresponding unequal distribution of wealth.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **The digital divide: facing a crisis or creating a myth?**  
Benjamin Compaine, MIT Press, 2001

<sup>2</sup> E. Forestier, J. Grace and C. Kenny (2002)  
**Can Information and Communications Technologies be pro-Poor?**  
Telecommunications Policy 26 refer to studies which also link access to communications networks with specific outcomes such as improved prices paid for crops in rural economies, reduced prices of inputs, the expansion of SMEs and better public services.

<sup>3</sup> Amartya Sen,  
**Development as Freedom**, Oxford University Press, 1999

<sup>4</sup> A view strengthened by the analysis of the Sustainable Development Department of the Food and Agriculture Organisation, which 'links the challenge of ensuring food security in Africa to human resource development through knowledge building and information sharing. Communication technologies are central to this process, from traditional media to the Internet.'  
**Knowledge and Information for food security in Africa: From traditional media to the Internet.**  
<http://www.fao.org/sd/CDdirect/CDan0017.htm>

<sup>5</sup> See correlation of lower levels of state ownership of television with measures of autocracy, of political rights, and health and education outcomes (Djankov, S., C. McLiesh, T. Nenova and A. Shliefer (2002) **Media Ownership and Prosperity** in World Bank Institute (ed) **The Right to Tell** Washington DC: The World Bank

<sup>6</sup> D Kaufman Media, **Governance and Development: An Empirical Perspective**, presentation at the Global Forum for Media Development, Amman, Jordan, October 2005.

*"you really can't talk  
about economic development  
without talking about  
freedom of the press."*

Paul Wolfowitz, President, World Bank

World Bank President, Paul Wolfowitz, and senior Bank economists are now making the case that strong, independent news media play a key role in promoting transparency and good governance, which in turn lead to economic and political development. Corruption can only flourish when governments operate with impunity outside the bright lights and public exposure that independent media bring. So autocrats and corrupt politicians everywhere seek to suppress their homegrown independent media.<sup>7</sup>

The Bank has been reluctant in the past to speak out on this issue for fear that it would be seen as interfering in the domestic politics of sovereign states. But media freedom is a universal right; it is also a precondition for tackling the central issue of corruption. As Wolfowitz has said, *"you really can't talk about economic development without talking about freedom of the press."*

Digital information and communications technologies have now spawned new viral media and citizen journalism formats that have helped democratize the media. These new sources of news and opinion, while challenging traditional media and the mainstream press, will play a significant role in exposing corruption. Repressive state governments are pressed to choose between their desires to benefit from the new global economy, in which ICT plays a prominent role, and their reflexive attempts to control information. In the long run, information freedom will win out. A World Bank study estimates that about half the world's households now have a fixed line telephone connection and that as much as 77% of the world's population lives within the range of mobile phone signals, figures which would have been unimaginable even only a decade ago.<sup>8</sup>

While new digital technologies pose challenges for traditional media, "old media" will continue to be central to development. Radio, in particular, will remain the primary source of news and information for most people in the developing world for many years to come; but "new media" of all kinds - cell phones and SMS text messaging, online citizen journalism and a variety of convergent application - represent the future for everyone. Digital applications cannot just be built as another project silo by media development organizations; they must transform our work on every level. For those of us working in the media development field, there is much work to do to retrain traditional journalists and their media to take full advantage of the financial, production and distribution benefits of the new media.

The information revolution holds great promise for every aspect of development. With the right investments and a pro-poor policy framework, new communications technologies have the potential to provide valuable information that can increase crop yields, improve markets, reduce corruption, make government more effective and responsive and give marginalized and poor people a voice. The costs to the international development community and private sector of extending this revolution to every corner of the world are minimal compared to the benefits it offers for global growth, trade and security.

<sup>7</sup> This continues most conspicuously in the sector of terrestrial broadcast, where natural scarcity demands effective regulation and therefore allows governments the chance to control issues such as frequency allocations on the grounds of public interest.

But even on the Internet, Freedom House estimates that perhaps 45 countries around the world block content in a way which reduces transparency and responsiveness

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/pfs2000/sussman.html>

<sup>8</sup> World Bank (2005) Financing Information and Communication Infrastructure Needs in the Developing World: A World Bank Contribution to the World Summit on the Information Society Working Group on Financing ICT Washington, DC: The World Bank.

# Integrating Approaches to Good Governance, Press Freedom and Intercultural Tolerance

**Shashi Tharoor**, *Under-Secretary General for Communication and Public Information, United Nations (Text adapted from keynote speech to the Global Forum on Media Development in Amman, Jordan, October 2005)*

*“Let us start from the assumption that free and independent media is an essential element of any stable and prosperous society.”*

There is a saying in the English speaking world that *“what you don’t know won’t hurt you.”* I trust that there are few journalists, media experts or public officials who give much credence to that maxim. What you don't know can certainly hurt you. So let us start from the assumption that free and independent media is an essential element of any stable and prosperous society. In the modern globalizing world, information sows the seeds of prosperity, and those without access to information are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to building a better future for themselves and for their children.

The UN has done some useful work in promoting media development, much of it in the form of partnerships between media organizers and the UN Development Program - UNDP - or the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization - UNESCO. Currently, the United Nations Development Program is actively working on independent media development in dozens of developing nations.

When providing advice on constitutional and legal system reforms in developing countries, UNDP stresses the importance of provisions for safeguarding an independent media. UNDP's Governance Unit has a strong "access to information" program whereby governments are encouraged and helped to make public records and data and other information readily available through the internet and through local media, and journalists are advised how to locate it - and demand it, if necessary. And as part of its work helping to organize elections in emerging democracies - UNDP and the UN's Electoral Assistance Division work on an election about every week in some part of the world - UNDP country offices organize workshops for local journalists on covering elections before, during and after the vote count. In the Middle East UNDP's Arab Human Development Report has cast a harsh spotlight on the restrictions on independent media and strongly advocated for press freedom guarantees in the region. And in one of its largest programs, next door in Iraq, UNDP has worked with the Reuters Foundation to help Iraqi journalists create an editorially and financially independent internet-based news agency which is already used widely by scores of new newspapers and broadcasters in the country.

Beyond the work done by UN agencies, the UN itself has struggled with how best to aid the development of media, in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in East Timor, to take but two examples. Realizing that, in order to promote unity



*“Freedom of information is meaningless if people don’t have the means to access this information.”*

and peace and informed decisions-making, we need to provide people with reliable independent sources of information, we built radio networks and trained local people to operate them. In 1999 in East Timor we were forced to watch while everything we had created was destroyed. We had to start again, almost from scratch, once order was restored. And in the Democratic Republic of Congo we have struggled to find ways to ensure the very successful Radio Okape can be sustained beyond our mission.

It is on the basis of our experience that I want to explore several parameters that may be useful in any debate on good governance and media freedom. Let me add another assumption that I think we can all accept as fact. We live in a globalizing world.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AT THE HEART OF A GLOBALIZED WORLD

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More than forty years ago, in 1962, the United Nations’ Secretary-General, U Thant, warned that an explosion of violence could occur as a result of the sense of injustice felt by those living in poverty and despair in a world of plenty. Why recall this today? Because both the risk and the potential for a solution have increased.

Nowhere is globalization more apparent than in the media. Television, radio, newspapers and magazines bring to our living rooms, and even our breakfast tables, glimpses of events from every corner of the globe. New communications technologies have shrunk the world and - in a real sense - made it all one: one market, one audience, one people. No one would argue that information technology is a magic formula that is going to solve all our problems. But we all know that it is a powerful force that can - and must - be harnessed if we are to deliver a tolerable standard of living to all people.

In the twenty-first century, globalization itself is not a matter of political choice, or even of economics. It is a fact. And in the long term, the new global economy is only sustainable if its benefits are felt all around the world and if it responds to the needs and demands of all people.

Whether we like it or not, a new global society is undoubtedly evolving and information and communication technologies are the nerve system of this new society.

We do, however, have some choice over how it evolves. Will globalization be a divisive force - one that merely adds to the gap between haves and have-nots in this new global society - or a process that actually delivers on the promise made in the UN charter, of *“better standards of life in larger freedom”*?

At the first-ever World Summit on the Information Society, a landmark United Nations conference held in Geneva in December 2003, and which reconvened in Tunis in November 2006 for its second phase, participating countries reaffirmed *“as an essential foundation of the information society, and as outlined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that everyone had the right to freedom of opinion and expression; that this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.”*

This was an important statement of principle. But freedom of information is meaningless if people don’t have the means to access this information. And in our world - a world of satellite television, of cell-phones and of the internet - universal access to information is not just a highly desirable aim, but also increasingly achievable.

When we speak today about media development, we do so standing on a platform of technology that could serve as the bridge between the right to information

and its realization. And yet this new world is not yet a safer or a more just world. There are many reasons for this, but one important reason is that the information revolution, unlike the French Revolution, is a revolution with a lot of liberty, some fraternity, and no equality.

## THE HAVES AND HAVE NOTS OF THE INFORMATION DIVIDE

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*“The information revolution, unlike the French Revolution, is a revolution with a lot of liberty, some fraternity, and no equality.”*

What we have at present is an information divide - an enormous gap between those with access to the benefits of this brave new world, and those without.

This divide has many aspects.

There is a technological divide - the enormous gap in access that means that seventy percent of the world's internet users live in the 24 richest countries and that 400,000 citizens of Luxemburg can count on more international bandwidth than Africa's 800 million citizens. There is a gender divide: women and girls are yet to gain full advantage from changes that could ultimately redress the inequalities of centuries. And there is a governance divide. Many people, companies and even governments in the developing world feel they have little control over this new global media that they know will have a powerful influence on their lives.

Equally important, there is also a content divide. The global media of the 21st century reflects the interests of its producers. Whether we are talking about television, radio or the internet, what passes for global media is still largely the media of the developed West. There is an occasional Third World voice, but it speaks a First World language. As far back as the first Congo civil war in the 1960s, the journalist Edward Behr spotted a TV newsman in a camp of violated Belgian nuns, going around with his camera and calling out, *“Anybody here been raped and speaks English?”* In other words, it is not enough to have suffered: one must have suffered and be able to express one's suffering in the language of the journalist.

The globalized media has few authentic voices from the developing world. Imagine if the only media to which you had access dismissed your most urgent - indeed life threatening - concerns as side issues, summed up your culture as barbaric or peripheral, your religious beliefs as incomprehensible and threatening, and the fragility of your livelihood as of no great significance to the rest of the world.

One way to change this is to increase the number and volume of voices from those parts of the world that are, as yet, recipients rather than producers, of media. And we know that this is possible. The success of Al Jazeera, for instance, serves to prove the point. Indeed, Al Jazeera does not stand alone, because we are also witnessing the impressive rise of Al Arabiya, Abu Dhabi television, and other Arabic-language networks.

A world in which it is easier than ever before to see or hear strangers at our breakfast table, through our daily dose of media must also become a world in which it is easier than ever before to see strangers as essentially no different from ourselves.

The alternative to this recognition may be terrorism, which has so dominated our headlines in recent times. If terrorism is to be tackled and ended, we have to deal with the ignorance that sustains it. We will have to know each other better, learn to see ourselves as others see us, learn to recognize hatred and deal with its causes, learn to dispel fear, and above all just learn about each other.

So how do we best encourage the growth of a media environment that adds to the sum of human knowledge and boosts opportunity in societies where such free expression has never been the norm, or where this freedom has been lost due to conflict or to systems of governance that suppress the media?

It is possible. As I mentioned previously, in the Middle-East there has been a dramatic expansion in media, especially satellite television, and the growth of a huge pan-Arab market with multiple channels available almost everywhere in the Arab world. This has served as a force for promoting Arab unity, as programmers seek material that enlarges their market-share across the Arab world and focus on regional and international issues rather than domestic ones.

We need to be cautious, because the need to win large audiences with low literacy rates can mean that programs are pitched at the lowest common denominator. Where this happens in news programming, narratives that are familiar tend to be reinforced.

The challenge for media development in such an environment is to develop media that is

- attractive, so that viewers in a saturated market don't simply change the channel;
- credible, so that viewers learn to trust the information they are receiving and keep coming back;
- authentic, in reflecting the views of the public to which it is addressed;
- empowering, reaffirming a sense of responsible citizenship by reminding viewers of their rights and obligations.

These issues have come to the fore recently in discussions about how best to develop a media culture in Iraq. Unfortunately, Iraqis themselves were not adequately represented in some of these fora. If such discussion is to be fruitful, it is essential to include those with a genuine affinity to the history, culture, and traditions of the region.

But it is equally true that this particular project - the creation of free and independent media in a country where the head of the journalists' union had, for some years prior to the war, been the son of the dictator - has lent an urgency and a specificity that has long been lacking in discussions of the importance of the role of the media.

## GOOD GOVERNANCE OR A FREE PRESS: WHICH COMES FIRST?

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At some of these discussions, an interesting conflict emerged between those who wanted a quick and substantial effort to establish a free press, claiming that good institutions of governance would follow, and those who preferred to, at best, ignore and, at worst, inhibit the freedom of the press until sound mechanisms of governance were established.

There is right and wrong in both these positions. While the vital role the media has in promoting government transparency and accountability is beyond doubt, which comes first - the institutions of good governance or a free press - is a valid question. In many places we have seen how the media can become a substitute

*"Freedom of expression does not include the right to falsely cry 'fire' in a crowded theatre."*

US Supreme Court Justice

for democratic political expression, with media talk shows serving as a facsimile (some might say a caricature) of genuine political debate. If journalists are not rewarded for being objective, and are not punished for fanning flames of intolerance, media can become a disastrous alternative to responsible politics.

To say this is not to advocate censorship. Freedom of expression is an inalienable and immutable human right, set out in article 19 of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights; An independent and credible media is essential to the enjoyment of fundamental human rights and essential to development. The people and countries with access to information have far more chance of enjoying the fruits of development than those without. Freedom to seek, receive, impart, and use information is vital.

But let us also not pretend that a thriving media is always a force for good. A free media can, sadly, sometimes prove to be *"hate media."* On 3 December 2003, three Rwandan media figures were sentenced to lengthy jail terms by the International Tribunal for Rwanda for their role in inciting their compatriots to kill Tutsis during the 1994 genocide. The three men were convicted of genocide, incitement to genocide, conspiracy, crimes against humanity, extermination, and persecution. These convictions were the first of their kind since the Allied Tribunal at Nuremberg in 1946 sentenced Nazi publisher Julius Streicher to death for his anti-Semitic publication *Der Stürmer*. In its judgment, the Court affirmed: *"The power of the media to create and destroy fundamental human values comes with great responsibility."*

In the case of Streicher, it is possible to argue that this abuse of the power occurred because the media was in the service of a tyrant. Tyrants and dictators have long known that controlling the information that people receive is a very effective way of controlling the people themselves. But in Rwanda, even before the genocide began the Rwandan president was assassinated, along with other representatives of a government that seemed inclined to seek peace. Radio Mille Collines served a terrible purpose, and it was not that of the legitimate government. Of course, it was not a truly independent media outlet; it was, rather, the propaganda arm of the Hutu genocidaires. But clearly even non-government media is not always virtuous.

The role played by the media of both sides in fuelling conflict in the Balkans also comes to mind. And, as United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has reported, the political violence that has wracked Côte d'Ivoire over the last few years owes something to the irresponsible conduct of "hate media" which, he explained, was *"fuelling the tensions, [encouraging] xenophobia and inciting violent acts."*

Even in countries with a long tradition of ensuring press freedom, the work of journalists and writers and commentators is not unfettered. There are laws against slander and libel. We may not like the specifics of some of those laws, but few doubt that some legal restrictions are reasonable. As a US Supreme Court Justice once so eloquently put it, *"Freedom of expression does not include the right to falsely cry 'fire' in a crowded theatre."* Media professionals have acknowledged that when those laws and restraints do not exist, their creation must form part of our media development programs.

## PARAMETERS FOR MEDIA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

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But what do we do when the very courts themselves don't exist? What about societies trembling on the brink of an apocalypse?

First, if our efforts to assist with media development are to genuinely contribute to a better, safer, and more prosperous world, we must accept that there is no



*“There is only one good, knowledge and only one evil, ignorance.”*

Socrates

"one size fits all" for media content. Countries and societies struggling to rebuild need a media that has a local face and a local voice, and reflects a local understanding of the world. To be a force for good, the media must be "of the people," and outsiders - even the most skilled and best-intentioned outsiders - cannot substitute. But they can help.

Second, although the establishment of a free and independent media will undoubtedly aid the creation of better institutions of governance, it is not enough to focus only on the media. The survival of a truly free and independent media cannot be divorced from the establishment of the social and political institutions of good governance. Of course, the simple answer is that the two concepts - good governance and press freedom - can and must develop together, as part of an integrated approach to nation building. But this raises some tricky questions about timing and priorities and allocation of resources that we ignore at our peril. Does it take the same amount of time to build a legal system and an independent judiciary as it does to train a journalist or set up a broadcast studio? Arguably not, and if media professionals are to take our responsibilities seriously, we must ask ourselves how to address dilemmas like this.

And finally, in a world where people fear a clash of civilizations, the need for tolerance, understanding and affirmation of our common humanity has never been stronger. A pluralistic global media can play a significant role in fulfilling this need. So it is not in any of our interests to provide support for the establishment of a second-class media. What assistance is offered must not simply be sustainable. It must also seek to provide the best possible chance for local voices to be heard across our globalized world. And if we can achieve this we will be contributing not just to peace in-country, but also to global security.

As Socrates taught us, "*there is only one good, knowledge; and only one evil, ignorance.*" If it can help promote the vital exchange of ideas and information regardless of frontiers, the media will play its part not just in the renewal of strife-torn countries but in the creation of a global civilization that is defined by its tolerance of dissent, its celebration of cultural diversity, and its insistence on fundamental, universal human rights.

## AFFIRMING OUR DIVERSITY ; A CHALLENGE TO THE MEDIA

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Fortunately, we live in a diverse and variegated world. There is no one standard, one style, or one way of doing things. Indeed, there exist, around us, many societies whose richness lies in their soul and not in their soil, whose past offers more wealth than their present, whose culture is more valuable than their technology. Our global media should bear this fact in mind. Recognizing it , and affirming that cultural distinctiveness is as central to humanity's sense of its own worth as the ability to eat and drink and sleep under a roof, is also part of the challenge before the media today.

The only way to meet this challenge is to preserve cultural freedom in all societies and to guarantee that individual voices find expression, and that all ideas and forms of media are able to flourish and contend for their place in the sun. We have heard in the past that the world must be made safe for democracy. That goal is essential, and is increasingly being realized. But it is also time for all of us to work to make the world safe for diversity.

# Media Development and Speech in the Public Sphere

**Thomas Jacobson**, *Professor School of Communications and Theater, Temple University*

*“Is a western style press really a universal goal of national development?”*

The definitive English language analysis of press-state relations in the Post WWII era was *Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert, Peterson et al. 1963). Published in the context of the cold war it classified press-state models, including mass media generally, in relation to the kinds of governments in which these models could exist. For example, the “libertarian” model of the press in which free speech was guaranteed by private ownership of media could only exist within a democratic state. Whereas a “Soviet” model was suitable for a communist state in which private ownership of media would be forbidden. For many years the libertarian model was promoted as the system young democracies needed for successful democracy.

Today this analysis of press-state relations is considered dated, both naïve about the effects of bottom line priorities in the media and also ethnocentric (Bates 1995; Nerone 1995). But considerable disagreement remains over exactly what is needed. Is a commercial press enough? What about publicly funded systems? Most importantly, whether commercial, public, or mixed, exactly what must the press accomplish to serve democratic ends? “*Man bites dog*” news? Civic journalism? Both? Neither? Does free speech mean precisely the same thing everywhere? And, is a western styled press really a universal end goal of national development, or not?

Today the most widely acclaimed analysis of these questions is that of German sociologist Jurgen Habermas (1984,1987). Answers to these questions are hard to come by in a postmodern world, and hence his work is formidably complex. But a kind of impressionistic account of his key ideas may serve for present purposes.

Habermas argues that in all human interaction there is a universal assumption underlying speech. The assumption is that the underlying structure of speech is “*oriented toward reaching understanding*.” Habermas’s claim may seem counter-intuitive in the face of common forms of deceit, manipulation, and simple bias. But for Habermas, lying itself preys upon understanding because in lying one causes someone else to presume this orientation, though as a falsehood. He argues that understanding is the “*telos*” of human communication. Individuals do not always agree, but speech of any kind assumes an orientation towards agreement even if it is an agreement to disagree. This telos is a “*...gentle but obstinate, a never silent although seldom redeemed claim to reason*” that is embodied in and operates through communication. Without it, speech would be impossible (Habermas 1979, p. 97).

In the context of media development, Habermas’s work can be seen as addressing at least two important sets of problems. One of these concerns the cultural prerequisites of democracy and cultural change generally. These prerequisites

represent the cultural institutions of modernity that young democracies must acquire, and protect, if they are to build sustainable democracies. The other concerns the specification of key stakeholders in media and democratic governance along with interactions among these stakeholders. These key stakeholders and their interactions represent what must be accomplished through communication for the sake of democracy, presuming that the prerequisites are in place. Both sets of problems can be viewed in relation to the "*public sphere*," the figurative space for public discussion that exists half-way between the private sphere of civil society and the state. It is a space where ideas must be expressed, as Article 19 of the UN Human Rights Charter suggests, without interference. But it is a space where much more must be accomplished as well.

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## MODERNIZATION, AN ORIENTATION TOWARD UNDERSTANDING, AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

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Studies of modernization have often focused on the spread of scientific and technological reason throughout society. From this perspective science is often viewed as the main prerequisite of modernity. For Habermas the emphasis on a scientific view of reason is too narrow. Modernity results from the spread of other uses of reason as well. Reason, in his view, includes science but extends to the use of "*good reasons*" in legal discussions, in discussions regarding preferred social norms, in family discussions of child rearing practices, in art, and more. In other words discussions, or discourses, of many kinds are prerequisites of modernity. Democracy, justice, and hence democratic media use rely on them all, and hence the cultural values of modernity are much broader than science alone. Yet all these discourses, including science, share the ability and willingness to consider the views of others and compromise, i.e. the hallmarks of an orientation toward understanding, and all contribute to the public sphere.

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## CULTURAL CHANGE AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

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Due in part to the common emphasis on scientific and technical knowledge, studies of media, governance, and the public sphere tend to focus on press-state relationships in an overly narrow fashion. They, too, overlook the full range of social and historical learning embodied in cultural institutions. Perhaps because such learning took place in the West over a period of centuries, democratic culture has come to seem "*natural*." But it is not. When press-state relations are observed in young democracies undergoing more rapid processes of social change it becomes clear that democratic culture must be actively "*learned*." It also becomes clear that during such periods of rapid change, democratic cultural values must therefore be handled in the public sphere, explicitly.

The public sphere extends beyond news media. Modern media circulate ideas through radio, television, film, and increasingly over the Internet. Some of these ideas are expressed artistically and some are expressed in escapist entertainment. Yet all media and forms of expression play a role in informing, motivating, and contextualizing public opinion. These media condition public opinion on what traditional practices should be preserved, what traditional practices should be abandoned, and what traditional practices should be combined in hybrid form with other perhaps "*newer*" practices, including speech practices.

The point is that the public sphere is a broad and sprawling affair in which the traditions of the past are filtered as they become combined with the practices of the present and future, through a process that involves both learning and choosing

among citizens. And only if this learning and choosing is done consciously and collectively in art, entertainment, education, scholarship, and the public sphere, can sustainable change be achieved.

## CULTURE AND “UNIVERSAL RIGHTS”

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Anthropology teaches us that no substantive values, even free speech and the value of human life, have ever been fully universal. Habermas is therefore mindful of the fact that each society will travel a different path toward development and each will continue to cherish some, probably many, of its traditional cultural values. But he is still concerned to find a universalistic basis upon which to defend intuitions of justice and rights.

Habermas's approach to justice and rights is to admit that specific rights, such as rights to free speech, to life, and others, may not be universally possessed upon birth. But at the same time he argues that the unconscious orientation towards understanding embodied in speech nevertheless establishes a universal *"moral viewpoint."* This moral viewpoint is experienced as the desire to be heard and treated fairly, to be understood in one's own cultural context. This universal desire underlies struggles for rights which have appeared more and more commonly over the past 200 years in highly varied cultural contexts. He therefore argues that the universalistic basis of justice and rights is not a set of specific *"universal rights,"* but is instead a set of evolving *"universalizable rights,"* rights that are increasingly widespread apparently because they embody the moral viewpoint.

There is a delicate balance between the moral viewpoint which is a universal and specific right which can only be adopted from within a cultural framework of tradition. Nevertheless, specific and just law can only arise as a hybrid combining the moral viewpoint with each society's own cultural preferences. The necessary reason for this hybridization is that voluntary observance of the law requires that new laws must be in accord with the motivations of individual citizens. Because motivations come from culture as well as individual experience, they cannot be forced unwillingly from the outside. The adoption of specific rights can only be accomplished through voluntary reflection and collective discussion leading to democratic legislation.

## COLONIZATION OF THE CULTURAL LIFEWORLD

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Culture comprises the *"lifeworld"* in which individual lives and collective activities take place. However, the lifeworld can be damaged when powerful institutions put too narrow an emphasis on market rationality and government by administration. In the industrialized West, economic justifications and bureaucratic imperatives have in too many respects taken over as the basis for policy making, displacing discussion among publics small and large as the basis for policy making. Economic justifications often take over for pedagogical discussions among educators and within communities. Economic reasoning sometimes even takes over for discussion within families and in the art world. Habermas addresses this problem with his thesis on *"colonization of the lifeworld."* Lifeworld colonization occurs when economic and administrative reasoning, oriented toward efficiency, replaces the proper role of public discourse which is oriented toward understanding.

Lifeworld colonization is one important cause of the much lamented dumbing down of public communication. This is not simply a matter of greed among media owners and shareholders. It also involves manipulation of the levers of



power by those with the capability to do so, sometimes intentionally and sometimes without planned intention as a result of bureaucratic processes that take on a life of their own. And the damaging consequences are not limited to poor journalism. When money and power are exerted behind the scenes and media's ability to fully reflect social interests diminishes, many social subsystems can be adversely affected. Education is hobbled in its ability to transmit social norms, individual identity is stripped of cultural context, and long term social viability suffers. Governance becomes a strategic process devoid of the orientation towards understanding that democracy and vibrant cultural life require.

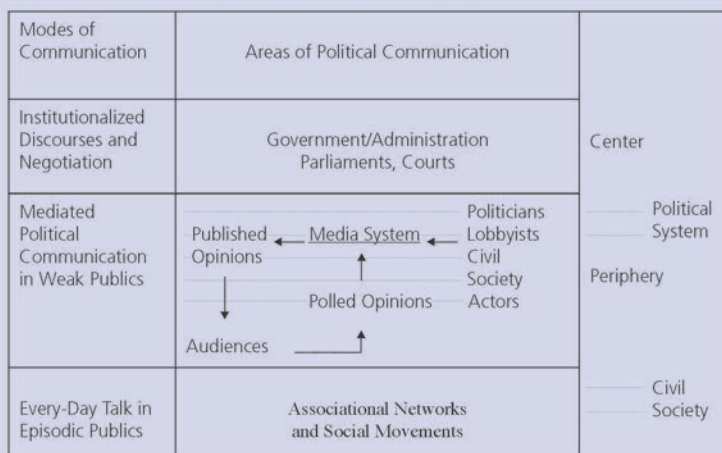
## STAKEHOLDERS IN MEDIA AND GOVERNANCE

Even if the cultural prerequisites of democracy are in place and are not undermined by lifeworld colonization, modern democracy requires an elaborate set of information flows if governance is to remain responsive to citizens. This is a requirement that is related to, but separate from the news media's important role in facilitating governmental transparency and accountability. It is the additional requirement that media represent public opinion in a way that meaningfully expresses the voice of citizens across the full range of their interests.

Most generally, there must be a mechanism to collect ideas, refine them, filter them, and feed them into formal political bodies. Habermas refers in this regard to the *"epistemic"* value of the public sphere, which is his way of seconding John Milton in his *Areopagitica*, published in 1644, *"...who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter? (Milton, (1909-14)."* When Milton penned these lines free and open debate took place on street corners. However, in modern conditions speaking openly on street corners is of little value. All the public

discourse in the world is of no democratic value unless it informs the deliberations of formal decision-making bodies. Here Habermas refers to both *"weak"* or peripheral public spheres and core public spheres. And he borrows the metaphor of a *"sluice gate"* to indicate the need for wild and overlapping citizen discourses from the periphery to be fed, or sluiced, into parliaments in the core of the political system (Habermas 1996, p. 356-8).

**Figure 1: The Public Sphere as an Intermediary System**



- Adapted from "The role of the Public Sphere and media independence in Deliberative Politics," Presented as keynote lecture at the Annual Conference of the International Communication Association, Dresden, June 21, 2006.

**Figure 1** indicates the structure of the public sphere. The right hand column of the figure shows that the public sphere occupies roughly a middle, or intermediary, position between civil society and the state. The center column represents related arenas of political communication. Social movements and associational networks such as citizen

interest groups express a quasi organized form of activity among citizens in civil society. The mode of communication there is every-day-talk in episodic publics. The mediated public sphere is a more organized sphere of political communication practiced by media systems but which also involves politicians, lobbyists, influential civil society leaders and, importantly, the public opinion industry and media audiences. The information and opinions generated among all these stakeholders in democratic communication must feed into institutionalized discourses among legislative bodies and courts in the core.

**Figure 2** shows information flows in and out of the mediated public sphere in more detail. Input into the media comes from special interest groups and lobbies as well as general interest groups, experts and intellectuals. Input also comes from political parties and politicians who have more access to the media than do other stakeholders. Output from the media is public opinion generated by virtue of the way that media select issues to publicize, choose individuals to analyze

The mass media have a significant impact on public opinion, and vice versa, to the extent that the media and public opinion industries are both part of a single system. Public opinion affects all the same groups that provide input to the

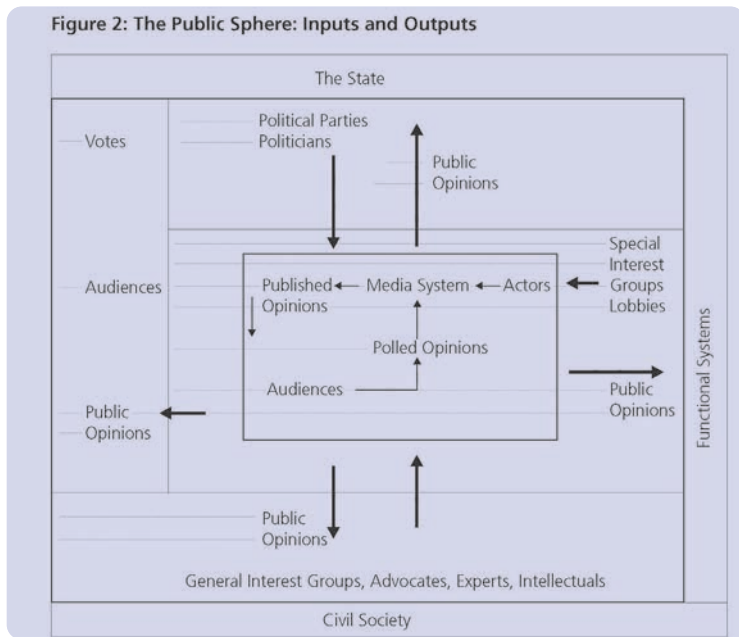
media, thus forming a feedback cycle in which all stakeholders attempt to affect dialog in the mediated public sphere, expressing innately held interests while also responding to the mediated expressions of the interests of others.

Of course the fidelity and accuracy of media representations, and the quality of discussions they facilitate, are of fundamental importance. Habermas recognizes that the healthy functioning of information flows necessary to democracy comprises a stringent set of standards societies must fulfill. And as his colonization thesis indicates, he believes that there is often a significant shortfall in fidelity, accuracy, and quality in even developed societies. The colonization thesis suggests that the intrusion of financial and administrative priorities into areas that should be governed by public discourse threatens to undermine processes through which media collect ideas, refine them, filter them, and feed them into the political system. And this, in turn, threatens to undermine the legitimacy of democratic institutions.

But colonization and the non-representative information flows it produces comprise a broader threat as well. Due to the fact that all media participate in democratic culture through entertainment programming as well as news, colonization also threatens social integration, transmission of social norms, healthy formation of individual identities. Indeed, discourses of action oriented toward understanding generally are endangered. In other words, the cultural prerequisites of democracy themselves are undermined whenever the orientation toward understanding in media is pushed aside by the inappropriate intrusion of corporate and administrative priorities.

With even this brief and highly selective review of key ideas it is possible to see that Habermas's theory addresses two main questions left over by the passing of standard libertarian theory, and asked by way of introduction. "*What exactly, must the press accomplish to serve democratic ends?*" And, "*Does free speech mean precisely the same thing everywhere?*"

On the matter of what needs to be accomplished, his analysis of the public sphere suggests that the media must accomplish a complex process of information and opinion processing by relying on a large and diverse collection of stakeholders.



## IMPLICATIONS FOR MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

*“Producing representative and responsive public opinion is not like producing shoe laces.”*

And to do this, especially in young democracies, the press and the media generally must also play a leading role in the evolution of cultural norms and skills, enabling citizens and institutions to participate in discursive procedures.

On the matter of speech values, he says “no” they are not the same thing everywhere. While Habermas hopes for notions of justice and rights that are based on the moral viewpoint, he also argues that the embodiment of this viewpoint will always depend to some degree on culture. The meaning of free speech must and does vary as can easily be seen when comparing speech protections among even European nations. Finally, the public opinion process along with processes engendering democratic norms and discursive skills all can only be acquired through speech oriented toward understanding, which must be protected from excessive market and administrative priorities.

If this account of human communication and the institutions of governance is a good one, then a few specific implications of this theory for media development can be drawn.

**1)** The central feature of democratic political life consists in discursive procedure, and the media play a constitutive role in this discursive procedure. But this role is not automatically fulfilled simply by virtue of the media being privately owned. The quality of news coverage, of news analysis, of responses to political institutions and citizen interests must be very high, and building the necessary media institutions to deliver this quality is a challenge. Debate over suitable approaches to meeting this challenge, including the possible use of publicly financed media, is often heated. However, global forums for media development should host such debates with full awareness of the complex procedural functions media must fulfill, and policy makers should support detailed research into these functions.

**2)** The norms enabling discursive procedures may reflect unconscious universal structures of human communication. However, as real social practices, individuals and societies must learn them. These procedural norms are as important as voting booths, privately owned newspapers, and election laws. Democratic procedures cannot be “transplanted” as brick and mortar institutions from one culture to another. Rather, such procedures can only be planted as ideas to be taken up by citizen participants themselves and tested against their own preferences, traditions, and hopes. Media development initiatives should therefore involve educational institutions, civic organizations, local non-profits, and others in generating community learning processes dedicated to the acquisition of discussion, analysis, and debate skills oriented toward understanding (not always agreement!).

**3)** The concerns discussed in the public sphere are not limited to politics but range across the entire gamut of citizen concerns including culture. For this reason the public sphere is a vital tool of cultural change. Culture change takes place in any case, but at least some cultural issues can be taken up deliberately and reflected on collectively. These cultural issues include matters like speech freedoms. Media development efforts should therefore engage artists and arts based organizations in addressing collective issues in culturally resonant ways, and should encourage national development policies that harness the vitality of cultural institutions. And these efforts, while including celebrations of traditional culture, should also engage contemporary issues of social change.

**4)** Lifeworld colonization threatens to undermine democratic legitimacy and social reproduction, and it must be resisted. Market rationality is of fundamental importance for improving life opportunities through economic growth. But market priorities do not serve all social processes equally well. Producing representative

and responsive public opinion is not like producing shoe laces. Enslavement of media priorities to profit maximization can rigidify and flatten media, making them less able to reflect the full range of citizen interests. The danger is cultural impoverishment that not only attenuates political discussion but undermines vital cultural life. Media development work at the broadest level should encourage democracy friendly policies. These will vary by culture and region but should include policies restricting consolidation of ownership as well as regulations resisting the pressure to equate money and paid commercial advertisements with politically protected speech. Careful analysis is needed across the variety of young democracy contexts to differentiate when the forces of money and power are employed in ways that facilitate public discourse and when these forces inhibit it.

## CONCLUSION

Most of these problems have been explored in various ways by others. Culture must be respected. Institutions cannot be transplanted. Markets can run amok. Habermas's singular contribution is to relate each problem to the other systematically within a theoretical framework defensible in the contemporary philosophical environment. The implications of his theory for media development are numerous, as has been indicated here at least briefly. In certain ways, media development challenges are similar in young and in more mature democracies. Both must worry about the arbitrary exercise of political power over media and about corporatization. However, in other ways, young democracies face the greater challenge. For here the cultural prerequisites of democracy embodied in social norms and modern cultural institutions, i.e. the orientation toward understanding, have sometimes yet to be built.

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# Why the Media Matters: the Relevance of the Media to Tackling Global Poverty

**James Deane**, *Managing Director, Communication for Social Change Consortium*

A rich, complex set of factors provided the background to the first Global Forum for Media Development, factors that imply a rapidly developing, starkly different series of challenges to the role of the media in development in the 21st Century than those that existed in the 20th.

This paper focuses on the role of media in development, rather than simply the development of the media. As this paper will argue, media plays a critical role in development, principally in four ways:

- In providing people with access to information that enables them to make sense of their lives;
- In covering issues of relevance to those living in poverty and those at the margins of society;
- In reflecting the perspectives of such people in its coverage;
- In providing public spaces and fora where issues of poverty and marginalisation can be freely discussed and feed into public debate;

None of these concerns are new but they have preoccupied development organizations for many years. It has not always been a preoccupation shared by much of the media itself.

The Global Forum for Media Development took place at a time of renewed energy and commitment to tackle global poverty, and at a time when international development strategies had undergone substantial review and restructuring. As such, it provided a fresh opportunity to reflect on why the media matters in the 21st Century and why the role it plays matters most to the almost 3 billion people on the planet living on less than \$2 a day.

This paper therefore seeks to provide a development context to current debates on the role of the media and focuses particularly on four sets of issues:

- Why the role of the media is increasingly acknowledged as being critical in determining success or failure in halving the number of people living in poverty by 2015;
- Why, perversely, media and communication support has featured so poorly in current development strategies;
- How the profound changes in the communication landscape over the last decade or so, raise profound new questions about the role of the media in society, questions which media and media support organizations themselves



(rather than governments or even civil society) should be taking the lead in responding to;

- How the debate on the role of media in development can be reframed to overcome old debates and divisions on the issue;

## NOT MESSAGE BUT VOICE: WHY THE MEDIA MATTERS

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In 2000, the World Bank carried out the largest ever survey to find out what people living in poverty said they wanted and needed most. The most common response was that people's first priority was not money. It was that they needed a voice - a say in the decisions that affected them.

Most debates over the role of the media in development focus on strategies to secure media coverage of poverty related issues. This is critical, but the extent of coverage is not the only factor. The extent to which the perspectives of those living in poverty are reflected in the public domain including through the media is becoming increasingly important. It is important in part because it is what people living in poverty say they need most if they are to improve their lives. It is important to because development economists and analysts have increasingly focused on the importance of the role of media in providing a voice for people living in poverty, a trend that is reflected elsewhere in this publication.

This paper will not rehearse all these arguments, but will focus particularly on the two that lie at the heart of current development debate: the first is ownership – the importance of countries and societies "*owning*" the development strategies that are designed to benefit them; the second is accountability: the importance of citizens being able to hold to account those with responsibility for improving their lives. The role of the media is critical in underpinning both. This requires some forays into current development debates, and current development architecture.

## HARMONY AMIDST DISUNITY: THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT DEBATE

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We live in an increasingly disunited and fragmented world with the dominant international discourse focused on the war on terror, the clash of civilisations and increasing international instability. In stark contrast to this, efforts to tackle poverty have become increasingly concerted, coherent and united. A revolution is taking place in development assistance and development strategies. Gone are the days of a thousand flowers blooming in development assistance when hundreds of donors, thousands of organizations, and millions of people were involved in a multiplicity of sometimes small, sometimes giant development projects.

The global development effort is now increasingly structured around meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Nearly all governments (the US is a major exception) have committed themselves to meeting eight Millennium Development Goals, a set of targets adopted in 2000. The Goals are an attempt to bring together a series of disparate agendas and targets developed at major global conferences on development and environment in the 1980s and 1990s into one overarching development framework. The deadline for meeting the goals is 2015 - which means we are already almost half way there and which means - for many of the goals - time is rapidly running out.

The adoption of the goals - of which halving the number of people living on

*“Issues of ownership and accountability lie at the heart of this new development agenda.”*

less than a dollar a day was the first - was one major milestone in development assistance. A second was the renewed political commitment - exemplified by the 2005 G8 Summit and Live8 events - to tackling poverty in Africa and the rest of the developing world by substantially increased development assistance, canceling debt and improving terms of trade (progress on the latter has been far slower than on the former). And a third was the development of methodologies and strategies to achieve those goals.

Donors, led principally by the World Bank, have committed themselves to work much more closely together according to a set of frameworks developed by developing countries themselves. Originally conceived as Comprehensive Development Frameworks by former President of the World Bank, Jim Wolfensohn in the late 1990s, they evolved into an uglier jargon: the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). PRSPs, which are meant to be developed and "owned" by developing countries themselves, are designed to form a framework within which all bilateral donors agree to work.

This determination to coordinate development assistance and make it more coherent is reflected in more recent agreements, particularly the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The Paris Declaration, endorsed on 2 March 2005, is an international agreement to which over one hundred Ministers, Heads of Agencies and other Senior Officials adhered and committed their countries and organisations to "*continue to increase efforts in harmonisation, alignment and managing aid for results with a set of monitorable actions and indicators.*" At the heart of the Paris Declaration, and heading the list of whether development assistance is successful or not, is the concept of "*ownership*". The declaration is also aimed at enhancing donors' and partner countries' respective accountability to their citizens and parliaments for their development policies, strategies and performance.

In essence, then, we stand at a time of unprecedented opportunity in development assistance with more money, better organisation and more urgent leadership than any time in history. Issues of ownership and of accountability lie at the heart of this new development agenda. Despite this, the role of information and communication in general and of media in particular in enabling people to understand the forces that shape their lives, in enabling them to talk and discuss those issues in public debate, in enabling them to speak out and communicate their own perspectives, in enabling them to hold authorities to account – this role has been marginal to most of the development discourse and action of the last five to ten years.

## OWNERSHIP AND PUBLIC DEBATE

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A central principle underpinning the current development agenda is countries having ownership and being responsible for developing their own development strategies. When Poverty Reduction Strategies were first proposed by the World Bank, the then President of the Bank stated that "*Too many capacity building efforts have foundered in the past because they have not been rooted in local ownership*".

To date, 61 countries have adopted or are in the process of adopting PRSPs as the foundations of their national development strategies, and several of these are now implementing their second PRS. PRSPs encompass most arenas of government concerned with poverty - health service provision, education, social services and

safety nets, livelihoods, housing and so on. It is difficult to imagine a more fundamental process affecting more people on the planet.

## WHAT HAS ANY OF THIS TO DO WITH THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA?

PRSPs were an essential condition for poor countries to qualify for debt relief, but they were also designed to be the mechanism which ensured that the perspectives of poor people, together with those of civil society organizations and the broader public in society, were to be taken into account in the design of development strategies. They were, in other words, conceived as a product both of government policy and of public debate, a debate which could provide a central pillar on which ownership rested. Without such ownership, argued Wolfensohn, PRSPs would fail.

There is increasing agreement that PRSPs have suffered from lack of ownership, and are consequently, in many cases, failing. They have been subject to criticism on various accounts - that macro-economic policy is not open for discussion, that World Bank advisers continue to shape policy for governments to give just two examples. Above all, they have been weakened by a lack of ownership, and that insufficient public consultation and debate has undermined that ownership. This is a view not only of civil society critics in many countries and internationally, but of the World Bank itself. A 2005<sup>9</sup> report published by the World Bank and Dfid found, in a major review of communication strategies and PRSPs, that a lack of information about the strategies being developed and implemented among major stakeholders remains an issue. So-called participatory exercises are still too often mere public information campaigns, involving top-down dissemination and a few workshops and seminars. What is worse, they are usually ad hoc, rather than strategic. Such debate cannot happen without an engaged, informed, proactive media. The same report recommends that it is essential to support the media in fostering "a process of open and inclusive national dialogue".

Analysis of media treatment of PRSPs - the extent to which they have been reported in the media, the extent to which media has provided a forum for public debate, the extent to which those who have most to win or lose from a public debate have had their perspectives aired in the media - has repeatedly shown a ludicrously low or poor level of coverage.<sup>10</sup>

In general, analysis has suggested:

- Very low level of awareness of PRSP processes within media of PRSP countries;
- Reporting when it happens is disengaged and formulaic;
- Lack of technical skills within the journalism corps to report on economic development and sectoral specific issues such as health, education and agriculture;
- Poor relationship between government and journalists hindering investigative and strong coverage of PRSP related issues;
- Lack of interaction between NGO/CSOs and media which could lead to greater understanding and engagement by media;
- Media outlets increasingly demanding payment for coverage of development related issues;
- Urban bias of media;
- Strategies to engage media have often not adjusted to new media environments;

<sup>9</sup> **With the Support of Multitudes: Using strategic communication to fight poverty through PRSPs**, Mozammel, M.; Odugbemi, S.; DFID / World Bank, 2005

<sup>10</sup> See Is the World Bank's strategy on poverty working, Panos, and With the support of multitudes

PRSPs are the central strategic mechanism agreed by the development community for meeting the central Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty by

2015. They are failing because of a lack of ownership. The media is vital to the kind of public debate that can foster ownership. The media is not and has not played that role. The result is that millions of people are dying today unnecessarily because this system is simply not working.

This is how the media matter to meeting just one MDG. Very similar arguments can be made with many of the other MDGs - on HIV/AIDS, on food security, on education and so on. And very similar arguments can be applied to the second pillar on which current development strategies are founded - an assumption that governments will act in the best interest of and be accountable to their citizens.

## ON A WING AND A PRAYER? AN ASSUMPTION OF ACCOUNTABILITY

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The importance of a government being held to account by its people is a given. It is at the core of most media debates. It is at the heart of much development policy and has been for many years. Amartya Sen famously wrote that famines don't occur in democracies, in large part because the media provides an early warning system and a mechanism for ensuring pressure for government action. The importance of the media for these and many other reasons is clear.

It is, in development terms however, becoming ever more critical. Most development strategies are becoming more coherent and organized. Having spent decades deciding what was best for the citizens of developing countries, donors have increasingly reached the conclusion that placing conditions on their funding was counterproductive and unsustainable. In one of the starkest conclusions of the Commission for Africa<sup>11</sup>, past donor practice has too often *"left African governments feeling more accountable to donors than to representatives of national institutions and to citizens."*

The Africa Commission report and much of current development policy thinking and practice is intent on changing this. Development assistance over the next few years will, it is proposed, increase substantially. Debt reduction is becoming real. Some progress may even be made in reforming the terms of trade in favour of developing countries, although prospects of this look increasingly desperate. There are real opportunities and potential to transform the lives of millions - and possibly billions - of people living in poverty.

All of these plans and strategies make a critical and central assumption – that governments will act in the best interests of and be accountable to their citizens.<sup>12</sup>

In essence it is proposed that very substantial increases in development assistance and other income be made available to developing countries over the next decade; and that those countries should be less accountable to donors for expenditure of that money. They should set their own priorities, as they think best in the interests of their own people.

While few pretend that this is the end of conditionality, the assumption is that governments, if they are not to be held to account by donors, will be held to account by their own citizens .

The importance of an independent, informed, engaged media in fulfilling that function is, once more, a central (if often and – at least in the past - strangely unacknowledged) pillar of this strategy. If the media fails in holding government to account, perhaps the last, best hope for making a real change to the lives of 3 billion on the planet may be lost.

<sup>11</sup> Report of the Commission for Africa, London, 2005, [www.commissionforafrica.org](http://www.commissionforafrica.org)

<sup>12</sup> One bellweather of just how critical this issue is likely to become is the response to the AIDS pandemic. Rapidly increasing expenditure on HIV/AIDS is leading to increasing concerns – including among many HIV/AIDS organisations – of money that is inefficiently spent or wasted.

This was an important and recurring theme at the XVI International AIDS Conference in Toronto in 2006.

## IF THE MEDIA IS SO IMPORTANT, WHY ISN'T IT A HIGHER PRIORITY FOR DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATIONS?

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There is little or no data available on how much development organizations collectively spend on support to media institutions and support efforts in developing

countries. There are, it is true, many initiatives designed to support media in developing countries, and given this it may appear perverse to criticize development institutions for a lack of support to the media. These are, however, generally marginal, inconsistent, fragmented, unstrategic and short term.

A meeting of bilateral and multilateral development agencies meeting in Bellagio, Italy in 2004 concluded that media and communication support strategies "*remain a low priority on development agendas, undermining achievement of the MDGs.*" Indeed many development agencies – both bilateral and multilateral - have actively reduced staff or downgraded programmes which were focused on supporting media and public debate within developing countries. There are many reasons for this.

**First**, most bilateral, and many multilateral donors, have undergone rapid and profound decentralisation processes. Decisions on funding are made at the country level on the assumption that decision-making needs to be as close to the problem as possible. This is clearly sensible, but for a sector like the media, with little overall institutional support, commitment to media support ends up depending heavily on the individual interests of programme officers in donor country desks. For this reason, donor support to media is increasingly fragmented, inconsistent and unstrategic.

**Second**, donors are channelling increasing funds through governments in the form of budget support. It clearly makes no sense to channel support to the media in the interests of promoting public accountability of governments through the same governments who are meant to become more accountable. No government anywhere could be trusted with such a task. Yet most donors are less and less equipped to provide substantial media support outside such a government structure.

**Third**, even when donors are able to provide funds directly to media support agencies, either internationally or nationally, they are open to accusations that, support to the media sector in any given country, is motivated not out of a desire to foster greater accountability in that country, or greater participation, but to further their own policy agendas.

**Fourth**, while most donors work in the name of international cooperation, many of their donor policies are actively designed to foster competition between like-minded organisations. Particularly in the media and communication sphere, where co-operation among agencies for a collective and more coherent agenda and set of strategies is badly needed, donor policies ensure that those organisations working to support media in developing countries are forced to compete rather than collaborate with each other, sometimes unnecessarily. This has the added effect of increasing duplication of effort and of capacity.

**Fifth**, donors have increasingly moved to evaluation mechanisms focused on systems such as results-based management. These have tended to insist that quantitative indicators within short time frames are used to assess impact. The best media support is aimed not at enhancing one particular organisation or initiative, but in creating a healthy, plural and vibrant environment for public debate, or in other words, the public sphere. This is beautifully captured by Jurgen Habermas: "*the confused din of voice rising from both everyday talk and mediated communication. Depending on democratic legitimation, at its periphery the political system thus possesses an open flank vis a vis civil society, namely the unruly life of the public sphere*".

The impact of a confused din and unruly debate is phenomenally difficult to measure, the health or otherwise of the public sphere is not well captured in current development monitoring and assessment tools.

**Sixth**, there is extremely limited coordination of media support and communication activities at country level. Despite the rhetoric of coherence and donor harmonization, this does not happen in the media and communication sector, and there is no



*“the confused din of voice rising from both everyday talk and mediated communication. Depending on democratic legitimation, at its periphery the political system thus possesses an open flank vis a vis civil society, namely the unruly life of the public sphere.”*

Jurgen Habermas

clear responsibility within the development system for making it happen. It becomes extremely difficult for media organisations and those who exist to support them, to have a clear strategic dialogue with development and donor organisations in the absence of clearer coordination and more transparent strategies.

*Seventh*, while there are increasing mechanisms for donor policies to be informed and guided by governments in developing countries, the same mechanisms are far less developed for non-governmental interventions such as media support. The UK Department for International Development and the Open Society Foundation are currently supporting an unprecedented effort, the Strengthening Africa Media Process, designed to enable media and communication organisations in Africa to develop and articulate their own agenda for support. It remains to be seen whether donor agencies will actively place their own support within the framework of such an initiative.

*Finally*, most development agencies conflate communication and media support that is designed, in essence, to advance their own development agendas and improve their own corporate profiles, with efforts designed to foster health public debate and strengthen media as a vital component of a healthy public sphere. In many cases, the same departments deal with both sets of issues with the inevitable result that internal organisational imperatives prioritise the branding and promotion of the organisation over the more complex business of supporting media systems.

How these and other challenges can be addressed are subjects for discussions, but clearly two priorities are obvious. The first is a much more concerted, coordinated and effective advocacy strategy aimed at donors by media support organisations. However, while this can be fostered and articulated by media support agencies, the needs and agendas need to be developed as much as possible from within developing countries, such as the Strengthening African Media process. And second, the evidence base for the impact of media support needs to be developed both urgently in the media sector.

There are now, strong signs that, after years of media support being a peripheral issue for donor and development organisations, that its critical role in fostering ownership through public debate, increasing participation and empowering people living in poverty, enabling citizens to hold their governments to account, and fostering the kind of public dialogue and healthy public sphere that can catalyse positive social change, is being recognised. In July 2006, the UK Department for International Development announced a new £100 million Governance and Transparency Fund as a cornerstone of a new White Paper on development designed to support media and civil society in developing countries. Other bilateral and multilateral agencies are also taking a renewed and more serious interest in the role of media and communication.

A corner may have been turned, but after years of inaction, it is late and there is arguably a growing crisis that needs to be addressed if media in developing countries (and for that matter in other countries) are able to play this role.

## CAN THE MEDIA PLAY THIS ROLE?

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It is not only the donors who need to examine their policies and practice in this domain. The extent to which the media is able or willing to play the role outlined in the first part of this paper is perhaps the central question facing us. This is not the place for a comprehensive analysis of media trends, but even a superficial trawl of such trends in developing countries suggests there is much to provide hope, and much to suggest despair. If development organisations assume that the media exists to act on behalf of the public in holding government to account, the question needs to be asked about the extent to which media organisations

themselves feel equipped or inclined to play this role, particularly in relation to people of complete uninterest to most advertisers.

The information revolution that has swept most of the industrial world over the last two decades has been one of technology. The information revolution that has swept most of the developing world, particularly in relation to the 3 billion people living on less than \$2 a day, is that prompted by the sweeping changes in the structure, content and character of the media. The trends shaping this "other information revolution" are inconsistent and obviously vary from country to country, and are far more complex than space allows here, but some are worth highlighting<sup>13</sup> :

**First**, a thoroughgoing liberalization and commercialization of media over the last decade in many parts of the world has led to a much more democratic, dynamic, crowded and complex media landscape. This is opening up new spaces for public debate and civic engagement, particularly in the field of broadcasting. It is also leading to a more commercial, advertising-driven media where information and power divides within developing countries between rich and poor, urban and rural are growing.

**Second**, growing concentration of media ownership - at the global, regional and national levels - is squeezing out independent media players and threatening to replace government-controlled concentration of media power with a commercial and political one.

**Third**, developing countries are increasingly reliant on powerful northern news providers, such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Reuters and Cable News Network (CNN), for their international news and information, particularly on stories of globalization, trade and international politics; and in newly democratic countries in the South, and particularly within civil society, there is a renewed and growing frustration at the Southern media's dependence on what are perceived to be partial, biased or at least fundamentally Northern-centric news organizations for international coverage and the setting of news agendas (there are major exceptions to this trend, of which the emergence of Al Jazeera is just one).

**Fourth**, new technologies have brought down the costs of media production and interaction between new and old technologies are prompting increasingly networked and horizontal patterns of communication within countries.

This is a complex, contradictory revolution marking an extraordinary transformation over little more than a decade. New freedoms, a blossoming of public debate, a resurgent community radio movement, a proliferation of channels and titles across all media, a dynamic interplay between old and new technologies and the sometimes rapid, sometimes agonizingly slow or non-existent loosening of government control over information have all characterized this revolution. So too are the continuing and increasing assaults on freedom of expression, too often accompanied by physical assaults and murder of journalists. When viewed from the perspective of development, a growing crisis may be emerging, a crisis marked by a collapse (or sometimes still birth) of public interest media. A new competitive market among media has brought innovation, dynamism and often greatly enhanced democratic debate, and has in a myriad of cases in many countries brought about a profound social change, much of it positive.

But while the proliferation of media in the wake of liberalization in many countries was initially marked by an upsurge of public debate on a whole range of issues, evidence is growing that, as competition intensifies, content is increasingly being shaped by the demands of advertisers and sponsors who pay for the newly liberalized media, and an increasingly dominant trend to focus on profitability. The result is an increasingly urban biased, consumer oriented media which has diminishing interest in or concern for people living in poverty and those living beyond the city.

<sup>13</sup> These arguments have been substantially expanded by this author and others in the **Global Civil**

**Society Yearbook 2002**

published by the

London School of Economics

([www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Yearbook](http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Yearbook))

and updated more recently in

**The other information revolution: media and empowerment in developing countries,**

by James Deane with Fackson Banda,

Kunda Dixit, Njonjo Mue and Silvio Waisbord in

**Communicating in the Information Society,**

Ed Bruce Girard and Sean O'Siochru, UNRISD, 2003,

full text available at

[www.unrisd.org](http://www.unrisd.org).

Some of this section is drawn directly from previous articles published by the author.

*“DJs are becoming as important as journalists in bringing development issues to public attention.”*

Communication for development organizations and practitioners are beginning to adjust to the new environment. DJs are becoming as important as journalists in bringing development issues to public attention. Journalists who themselves want to explore and investigate development stories – particularly those from outside the capital, are finding it more and more difficult to get either resources or attention from their editors.

Journalists the world over continue to risk their lives in the pursuit of truth, in the interests of the public. Very often they lose their lives in such an interest. But in an environment which is not only politically hostile, but economically hostile too, how long and to what extent can journalists be expected to play this role, let alone do so routinely and as the core of their job description? Such courage and such reporting may continue to survive in pursuit of stories that matter in conventional journalistic terms, but can it be expected to survive, let alone increase, for stories which in traditional journalistic terms, are often treated as non starters? Poverty and development related stories have traditionally fallen within this category.

Journalism training is also under pressure, particularly with a public interest remit, and journalism schools in some developing countries are finding that graduates are as often snapped up by the public relations and advertising industries as they are by news organizations.

The former state monopoly broadcasters and media organizations – particularly radio - which retain the greatest capacity to reach rural and marginalized populations, are facing intense competition from commercial organizations as governments reduce budgets. As a consequence some are in crisis, and feel forced to compete with their brash commercial competitors by offering more commercial and consumer oriented content. As they do so they often cut back on less public oriented services, including (particularly minority or marginalised languages), technical extension services (for example in agriculture) and of transmitter capacity (meaning that some people cannot receive a signal at all). In this sense, the digital divide is being reflected in a much broader, deeper and perhaps more fundamental information divide between urban and rural, rich and poor.

Many development agencies are responding to the new commercialized media market by actively entering it, and some of the most consistent customers for some radio stations are development organizations and donors. Income - in the form of payment for spots or sponsorship of programs - from development organizations is becoming an increasingly critical component of some broadcast organization's income, but fears are growing that an artificial market is being created and that public are receiving information determined by whatever organization - development or otherwise - that has the most money, rather than through any journalistic or public interest criteria.

The above represents, perhaps, a confused and contradictory critique of the current media in relation to current development practice and strategy. This is because most current media trends, and development trends in relation to the media, are also confused and contradictory, and this is amplified by our lack of understanding of whether and how media matters to people living in poverty. In essence, when assessing how the extraordinary changes in the media have affected people living in poverty over the last years, the answer is we don't really know. We don't know because we have extremely limited data and research in this area. Unless development organisations begin to ask more and better questions on citizen's access to information and capacity and opportunity to communicate in the public domain - including as part of their standard country assessments of development needs - these issues will continue to be marginal to development action. And we will continue not to know.

This paper has sought to set out a series of problems linking the role of the media to development policy. At its heart and put simplistically, the logical conclusion of much current development policy is clear. Unless the media is able to play the role of guardian of the public interest, unless the public is seen as the whole population of developing countries and not just those who constitute a market for advertisers; and unless those who have most to win or lose from development debates - close to half of mankind - are able to access, understand and contribute to them, people will die. They will die, as they are dying now, not in their hundreds or thousands but in their hundreds of millions.

This is a heavy responsibility to place on the media, and is arguably both misplaced and unfair. Is it the responsibility of the media to assume such a grandiose role? Should it be assumed that the media should have to pay any attention, let alone adapt itself, because of how governments choose to structure their development strategies? Surely the media exists in its own right and has the right to determine what its own responsibilities are?

Opinions may differ on these questions and they may also differ on the remedies (although there is increasing consensus and clarity among media and media support organisations of what needs to be done). There surely rests, at a minimum, a responsibility on those in the media to debate these issues, and those in development to embrace the complex and sometimes messy "din" that makes up the public sphere more seriously. To contest and disagree with the analysis set out in this paper perhaps; to explore what strategies can be made; to begin to define a set of steps that recognizes the enormity of the implications of this issue and this debate. These issues are barely discussed in the international arena. It is true that there are venues internationally where such issues are raised, such as at UN summits like the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) held in 2003 and again in 2005. These though are not the places for this debate because they are driven and oriented around government. And the role of the media has become more prominent in debates on good governance in the development sector, but they have been relatively secondary and concerted action has been woefully lacking. The agenda for addressing these issues should fundamentally be shaped by the media itself, particularly from developing countries, and by those concerned with supporting free, independent and genuinely plural media. Very few other opportunities currently exist to confront, debate and develop responses to these issues. Yet, this debate is urgent and its outcome could barely be more important. The first Global Forum for Media Development successfully provided one important opportunity. The challenge now is to place this issue at the heart of development action.

*“Unless those who have most to win or lose from development debates are able to access, understand and contribute to them, people will die.”*

# Gender Inequality, Media and Development

Margaret Gallagher, *International Media Consultant*

*“How can development policy claim to be pro-people, if it does not address the current and potential role of the media in determining social and gender relations?”*

In 2005 the United Nations Development Programme published a detailed 'gender review' of all available national reports on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.<sup>14</sup> The review starts from the premise that 'Gender equality and empowerment of women' - specifically addressed in Goal 3 - is at the core of all eight MDGs. It concludes that the national reports generally fail to highlight linkages between the Goals or to make connections with wider issues that - although not headlined in the targets and indicators themselves - are fundamental to the change process and to achievement of the MDGs. In relation to the media, the review has this to say (p. 30, emphasis in original):

*It is a matter of concern that only two of the [78] reports mention the role of the media in creating or countering popular misconceptions and negative stereotypes of women. Negative portrayals of women in the popular media and media insensitivity to women's rights have been identified as major impediments to gender equality in many countries by governments and civil society groups alike. In such a situation the silence on the role of the media in the overwhelming majority of reports reviewed is an unfortunate omission.*

Decades of research, advocacy and political lobbying at the international level have helped to locate media, information and communication among the most crucial factors that determine women's status and gender equality. The Beijing Platform for Action (BPA), adopted unanimously by 189 Member States of the United Nations at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, cited the media as one of twelve 'critical areas of concern' in which priority action was needed for the advancement and empowerment of women. The BPA's section on media - Section J as it became known - was a historic breakthrough. It placed the media alongside issues that had long been accepted as major signifiers of social and gender inequality - poverty, education, health and so on.

Ten years after Beijing, the 'silence on the role of the media' noted in the 2005 UNDP review is indeed an unfortunate omission, and one which of course characterises the MDGs themselves. But until these omissions are addressed, the claim that the MDGs provide a framework that places human rights and human poverty at the centre of development policy rings hollow. In a world where few people are untouched by media messages, yet where media content is often far removed from the daily lives and concerns of most citizens, and where media institutions overwhelmingly reflect the voices of urban elites - how can development policy claim to be 'pro-people' if it does not address the current and potential role of the media in determining social and gender relations?

The amorphous, unquantifiable nature of media processes and outcomes is often cited to explain why policy-makers prefer to allocate resources to 'concrete'

<sup>14</sup> En Route to Equality:  
A Gender Review of National  
MDG Reports 2005.  
New York:  
Bureau of Development Policy,  
UNDP, 2005.  
[www.undp.org/women/docs/en-route-to-equality.pdf](http://www.undp.org/women/docs/en-route-to-equality.pdf)



activities with 'measurable' results. Yet quantitative data can readily be found to document the ways in which the media reflect and perpetuate patterns of inequality in society. In the field of gender, the most far-reaching and significant international study is the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) which, every five years since 1995, has systematically monitored the representation of women and men in world's news media. The GMMP provides a unique, global analysis of who makes the news, in what capacity and with what level of authority.

News is the major source of information, facts, ideas and opinion for people throughout the world. In today's 24-hour news environment, it matters profoundly who and what is selected to appear in news coverage, and how individuals and events are portrayed. Equally, it matters who is left out and what is not covered. These are the concerns that have underlined the GMMP since its inception in 1995. The undertaking is impressive in scale and scope. In 2005 groups in 76 countries submitted data that were analysed and compared. In total 12,893 news stories were monitored on television, radio and in newspapers. These news items included 25,671 news sources - persons who are interviewed or whom the news is about. The stories were reported and (in the case of television and radio) presented by 14,273 news personnel. Altogether 39,944 people - including news sources, presenters and reporters - were covered in the 2005 GMMP.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The following sections are based on the executive summary of the 2005 GMMP. For the full report, see **Who Makes the News: Global Media Monitoring Project 2005**, by Margaret Gallagher, London: World Association of Christian Communication, 2006. [www.whomakesthenews.org](http://www.whomakesthenews.org)

## NEWS: A MIRROR ON THE WORLD?

It is often said that news provides a mirror on the world. But GMMP 2005 shows that it does not. The world we see in the news is a world in which women are virtually invisible.

- Women are dramatically under-represented in the news. Only 21 % of news subjects - the people who are interviewed, or whom the news is about - are female. Though there has been an increase since 1995, when 17% of those heard and seen in the news were women, the situation in 2005 remains abysmal. For every woman who appears in the news, there are four men.
- Women's points of view are rarely heard in the topics that dominate the news agenda. There is not a single major news topic in which women outnumber men as newsmakers. In stories on politics and government only 14% of news subjects are women; and in economic and business news only 20%. Yet these are the topics that dominate the news agenda in all countries. Even in stories that affect women profoundly, such as gender-based violence, it is the male voice (64% of news subjects) that prevails.
- When women do make the news it is primarily as 'stars' (celebrities, royalty) or as 'ordinary' people. Women make the news not as figures of authority, but as celebrities (42%), royalty (33%) or as 'ordinary people'. Female newsmakers outnumber males in only two occupational categories - homemaker (75%) and student (51%).
- As newsmakers, women are under-represented in professional categories such as law (18%), business (12%) and politics (12%). In reality, women's share of these occupations is higher. For instance, in Rwanda - which has the highest proportion of female politicians in the world (49%) - only 13% of politicians in the news are women.
- As authorities and experts women barely feature in news stories. Expert opinion in the news is overwhelmingly male. Men are 83% of experts, and 86% of spokespersons. By contrast, women appear in a personal capacity - as eye

witnesses (30%), giving personal views (31 %) or as representatives of popular opinion (34%).

- For women, age has a crucial bearing on whether they appear in the news. Men go on making news well into their 50s and 60s: nearly half (49%) of all male news subjects are aged 50 or over. But older women are almost invisible: nearly three-quarters (72%) of female news subjects are under 50.
- Women are more than twice as likely as men to be portrayed as victims: 19% of female news subjects, compared with 8% of males are portrayed in this way. News disproportionately focuses on female victims in events that actually affect both sexes - accidents, crime, war. Topics that specifically involve women - sexual violence, domestic violence, cultural practice - are given little coverage.
- Female news subjects are more than three times as likely as males to be identified in terms of their family status: 17% of women are described as wife, daughter, mother etc.; only 5% of men are described as husband, son, father and so on. Even in authoritative functions such as spokesperson or expert, women do not escape this identification with family. So while men are perceived and valued as autonomous individuals, women's status is deemed to derive primarily from their relationship to others. It is from these relationships, rather than from her own autonomous being, that a woman draws her authority.
- Women are much more likely (23%) than men (16%) to appear in photographs. In stories on crime, violence or disaster, pictures of women are frequently employed for dramatic effect. In newspapers and on television, the female body is often used to titillate.

## DELIVERING THE NEWS

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- There has been a steady increase in the percentage of news items reported by women - from 28% in 1995, to 31% in 2000, reaching 37% in 2005. Female reporters have gained more ground in radio and television than in newspapers. The press lags far behind the electronic media, with only 29% of stories written by female reporters in 2005.
- On television, female media professionals disappear from the screen as they get older. For women in the profession, a youthful appearance is more highly valued than experience. Up to the age of 34 women are in the majority as both news presenters and reporters. By the age of 50, only 17% of reporters and 7% of presenters are female.
- Female reporters predominate in only two topics - weather reports on television and radio (52%) and stories on poverty, housing and welfare (51%). Sports news is the least likely to be reported by women, with just 21% of female reporters.
- Overall, male journalists report at the so-called 'hard' or 'serious' end of the news spectrum such as politics and government (where women report only 32% of stories). Female journalists are more likely to work on the so-called 'soft' stories such as social and legal issues (40% reported by women). Although many 'soft' news stories are important, they are not always perceived as such in the hierarchy of new values. As a result, the work of female journalists is sometimes under-valued, and women reporters are frequently assigned to stories that are downright trivial - celebrity news (50% reported by women), or arts and entertainment (48%).

- There are more female news subjects in stories reported by female journalists (25%) than in stories reported by male journalists (20%).

Irrespective of who reports the news, however, the fundamental question is: why do so few women make the news at all - and what can be done to change that?

## NEWS CONTENT

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- Very little news - just 10% of all stories - focuses specifically on women. North America stands apart from the other regions: here women are central to the news in 20% of stories (23% in Canada, 19% in the USA). But even in this region only one story in five focuses on women - still a very small proportion of the total;
- Women are rarely central in stories that comprise the bulk of the news agenda - politics (8%), the economy (3%). Even in topics where the percentage of female news subjects is relatively high - education, child-care, consumer issues, HIV-AIDS - women seldom feature centrally. Apart from crime and violence, where women are central in 16% of items, women are central in stories that are at the periphery of the news;
- News stories are twice as likely to reinforce (6%) as to challenge (3%) gender stereotypes. Three topics contribute greatly to the reinforcement of gender stereotypes in the news: celebrity news (16% of which reinforces stereotypes), sports (12%) and arts and entertainment stories (11%);
- News on gender (in)equality is almost non-existent. Only 4% of stories highlight equality issues, and they are concentrated in areas such as human rights, family relations, or women's activism - topics which are barely visible in the overall output. Stories with a gender equality angle are almost completely absent from the major news topics of politics (3%) and the economy (1%);
- Women journalists report proportionately more stories on gender equality than men do. Female journalists report 37% of all news stories. However, almost half (47%) of the stories that challenge stereotypes, and of the stories that highlight issues of gender (in)equality, are reported by women. But male reporters also have a responsibility to produce stories that challenge stereotypes and highlight (in)equality - and they do. In 2005 men reported 53% of such stories. This is something to be welcomed and encouraged, because both female and male journalists must be concerned if the news is to become more gender balanced in the future.

With so few women central to the news - particularly in stories that dominate the news agenda - news content reflects male priorities and perspectives. The absence of a gender angle in stories in the 'hard' news topics reflects a blinkered approach to the definition of news and newsworthiness.

A small ray of light comes from the fact that male journalists do write stories on gender (in)equality. It is important that this should not be perceived as a 'female-only zone' in journalism, because the development of a more gender sensitive approach to news selection and production requires the commitment of all editorial staff - both female and male.

## JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE

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Gender portrayal in the news is the result of many aspects of journalistic practice. From the story angle and the choice of interview questions, to the use of language and the choice of images - all these have a bearing on the messages that emerge

in the news. Qualitative analysis of stories covered in GMMP 2005 found that:

- Blatant stereotyping is alive and well in news reporting around the world. Nor is it limited to the gratuitous display of female flesh - although there are plenty of examples of this. Sexist reporting extends to a very wide range of stories - including sport, crime, violence, and even politics;
- Many news reports use language and images that reinforce gender stereotypes in a subtle way. These stories usually embody unstated assumptions about the roles of women and men - assumptions that are hidden in the choice of language and images, and by the emphasis that is placed on certain aspects of male or female experience;
- News reports frequently miss the opportunity to analyse issues in a way that differentiates between women and men. A story about divorce legislation that includes only male sources; a story about national unemployment that ignores its differential impact on women, men and families - these are missed opportunities to enrich such as sports reporting - was one gigantic missed opportunity.
- Some stories do challenge stereotypes or highlight equality issues in unexpected ways. Such news items tend to overturn prevalent assumptions about women and about men - in relation to attributes, areas of expertise and competence, interests and concerns. Stories that focus directly on aspects of gender inequality - the 'glass ceiling' in employment, unequal access to resources, and so on - though rare, are a heartening glimpse of gender sensitive journalistic practice.

## LESSONS FROM THE GMMP

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The 2005 Global Media Monitoring Project demonstrates a glaring democratic deficit in the news media globally. Women - 52% of the world's population - are barely present in the faces seen, the voices heard, the opinions represented in the news. Ten years after the first GMMP, this situation has barely changed. The 'mirror' of the world provided by the news is like a circus mirror. It distorts reality, inflating the importance of certain groups, while pushing others to the margins. When it comes to reflecting women, women's viewpoints and women's perspectives on the world, this mirror has a very large and enduring black spot. If the media are to - even rudimentarily - hold governments to account on behalf of citizens, and thus to promote good governance and development,<sup>18</sup> it would seem that the media definition of 'citizens' is in serious need of revision.

Commitment to 'good governance' has become almost a sine qua non of international development planning and policy-making. The Millennium Development Goals also encompass this concept (MDG 8). It is integral to the philosophy underpinning the UK's 2006 White Paper on international development. The watchdog role of the media - sometimes on behalf of, sometimes together with, civil society - is frequently invoked as a means of ensuring government accountability and encouraging good governance. In principle this is laudable ideal. But as long as half the world's citizens are so marginal in the media, how can the media fulfil its watchdog role on behalf of all citizens? Before that can happen, much work will be needed to redress the profound gender inequalities that persist within the structures, priorities and practices of the media themselves.

<sup>16</sup> **Eliminating World Poverty:**  
 Making Governance Work for the Poor.  
 Department for International  
 Development,  
 July 2006.  
[www.dfid.gov.uk/wp2006/default.asp](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/wp2006/default.asp)



# Access to the Electromagnetic Spectrum is a Foundation for Development

Christian Sandvig, *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

## ACCESS TO THE SPECTRUM: NEW RULES IN THE PLAYGROUND

*"Purbo and Mahato are called pirates because they don't have the government's permission to transmit, but they haven't stolen anything."*

In 1985, unusual waves began to propagate from Yuendumu township - population 1,000 - on the edge of the Tanami desert in Australia. The waves were a television signal, an entirely "unauthorized, unfunded, uncommercial, and illegal" effort of the Warlpiri aboriginal nation.<sup>17</sup> Over the next years, the Warlpiri Media Association produced local, independent news broadcasts, aired indigenous language educational programming, and parlayed locally-controlled television exposure into political organization, tangible educational reform and other self-development assistance. In one memorable moment from the earliest days, the entire Yuendumu School Council traveled 290 kilometers to confront regional education officials with a video camera. As one council member said on tape, "We want this video to prove that we really did come and ask for these things, as the education department is taking no notice of our letters." The project has been a celebrated success in media development,<sup>18</sup> leading to a larger indigenous broadcasting movement and popular, award-winning content.

Twenty years later, Raghav FM Mansoorpur 1 began illegally broadcasting in Bihar, India with a related agenda. Raghav FM broadcasts brief, locally-produced news, HIV and polio prevention information, and a mix of Bhojpuri, Bollywood, and devotional songs.<sup>19</sup> Both Raghav FM and the Warlpiri Media Association could be seen as examples of many things: both were locally-initiated, had no outside support, had a development agenda, and were initially illegal.<sup>20</sup> In the 1980s and 1990s, it was enough to conceptualize these projects as falling within the category of "media for development" and to discuss them as independent broadcasters or media producers.

However, much has changed in the twenty years between the Warlpiri broadcasts and Raghav FM. Before considering the status of these projects as broadcasters or as producers of content, first step back and witness that these efforts require access to the electromagnetic spectrum. These transmitters produce invisible radiation that carries their messages of news, education, and entertainment to their destinations. The electromagnetic spectrum (or just "spectrum") is the range of all possible electromagnetic radiation: the playground on which the waves of Raghav FM intermingle with those of other stations and other services, from cellular phones to radio telescopes, military radios to wireless pacemaker controls, garage door openers to aircraft radar. The technical, legal, even notional and conceptual conditions for access to this resource - the electromagnetic spectrum -

<sup>17</sup> This quote is from Michaels (1994, p. 98).

<sup>18</sup> For example, leading to the **Australian Broadcasting to Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme** (Warlpiri Media Association, 2003).

<sup>19</sup> For news coverage, see Tewary (2006). For an overview of recent similar efforts across media, see Slater & Tacchi (2004).

<sup>20</sup> The **Warlpiri Media Association** later received a license.

have been wholly transformed since 1985 because of plummeting costs, new digital applications, and new laws allowing transmission without a license in some countries. This and many other rules of this playground have great significance for media development projects, and may now be in flux.

## THE RADIO SPECTRUM

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Discussion of the spectrum is off-putting because it is even more heavily cloaked by jargon than other technology topics. However, the noun "*spectrum*" simply indicates a range, as the phrase "the political spectrum" is sometimes used to indicate a range of ideas. The spectrum used for communication is the range of electromagnetic radiation - the stuff that the familiar antennas of our cellular telephones and radios are designed to send and receive. The concept of "*the political spectrum*" is a range organized by opinion (the "*left*" and "*right*" of this spectrum refers to historical seating arrangements in the French National Assembly). The electromagnetic spectrum is a range organized by frequency - in other words, organized by the length of the wave (as in wavelength, shortwave, microwave etc.). Waves as long as atoms or amoeba sit on one end, compared to waves as long as football fields and planets on the other. As a physical phenomenon, there are no gaps in this spectrum and a wave could be infinitely long or infinitely short.

The key point to be made here is that human communication systems are not solely physical phenomena; they are also political and technical phenomena. Radio is as much a kind of physical wave as it is the result of the human capability for transmitting and receiving waves, combined with political decisions about how to design, deploy, and organize transmitters and receivers. That portion of the electromagnetic spectrum that can be used for communication is called "radio spectrum" or the "*useful spectrum*," but the definition of which waves can be used has expanded with the human ability to manipulate them.

It has been helpful to conceptually divide the radio spectrum into passages through which we can transmit - in everyday life most people know these passages as the channels of the television and the frequencies on the radio. These passages represent the imposition of human order on the spectrum. The definition of a useful passage always depends on the available knowledge and technology of transmission and reception. At the dawn of this knowledge, separating radio transmissions into different passages by frequency was not well understood, and Guglielmo Marconi began radio with effectively one channel. As knowledge about manipulating these waves has developed, so too the definition of the radio spectrum has continually changed. For instance, in North America AM radio was succeeded by FM radio, VHF television (channels 2-13) succeeded by UHF (14-83), with each new definition of passages for communication allowing more capacity.

At the turn of the 21st century, the notion of the radio spectrum continues to change. The old trick of defining a channel or a passage now appears suddenly less helpful, throwing long-held ideas about the organization of broadcasting and the media into question. It is not just that more channels may be available than previously thought, but that channels might not be necessary at all. It could be that everyone can have their own radio station.

## POLITICAL CONTROL OF THE SPECTRUM

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If the above suggests that the human capability to use the spectrum has been ever-expanding, this could easily lead to the conclusion that more channels are

necessarily a boon to media development and democratization. More capacity could ease entry for new broadcasters and promote pluralism in content and services. More channels must mean more voices, and that must be good. However, this conclusion should be put off. The Warlpiri Media Association and Raghav FM began their transmissions as pirates. That is, despite the fact that capacity in the spectrum was available for them, they were breaking the law because they did not have permission from their respective governments to transmit on the frequency they were using. The requirement that those who wish to transmit must first obtain government permission is axiomatic in the regulation of communication. This permission, in the form of the broadcast license, is a profound way that the state intervenes to control media and communication. The license limits the entry of new broadcasters, for instance blocking the unpopular and subversive from having a public voice in repressive regimes.

This kind of control over spectrum and its danger for the freedom of information is old news. One rationale for government licensing has been the perceived scarcity of channels. The introduction of channels served in part to meet the limitations of early radio technology that could not effectively distinguish between different signals. Since it is obvious that there are far fewer channels than citizens, some system of allocation was required. However, this rationale of scarcity is only one reason to impose licensing. Licensing was and is expressly political and limiting dissent and controlling speech is often the goal.<sup>21</sup> That means that more capacity does not necessarily mean more voices.

When the Warlpiri began broadcasting in 1985, they were afraid of new technology and new capacity. They acted just in advance of the introduction of TV signals across the Tanami desert via a new satellite, Aussat. The introduction of mainstream English-language television was a danger to the preservation of Aboriginal culture, language, and way of life. After the introduction of Sesame Street into every home, why would children still speak Kaytetye and Warlpiri? Of course the planned promulgation of Sesame Street far and wide across the Tanami desert was not the manifest destiny of spectrum expansion, satellites, or new technology generally, it was a political decision.

Careful attention needs to be paid to the political and institutional surroundings that determine these choices. In 2006, nations are again at the brink of an expansion in communication capacity that could mean many things, depending on political decisions.

<sup>21</sup> For a review, see Horvitz (2005).

## NON-MONETARY RADIO AND DIGITAL CONVERGENCE

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A number of new developments in both technology and regulation have intervened in the twenty years between the foundation of the Warlpiri project and Raghav FM. The first is the dramatic improvement in wireless technology and the dissemination of knowledge about it. While the Warlpiri project was noncommercial, Raghav FM was almost non-monetary. Raghav Mahato found out how to build his transmitter from parts worth 50 rupees (about US \$1). This is more than a decline in price: it turns the typical thinking about the costs of "mass" communication on its head. According to a BBC estimate, the transmission equipment for Raghav FM costs 1/5 as much as the amount that listeners in Mansoorpur pay for the radio set that receives it (about \$5).<sup>22</sup> This fall in costs is not limited to old-fashioned analog radio. While new digital systems are not free, they have declined dramatically in price while offering new abilities.

<sup>22</sup> This phenomenon is global. Radio pirate Stephen Dunifer has recently distributed a transmitter kit for \$300-700 that allows an audio broadcast radius between 5 and 15 miles. These kits have been used for new stations across the United States, in Haiti, and in Chiapas, Mexico.

While the Warlpiri station was a story about cheap, new technology (videotape), the features and organization of radio technology at the turn of the 21st Century

are now fundamentally different. As alluded to earlier, the old trick of defining a passage or a channel in the spectrum now seems to be less necessary. In a 1983 experiment, the US FCC allowed the use of devices that spread their transmissions out over many channels and did not require a license to transmit. New technology and a short range obviated the need for licensing to prevent collisions and interference when two users wanted the same channel. This unlicensed or "license-exempt" band gave the world cordless phones, garage door openers, baby monitors, and generally a wealth of short-range radio stations that did not require government permission to operate. In the late 1990s, "Wi-Fi" wireless Internet technology came on the market and used this regulatory easement in the spectrum.

## A FIRST QUESTION FOR MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

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Around 2000, Wi-Fi allowed cheap, high-speed computer-to-computer communication over short distances. It became a demonstration of the new rules of a transformed spectrum.<sup>23</sup> Media development activists and entrepreneurs the world over quickly took this indoor, short-range equipment out to their rooftops and started building cheap and unlikely communication systems that promote new voices.

California's Tribal Digital Village uses solar and gasoline-generator-powered Wi-Fi to provide high-speed Internet access on rural, mountainous Indian reservations that have no power or telephone service.<sup>24</sup> Free2Air patches Wi-Fi networks together with wired telephone lines to extend telephone service to artists lofts in London.<sup>25</sup> In India, wireless allowed n-logue to launch an ambitious, sustainable rural Internet kiosk project offering, among other services, agricultural, veterinary, or medical queries to government officials (US\$0.23/each), English lessons (\$5.74/month), and Internet horoscope matching (\$0.69 for 40 pages).<sup>25</sup>

The happy marriage of computers with cheap wireless equipment has allowed these groups to supplement and disturb (if not usurp) the monolithic media and communication systems that did not serve them well. It is this marriage that changes the policy landscape for media development today. Connecting cheap radios to computers has allowed distinctions between applications to disappear: wireless Internet providers offer videoconference, audio and video content, email, telephone, one-to-many or one-to-one communication. More fundamentally, these new wireless systems have the prospect of using the spectrum much more efficiently than in the past - many more systems can cheaply coexist with Wi-Fi and related technologies. In some places, good advice for the social entrepreneurs of media development is then: go digital. But to launch these services, the way forward is not to wait for these unstoppable technological potentials to unfold on their own. Those interested in media development must act.

While these upstarts have potential, the future is not yet theirs to make. Governments the world over are used to imagining telecommunications and the spectrum as a lucrative purse that can be used to extract license fees for the treasury. While research and investment in advanced wireless technology has produced new possibilities for communication systems, this has been coupled with laws that allow free access to the spectrum only in parts of the global north. In contrast, building your own Wi-Fi project is legal and does not require advance government permission in only 4-6% of Africa. Sometimes new information sources have proven popular enough to sustain and protect illegal pirates with popular sentiment, but this sort of security is uncertain. As Indonesian Wi-Fi pioneer Onno Purbo writes, "*we run the [equipment] without any license from*

<sup>23</sup> See Werbach (2003).

<sup>24</sup> see <http://www.sctdv.net/>

<sup>25</sup> see <http://www.free2air.org/>

<sup>26</sup> See <http://www.n-logue.com/> and for a review, see Proenza (2005, p. 19-20).



the government. Fortunately, the Indonesian media helps keep us from being jailed.”<sup>27</sup>

If media projects promise to help alleviate social problems in developing countries, a first question for media development is, “What are the conditions for access to the spectrum?” The politics of spectrum have always underpinned questions about the media, and while spectrum policy is as important as ever for television and radio stations, the 2000s have presented the world with a chance to seize new capacity through digital systems. This chance is only open to developing countries if the law permits at least some unlicensed access to spectrum - access without a fee and without advance permission. To truly celebrate the communication of health, education, and political information on Onno Purbo’s Jakarta Wi-Fi network or Raghav Mahato’s Mansoorpoor 1, projects like these need encouragement. Purbo and Mahato are called pirates because they don’t have the government’s permission to transmit, but they haven’t stolen anything.<sup>28</sup>

27 Depending on the frequency used (Neto, Best, & Gillett, 2005, p. 76).

28 From Purbo (2003, p. 24).

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# Media, Governance and Development: An Empirical Perspective that Challenges Convention

Daniel Kaufmann, Director, Global Programs, World Bank Institute

*"We suggest the importance of viewing media development and freedoms from a governance and development perspective."*

Until the mid-1990s, the World Bank believed that its mandate was limited to purely economic issues such as trade reform, privatization, or financial sector management - reforms that according to the Washington Consensus were essential for economic development. The Bank underestimated the importance of governance and strong institutions; and the word "corruption" was not part of our vocabulary. By the late 1990s the Bank became aware that poor governance and corruption were not only severe impediments to the effective use of development assistance, but that the poor were most affected by these abuses. Gradually the Bank began raising awareness about the issue, conducting research, developing instruments to diagnose corruption, delivering training programs for government officials and civil society, and working directly on governance issues with selected countries upon request. Most recently, the Bank has focused on the importance of access to information and developing a freer media as major components of good governance and ultimately effective development.

## PRONOUNCEMENTS ARE NOT ENOUGH: THE POWER OF DATA AND ANALYTICAL RIGOR

To make a convincing case and develop properly designed initiatives, we need to understand the status of press freedom in the world today, including the factors that militate for and against an open media. We believe that the same rigorous analysis and evidence-based policy-making that we have applied to traditional economic and financial decisions should apply to governance issues as well. We are supporting initiatives to collect and assess the current state of the media which can then be shared with clients around the world. This includes, for example, the development of country-level and internationally comparable indicators of media freedom and governance. Much of this data is available, but has not been widely publicized. Data on the media industry and at the firm level also need to be collected and disclosed including accurate information on real ownership structures. Similarly, assessments need to be carried out on the political environment (for example, freedom of expression), the legal and regulatory environment and their effect on the media, the competitive environment, and a number of

*“A free press is not a luxury that only rich countries can afford.”*

other factors that help determine the effectiveness and viability of a free and open media. More specifically, our evidence-based approach begins by challenging a set of ten myths (or popular notions) on press freedoms, namely:

- 1.** Freedom of the press ought to be viewed from a strictly political perspective. We reject this view, and instead we suggest the importance of viewing media development and freedoms from a governance and development perspective.
- 2.** Press freedom should be seen as an outgrowth (or result) of a country's industrialization process and higher incomes, rather than as a contributor in itself to economic development and growth. In fact, a free press is not a luxury that only rich countries can afford.
- 3.** Data on media and governance is scant, and the limited existing data is unreliable and not useful. We challenge this notion as well, indicating the progress made on governance and media-related indicators, and that the solid empirical analysis based on this data is important. It yields evidence based lessons, and helps inform future strategies.
- 4.** The Impact of press restrictions on corruption, poverty, and underdevelopment is vastly exaggerated. This is not the case. The evidence indicates that it matters enormously.
- 5.** The written laws 'on the books' are crucial determinant of the existence or absence of press freedom. Written laws do matter as the 'de jure' codification of rules and regulations, but they are far from sufficient. The application of such legal and regulatory frameworks, the effective implementation of Freedom of Information Acts, and the de-monopolization of the telecommunication sector, for instance, matter fully as much.
- 6.** Broad press restrictions, including Official Secrecy Acts, and limitations to private media ownership, are often justified on the grounds of national security considerations. Although there are legitimate concerns about confidentiality and national security, they require rather narrow and specific areas of caution (rather than broad restrictions), and ought not justify restrictions on the type of ownership per se.
- 7.** Significant state ownership of the media, and subsidies to the media, are often rather beneficial. The evidence suggests the contrary: large-scale state ownership is usually associated with a more restricted and ineffective media. More generally, high levels of ownership concentration are associated with less media effectiveness. This also applies within the private sector where more competition should be encouraged, a process that can be aided through new technologies (web, cell, community radio, and so forth).
- 8.** The media is not to be treated as a business undertaking. It is so distinctive in its mandate and objectives, that it ought not be viewed as an 'industry.' Although it is important to recognize some particular characteristics and (among others, social) objectives of the media, it is also important to view it as a business where financial viability is essential to ensure that media development objectives are attained.
- 9.** Does holding elections in a country guarantee press freedoms? The evidence suggests that elections, while associated with a higher degree of press freedom in general terms, do not in themselves guarantee media development and press freedoms which require other initiatives and support.
- 10.** The international community and the World Bank can do very little in the field of media. We suggest that this is not the case. In fact, a number of ongoing initiatives exist; and many others could be contemplated in the future.

*In particular, the following can be highlighted:*

Today the World Bank and other development and donor agencies are "practicing what they preach" by increasing public access to information, documents, and decision-making processes. We are treating the media as an important partner in our governance, anticorruption, and poverty alleviation efforts by including them at the early stages of project work in countries and in poverty reduction strategies.

To help develop media capacities we deliver learning programs on topics not covered by other institutions, such as business and economic journalism and media management. We are also providing support to nascent media in fragile states, and in countries implementing freedom and access to information acts such as Mexico, and we are sharing good policy practices for building competitive media and telecommunication sectors, with more limited state interference. In collaboration with other organizations, we are deepening our research and analysis on media development ratings and worldwide indicators.

Finally, the Bank has been commenting publicly on media developments in our partner countries, highlighting achievements and actively discouraging abuses.

For the full presentation on media, governance and development - including aggregate governance indicators, surveys, and expert polls - presented by Daniel Kaufmann at the Global Forum for Media Development, Amman, October 2005, please see: [http://70.87.64.34/~intint/gfmd\\_info/pdf/GFMDoct05.pdf](http://70.87.64.34/~intint/gfmd_info/pdf/GFMDoct05.pdf)





# How Media Matters: Measuring its Impact

## Section 2: How Media Matters: Measuring its Impact

# Moving Media: The Case for the Role of Communications in Meeting the MDGs

**Warren Feek**, *Executive Director,  
The Communication Initiative*

*"The frustration and bewilderment are doubled when we see the flow of news emerging from the UN building as report after report and official statement describe a world generally heading in the wrong direction when it comes to 'achieving' the MDGs by 2015. New strategies are needed. Development investment patterns need to change."*

One of the biggest challenges that faces professionals in the media development and communications for development sector relates to answering a single bottom line question: what impact does the sector have on people living in poverty? The sector encounters further difficulty in presenting its case for relevance to the set of international targets embodied in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The task is made more complex by the nature of the MDGs themselves - centrally decided, universal and technical, time-bound and non-political, for instance - which present a mismatch with the processes underlying media development and strategic communications: the latter emphasise local agendas and contexts, social complexity and long-term goals and embrace political change. This apparent disconnect should not let the sector off the hook, however. The MDGs are the landscape on which we are walking: every major international agency is framing their policy and financing strategies around the MDGs. The sector just has to make its case.

The following arguments and information upon which I draw to make "the case" have been provided from both [a] the now very extensive Communication Initiative online knowledge base of summaries of 35,000 plus programme experiences, strategic thinking pieces, evaluation results and other relevant themes from all over the world and [b] the views and opinions from an interactive, online network that now numbers more than 58,000 media development and development communication professionals globally.

*This "case" has three component parts:*

1. The History of the major social forces that have shaped this world
2. The Data from research and evaluations
3. The Methodologies that underpin the way the Communication Initiative works



## A "DDDAAAH" QUESTION

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Like many practitioners I am often frustrated and bewildered by how many times we are challenged to prove that media interventions and strategies have a direct effect on the core development challenges that this world faces. Many funders, technical experts in other fields and policy makers ask *"Can you prove that the media - and other forms of communication - have impact?"*

In my view this question qualifies for the kind of response that my 13 year old daughter gives me when I ask her what is in her opinion a very stupid question. That response goes something like this: *"Dddaahhh!"*

The frustration and bewilderment are doubled when we see the flow of news emerging from the UN building as report after report and official statement after official statement describe a world generally heading in the wrong direction when it comes to 'achieving' - the MDGs by 2015. New strategies are needed. Development investments patterns need to change.

## THE BIG CHANGES

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Let's imagine having a chat with Martin Luther King Jr, the Civil Rights leader, in the course of which he is asked *"Hey, Martin, do you think that the media has impact?"* I am sure his response would NOT be "daahhh" but it would be an equivalent expression.

Just about the only thing the Civil Rights movement had going for it in terms of a strategy was public and private media and communication. No vaccines to change prejudiced social norms. No food supplements to alter ethical states. No grand economic plan to change the discriminatory world. No equity dams to build or culturally relevant new technology systems to introduce. Just private and public argument: information, debate, ideas, dialogue, analysis and convictions, a substantial part of which is channeled through the media. And the civil rights movement changed this world in very significant ways.

So, if all you get from Martin is an admittedly dreamy *"daahh"* equivalent, how about moving on down the road and chatting with Mahatma Gandhi. He is asked whether the media have impact? Perhaps this time there is simple silence as he considers the best way to respond given the vital role of the Indian media - small and large media - public and private media - informing and mobilising media - in the Indian Independence movement. That silence would provide a more compelling answer than any *"daahhh"* from any teenager.

You move on to a spiritual neighbour of Martin and Mahatma: Emily Pankhurst was a leader of the Women's Suffragette movement. Many women still cannot vote in some countries. But in the first 50 years of the 20th century a seismic shift took place. The media were centrally involved in that shift.

Women did not get the vote that is rightfully theirs by holding dinner parties. They staged events that demanded media coverage. They created the space needed for public debate and private dialogue on these issues by writing columns, highlighting principles and communicating their vision and ideas - almost always through a media form. I am sure that Emily would respond to our question along the lines of: *"Oh my dear...let me tell you my experience"* but in essence she would mean *"Daahhh!"*

There are many others you could talk to as we travel this road: Nelson Mandela on anti-apartheid action, indigenous community leaders on land rights, tobacco company leaders on what the anti-tobacco movement has done to smoking rates in some countries, etc...

*"Whether we like it or not - and no matter how strongly we believe that what we do works - measurable impact data is required. And data that is relevant to the MDG targets is particularly needed."*

## NOW THAT THE CASE IS MADE

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So, the case is made! There is no need to go any further. Big increases in funding will now flow for media development and development communication? The media and communication perspective become an integral and central part of policy development and monitoring?

Ahhh – no! As the New Zealand back country farmer in my native land would probably say if you asked for directions: *"If I were you I would not start from here!"*

What the funders and policy makers appear to say they need is the detailed data not the historical precedents – no matter how compelling and major those changes have been. Whether we like it or not – and no matter how strongly we believe that what we do works – measurable impact data is required. And data that is relevant to the MDG targets is particularly needed.

### MDG 1: Poverty

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**<sup>1</sup> Political Economy of Government Responsiveness**  
Theory and Evidence from India by  
Timothy Besley and Robin Burgess  
Quarterly Journal of Economics  
November 2002  
see summary and links to original at  
<http://www.comminit.com/evaluations/eval2005/evaluations-45.html>

A group of London School of Economics economists were interested in that most basic of development issues, hunger and food security. In India they looked at the public distribution of food and state government expenditures on disaster relief related to the most vulnerable people and populations in selected Indian States. Their research reveals strong, significant, and positive correlations between newspaper circulation levels and government responses. A 1% increase in newspaper circulation is associated with a 2.4% increase in public food distribution and a 5.5 % increase in calamity relief expenditures. Their summary was that "States with higher levels of media development are more active in protecting vulnerable citizens".<sup>1</sup>

### MDG 2: Education

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**<sup>2</sup> Power of Information: Evidence From a Newspaper Campaign to Reduce Capture**  
by Ritva Reinikka and Jakob Svensson  
World Bank Institute - December 2003  
see Summary and Links at  
<http://www.comminit.com/evaluations/eval2005/evaluations-75.html>

The World Bank's Policy Research Group assessed a Ugandan government initiated newspaper campaign to boost schools' and parents' ability to monitor local officials' handling of a large school-grant program - to ensure that the money that was allocated by government to schools got to those schools for the purpose of education – not into other people's hands through corrupt practices. The results were striking: In 1995 only 20%, on average, of the funds allocated got to those schools. 80% of those dollars just wandered away. By 2001, with the newspaper initiative the only major variable, the situation had been reversed: 80% of the dollars got to the schools. The resources are dramatically improved for more effective education – a crucial component in development.<sup>2</sup> In summary: Increased public access to information (...) reduce[s] (...) corruption of public funds.

### MDG 3: Gender

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Charles Westoff is a leading demographer at Princeton University. He and his equally eminent colleague Akinrola Bankole, looked at the impact that accessing mass media had on people's reproductive health choices in Africa, using DHSS data as the basis for the analysis. In assessing the data and making the analysis they controlled for the variables that could distort such findings: income levels; socio-economic status; age; rural-urban and so on.

The Executive Summary of their paper states: *"The general conclusion (...) is that there is a persistent and frequently strong association between exposure to the*

mass media and reproductive behaviour in Africa in the expected direction; (...) greater knowledge and use of contraception, intention to use contraception in the future, preferences for fewer children and intention to stop child bearing. In addition, there is evidence that media exposure is also associated with later age at marriage. These conclusions can be generally applied to women and men, both married and single" [para 4 of Executive Summary].

Some examples of the data produced:

Zambia: 15% of married women with no education regularly exposed to radio and TV are currently using contraception compared with 9% exposed to one of those media and 7 per cent exposed to no media.

Burkina Faso: All women regularly exposed to radio, television and print media desire a mean number of children of 3.7; compared with 4.2 for women having regular exposure to two of those media, 5.7 for one of the media, and 6.3 for no exposure to any media.

What is interesting is that just accessing the media, in particular radio, is enough to have a significant effect. It is not necessary to hear a specific message or piece of information. It is the way that the media opens up overall possibilities and horizons that transfers to, in this case, modern contraception use, fewer children and intention to stop child bearing that encourages such change.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> **Mass Media and Reproductive Behavior in Africa;** Demographic and Health Surveys [DHS] Analytical Reports; by Charles Westoff and Akinrola Bankole; April 1997 see Summary and Links at <http://www.cominit.com/evaluations/idmay15/sld-2291.html>

## MDG 4: Child Mortality

Reducing child mortality is a very important Millennium Development Goal. In 1990 the Philippines Department of Health conducted a national mass-media campaign in support of routine vaccination services. A WHO cross-disciplinary research team assessed that media campaign. They concluded that "*significantly attributable to that campaign*" the proportion of fully vaccinated children of ages 12-23 months increased from 54% to 65%. The proportion of children whose vaccinations were started on time increased from 43.3% to 55.6% and the number that finished on time jumped from 32.2% to 56.2%. The average number of vaccinations that a child under 2 years received increased from 4.32 to 5.10. Coverage increased between 1989 and 1990 by a factor of 0.77. 64% of mothers who knew of the campaign had their children immunised; 42% of mothers who did not have the knowledge of the campaign had their children vaccinated. They even quantified the media role - the amount of these increases that were attributed to the media was 0.54.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> **Improving vaccination coverage in urban areas through a health communication campaign:** the 1990 Philippine experience. WHO Bulletin DMS. Vol. 72, 1994. Pages 409-419 by Zimicki, S., Hornik, R.C., Verzosa, C.C., Hernandez, J.R., de Guzman, E., Dayrit, M., Fausto, A., Lee, M.B., Abad, M see Summary and Links at <http://www.cominit.com/evaluations/idmay15/sld-2278.html>

## MDG 5: Maternal Mortality

Reducing maternal mortality is a vital issue that is proving extremely difficult to significantly achieve. Researchers at the BASICS project investigated the impact of an initiative in Mali called "*The Green Pendelu*" which uses indigenous cultural, local media resources including songs, singer/storytellers (griots) and traditional clothing to address maternal mortality issues. The goal was to increase communication between husbands and wives regarding pregnancy and to improve health-seeking behavior during pregnancy. All indicators showed significantly increased domestic communication between husbands and wives on a very culturally sensitive issue. And the result related to maternal mortality?

<sup>5</sup> **Turning the Ordinary into the Extraordinary: The Green Pendelu and Maternal Health in Mali** Lydia Clemmons, MPH2 and Yaya Coulibaly a BASICS publication see Summary and Links at <http://www.cominit.com/strategicthinking/st2004/thinking-83.html>

Assisted births by professional health workers in the project area increased from under 20% at the start of the project to 77% in the year after the communication intervention was implemented. We know from many studies<sup>5</sup> that the presence of such skilled support significantly reduces maternal mortality.<sup>5</sup>



What do we do about HIV/AIDS? It will be 20 years before there is an effective widely available vaccine. By then who knows what situation we will be in if we continue on the current trajectory. One thing we can do is to incorporate much more extensively than at present the strategic principles that guided the early efforts on HIV/AIDS that proved somewhat successful. A Cambridge University publication managed to identify what the principle for success was.

As an explanation of why Uganda did so much better than other countries, they found evidence of a basic population level, early behaviour and communication response, initiated at community level, to avoid risk, reduce risk behaviours and care for people with AIDS. There were greater levels of communication about AIDS and people with AIDS through social networks in Uganda, unlike the comparison countries.

The authors identified similar higher levels of communication about HIV/AIDS in other situations where HIV has declined: Thailand and the US Gay community. The media – national to local - were, of course, a crucial part of that locally initiated Ugandan communication response. In Uganda, HIV prevalence declined from 21% to 9.8% from 1991-98 and there was a reduction in non-regular sexual partners by 65%. On the basis of such evidence, why is there not much more extensive support for communities to do what they know works best in their circumstances and contexts - including the very important media response?<sup>6</sup>

There are many Communication Initiative Partner organisations that do excellent research on the impact of media development/development communication on HIV/AIDSs. These include Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs, BBC World Service Trust, Exchange, Media Institute of Southern Africa, FAO, Calandria in Peru, ANDI – the Child Rights News Agency in Brazil.

A very good example of partner research is the very extensive and deep evaluation of the Soul City initiative in South Africa. Soul City has always placed a high priority on thorough and well resourced evaluation. The largest of those evaluations - Soul City 4 - was guided by an international advisory panel.

The evaluation found that thirty-two percent of African respondents with high Soul City TV exposure said they always use condoms, compared to 31% with medium and 28% with low Soul City exposure. Young respondents (16-24) exposed to Soul City were also more likely to say they always use condoms. Thirty-eight percent of those who watch Soul City television a lot always used condoms. In comparison, 26% of those who watch television, but did not watch Soul City, reported that they always used condoms.<sup>7</sup>

**<sup>6</sup> Behaviour and Communication Change in Reducing HIV**

Is Uganda Unique? by Daniel Low-Beer and Rand L. Stoneburner Health and Population Evaluation Unit and Cambridge University Health, Cambridge University, UK, 2004 – see Summary at

<http://www.comminit.com/evaluations/soul2004/thinking-482.html>

**<sup>7</sup> Soul City 4 Evaluation:**

Author Shereen Usdin see Summary and Links at <http://www.comminit.com/soul-city-evaluation.html>

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MDG 7: Environment

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What a strange feeling it must be for those people involved in environmental communication when they have to justify the impact of the media on environmental issues. It is undeniable that without the media, Greenpeace's Rainbow Warrior is just another boat.

So, it is instructive to look at what happens when there is no media and communication process integral to the overall strategy. Rather than look at the big environmental issues lets look at some basic, local environmental concerns.

The Ghana Upper Region Water Supply Project (URWSP) had repeatedly attempted to promote the use of communal waste dumps and latrines by, for example, the

subsidised provision of squatting slabs. These attempts "failed". In that sanitation and hygiene norms, expectations and behaviours in the communities targeted by this project did not improve. The project began and continued as a top-down technical project, with an apparently simple solution. But there was little by way of media and communication process.

The absence of a media and communication strategy meant that some very basic and important questions were simply not asked. This was highlighted by researchers from the Center for Development Studies in Ghana, in a paper published by The University of Bradford. Whilst the Ghana Water Supply project focused on the quality and placement of "squatting slabs" the absence of a media and communications strategy meant that issues like traditional use and family and household dynamics appear to have been just plain ignored.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> **Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene: Analysis of Connecting Factors in Northern Ghana**  
University of Bradford Development and Project Planning Centre Discussion Paper Series 2 No. 20, by S. Kendie, 1999;  
see Summary and Links at <http://www.comminit.com/evaluations/idkdv2002/sld-2388.html>

## MDG 8: Governance

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A World Bank Policy Research Paper, produced by the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Division at The World Bank Institute, explored the link between information flows and governance, worldwide.

Using two kinds of indicators, Roumeen Islam from the Institute found that "*information gives power to monitor and make good choices*"; thus, there is "a significant and positive correlation between transparency and improved governance". Just giving better data to people", she summarises, "*can help countries do better*." Of course the media is a prime vehicle for better sharing of such data and information.

Islam's analysis also showed that "*better decision-making in economic and political markets boosts growth*", which suggests that "*advising countries on the importance of(...)making this data widely available is policy advice that can boost economic growth*."

There is further exploration of the link between information flows and governance or institutional quality in Islam's paper. It demonstrates that countries with better information flows also govern better. The media are maybe the key actors for freedom of speech and freely available information, and transparency.<sup>9</sup>

## STRATEGIC AND PROGRAMMATIC ACTION FOR EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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The data linking investments in communications to impact on the MDG agenda exists, therefore. The practitioner sector and donor community alike need then to move beyond the idea that the effect of communications is impossible to measure and quantify. It also needs to identify which of the core elements of communications and media are required in greater scale to achieve the MDGs and to implement effective poverty reduction strategy (PRS) programmes.

*Below are eight key areas :*

**VOICE:** Increased space for and attention to the voice, perspective, and central contribution of those most affected by poverty and other development issues.

**KNOWLEDGE:** Widened and expanded knowledge and information sharing including, for improved relevance and other reasons, a higher priority on knowledge and information generated within the communities and countries that are bearing the heaviest burden of poverty and related issues.

**CULTURE:** Improved ways to engage the rich cultural diversity across the globe and the important and diverse ways in which those varied cultures understand, address, and harness the vitally important factors of leadership, community,

<sup>9</sup> **Do More Transparent Governments Govern Better?**  
World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 3077  
by Roumeen Islam  
World Bank June 2003  
for Summary and Links see <http://www.comminit.com/evaluations/eval2005/evaluations-137.html>

behaviour, and inclusion in order to improve their families, communities and countries.

**DEBATE:** Significantly expanded public and private debate and dialogue on the issues that are of priority importance in each international, national, and local context.

**POLICY:** More open, participative, and inclusive processes of policy development that increase the substantive integration of the views and perspectives of those most affected by poverty and other development issues.

**LEGISLATION:** More effective legislation, including on media, supporting a pluralistic communication environment with space for a full range of organisations and voices.

**BEHAVIOUR and ATTITUDES:** Expanded focus on addressing the relevant behaviours of both people affected and decision makers in order to accelerate action on the development issues of concern.

**DATA:** Improved collection, sharing, and utilising of data related to the human and social dimensions of development.

## A TROVE OF PROVEN EXPERIENCE AND METHODOLOGIES TO BE APPLIED AT SCALE

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Does the practitioner sector possess the capacity and methodology to successfully apply increased investments in these areas by the decision-makers in development agencies? The Communication Initiative has summarised over 35,000 experiences drawn from on-the-ground experience and learning. It has assembled over 200 pieces of strategic thinking, gathered over 75 individual and social change theories, and is hosting a growing rich set of planning models that can systematically guide the implementation of initiatives informed by the strategies outlined above.

The case is made, I believe. Furthermore, a community of professionals with the necessary experience and knowledge tools is ready to make its contribution to addressing poverty and to the other international development issues covered by the MDGs.

For this to happen at the scale required calls, however, for a major shift from decision-makers in local, national and international development that would raise from its current marginal status the use of strategic communications and media in development, and mainstream it across the workings of all development agencies. Ensuring that this shift occurs is the most urgent challenge facing the international development community.

# The Role of the Free Press in Promoting Democratization, Good Governance and Human Development<sup>10</sup>

**Pippa Norris**, *McGuire Lecturer in Comparative Politics, John F Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University ; Director, Democratic Governance Group, UNDP*

What is the role of the free press in strengthening good governance, democracy and human development?<sup>11</sup> A long tradition of liberal theorists from Milton through Locke and Madison to John Stuart Mill have argued that the existence of an unfettered and independent press within each nation is essential in the process of democratization by contributing towards the right of freedom of expression, thought and conscience, strengthening the responsiveness and accountability of governments to all citizens, and providing a pluralist platform and channel of political expression for a multiplicity of groups and interests.<sup>12</sup> This paper will explore how and to what extent the above is indeed true, to what extent free and independent media does contribute to good governance and what are the consequences for human development and the alleviation of poverty.

The guarantee of freedom of expression and information is recognized as a basic human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN in 1948, the European Convention on Human Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The positive relationship between the growth of the free press and the process of democratization is thought to be reciprocal (see Figure 1). The core claim is that, in the first stage, the initial transition from autocracy opens up the state control of the media to private ownership, diffuses access, and reduces official censorship and government control of information. The public thereby receives greater exposure to a wider variety of cultural products and ideas through access to multiple radio and TV channels, as well as the diffusion of new technologies such as the Internet and mobile telephones. Once media liberalization has commenced, in the second stage democratic consolidation and human development are strengthened where journalists in independent newspapers, radio and television stations facilitate greater transparency and accountability in governance, by serving in their watch-dog roles, as well as providing a civic forum for multiple voices in public debate, and highlighting social problems to inform the policy agenda.<sup>13</sup> Through this process, many observers emphasize that a free press is not just valuable for democracy, a matter widely acknowledged, but the final claim is that this process is also vital for human development. This perspective is exemplified by Amartya Sen's argument that political freedoms are linked to improved economic development outcomes and good governance in low-income countries by encouraging responsiveness to public concerns. The free press, Sen suggests, enhances the voice of poor people and generates more informed choices about economic needs.<sup>14</sup> James D. Wolfenson echoed these sentiments when he was the president of the World Bank: *A free press is not a luxury. A free press is at the absolute core of equitable development, because if you cannot enfranchise*

<sup>10</sup> Paper originally presented at UNESCO meeting on World Press Freedom Day: Media, Development, and Poverty Eradication, Colombo, Sri Lanka 1-2 May 2006.

For full set of technical annexes to this study please see:

[http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=21899&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=21899&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

<sup>11</sup> For a bibliographic guide to the literature on the media and development see Clement E. Asante. *Press Freedom and Development: A Research Guide and Selected Bibliography*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press.

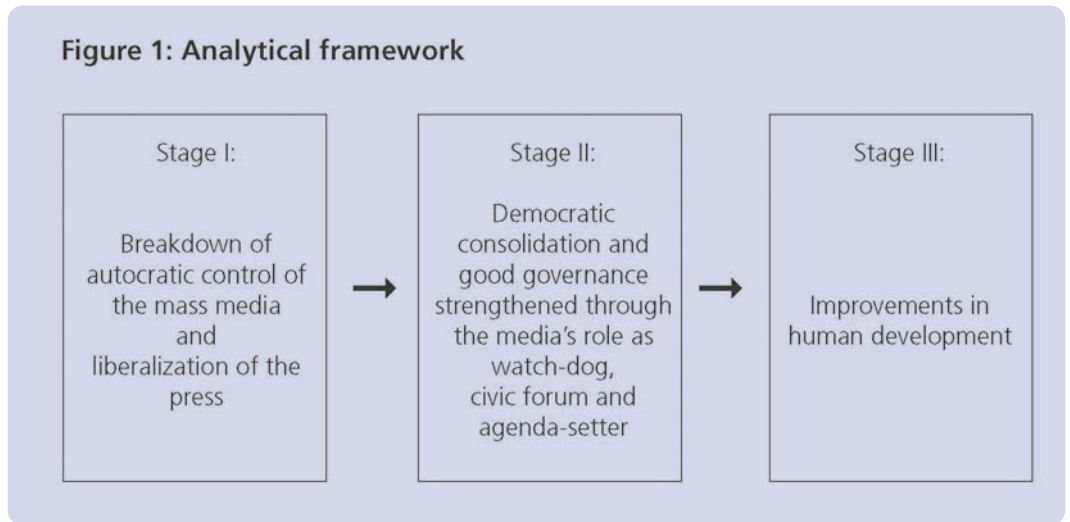
For a discussion of how alternative theories have evolved in the normative debate see H. Shah. 1996. 'Modernization, marginalization and emancipation: Toward a normative model of journalism and national development.' *Communication Theory*. 6(2); Denis McQuail. 2001. *Political Communication Theory*. London: Sage.

<sup>12</sup> Amartya Sen. 1999. **Development as Freedom**. New York: Anchor Books.

<sup>13</sup> Goran Hyden, Michael Leslie and Folu F. Ogundimu. Eds. 2002. **Media and Democracy in Africa**. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

<sup>14</sup> Amartya Sen. 1999. **Development as Freedom**. New York: Anchor Books; T. Besley and R. Burgess. 2001. **Political agency, government responsiveness and the role of the media** *European Economic Review*. 45(4-6): 629-640.

Figure 1: Analytical framework



*“A free press is not a luxury. A free press is at the absolute core of equitable development, because if you cannot enfranchise poor people, if they do not have a right to expression, if there is no searchlight on corruption and inequitable practices, you cannot build the public consensus needed to bring about change”*

James D. Wolfenson, former  
President of the World Bank

<sup>15</sup> James D. Wolfenson. 1999.  
**‘Voices of the Poor.’**  
Washington Post, 10 November 1999,  
A39.

*poor people, if they do not have a right to expression, if there is no searchlight on corruption and inequitable practices, you cannot build the public consensus needed to bring about change.”<sup>15</sup>*

More liberal media landscapes are therefore widely regarded as strengthening democratization and good governance directly, as well as human development indirectly. These claims are commonly heard among popular commentators, donor agencies, and the international community. But what systematic evidence supports these contentions? Despite historical case-studies focusing on the role of the press in specific countries and regions, it is somewhat surprising that relatively little comparative research has explored the systematic linkages in this process. Much existing research has also focused on assessing the impact of media access, such as the diffusion of newspaper readership or television viewership, rather than press freedom. To explore these issues, Part I presents the analytical framework, develops the core testable propositions, and summarizes the previous research literature on the topic. Part II outlines the comparative framework, evidence, and research design. This study utilizes a large-N cross-sectional comparison to analyze the impact of press freedom on multiple indicators of democracy and good governance. Freedom House provides the principle measure of Press Freedom, with annual data available from 1992 to 2005. This indicator is strongly correlated with the independently developed Press Freedom Index created by Reporter’s Without Borders, increasing confidence in the reliability of the Freedom House measure. Part III describes the distribution of press freedom and regional trends. Part IV analyzes the impact of this pattern. The regression models control for many factors commonly associated with processes of democratization and good governance, including levels of economic development, colonial origins, population size, and regional effects. The results presented confirm that the free press does matter for good governance, and it is integral to the process of democratization. The Conclusion summarizes the key findings and considers their consequences for strengthening development.

## THE ROLES OF THE NEWSMEDIA AS WATCH-DOG, CIVIC FORUM, AND AGENDA-SETTER

<sup>16</sup> For the classics in this account see Daniel Lerner. 1958. **The Passing of Traditional Society.** Glencoe, IL: The Free Press; Lucian W. Pye. 1963. **Communications and Political Development.** Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Seymour Martin Lipset. 1959. **‘Some social prerequisites of democracy: Economic development & political legitimacy.’** American Political Science Review 53: 69-105; Donald J. McCrone and Charles F. Crutcher. 1967. **Toward a communication theory of democratic political development: A Causal model.** American Political Science Review 61(1): 72-79.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, early modernization theories assumed a fairly simple and unproblematic relationship between the spread of access to modern forms of mass communications, economic development, and the process of democratization. Accounts offered by Lerner, Lipset, Pye, Cutright and others, suggested that the diffusion of mass communications represented one sequential step in the development process. In this view, urbanization and the spread of literacy lead to growing access to modern technologies such as telephones, newspapers, radios and television, all of which laid the basis for an informed citizenry able to participate effectively in political affairs.<sup>16</sup> Hence, based on a strong connection between the spread of communications and political development,



<sup>17</sup> Daniel Lerner. 1958. **The Passing of Traditional Society.** Glencoe, IL: The Free Press p.60.

<sup>18</sup> Samuel Huntington. 1993. **The Third Wave.** Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma Press.

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of the criticisms of the older literature and heated debates about the role of the media in development that arose in the late 1970s and early 1980s see Hamid Mowlana. 1985.

**International Flow of Information: A Global Report and Analysis**  
Paris, UNESCO;

Annabelle Sreberny Mohammadi et al. 1984. **Foreign News in the Media: International Reporting in Twenty Nine Countries.** Reports and Papers on Mass Communication, 93. Paris, UNESCO;

Robert L. Stevenson and Donald Lewis Shaw (eds). 1984. **Foreign News and the New World Information Order**

Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press;

K. Kyloon Hur. 1984. 'A Critical Analysis of International News Flow Research.'

**Critical Studies in Mass Communication 1:** 365-378;

William Preston, Edwards S. Herman and Herbert I. Schiller. 1989.

**Hope and Folly: The United States and UNESCO 1945-1985**

Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

<sup>20</sup> See Pippa Norris. 2000. *A Virtuous Circle.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Daniel Lerner theorized: "The capacity to read, at first acquired by relatively few people, equips them to perform the varied tasks required in the modernizing society. Not until the third stage, when the elaborate technology of industrial development is fairly well advanced, does a society begin to produce newspapers, radio networks, and motion pictures on a massive scale. This, in turn, accelerates the spread of literacy. Out of this interaction develop those institutions of participation (e.g. voting) which we find in all advanced modern societies."<sup>17</sup>

By the late-1960s and early-1970s, however, the assumption that the modernization process involved a series of sequential steps gradually fell out of fashion. Skepticism grew, faced with the complexities of human development evident in different parts of the world, and the major setbacks for democracy with the 'second reverse wave' experienced in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia.<sup>18</sup> There was growing recognition that widening public access to newspapers, radio and television was insufficient by itself to promote democracy and development, as these media could be used to maintain autocracies, to reinforce crony capitalism, and to consolidate the power of media oligopolies, as much as to provide a democratic channel for the disadvantaged.<sup>19</sup> Access remains important, but this study theorizes that the news media is most effective in strengthening the process of democratization, good governance, and human development where they function as watch-dog over the abuse of power (promoting accountability and transparency), as a civic forum for political debate (facilitating informed electoral choices), and as an agenda-setter for policymakers (strengthening government responsiveness to social problems).<sup>20</sup>

## THE ROLE OF JOURNALISTS AS WATCHDOGS OF THE POWERFUL

<sup>21</sup> George A. Donohue, Philip Tichenor et al. 1995.

'A Guard Dog Perspective on the Role of the Media.'  
**Journal of Communication.** 45(2): 115-128.

<sup>22</sup> Renate Kocher. 1986. 'Bloodhounds or Missionaries: Role Definitions of German and British Journalists.'  
**European Journal of Communication.** 1: 43-64.

<sup>23</sup> A. Brunetti and B. Weder. 2003. 'A free press is bad news for corruption.'  
**Journal of Public Economics** 87 (7-8): 1801-1824;

S.K. Chowdhury. 2004. 'The effect of democracy and press freedom on corruption: an empirical test.'  
**Economics Letters** 85 (1): 93-101;

D. Fell. 2005. 'Political and media liberalization and political corruption in Taiwan.'  
**China Quarterly** (184): 875-893.

<sup>24</sup> Leonard R. Sussman. 2001. **Press Freedom in Our Genes.** Reston, VA: World Press Freedom Committee.

<sup>25</sup> See for example the International Federation of Journalists. <http://www.ifj.org/> and the Human Rights Watch. <http://www.hrw.org/>

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, cases documented by the Index on Censorship <http://www.indexoncensorship.org/> The World Press Freedom Council [www.wpfc.org](http://www.wpfc.org/) and the International Press Institute <http://www.freemedia.at>. See also Louis Edward Ingelhart. 1998. **Press and Speech Freedoms in the World, from Antiquity until 1998: A Chronology.** Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

<sup>27</sup> See Shanthi Kalathil & Taylor C. Boas. 2001. **The Internet and State Control In Authoritarian Regimes: China, Cuba and the Counterrevolution.** Global Policy Program No 21 Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Leonard R. Sussman. 2000. 'Censor Dot Gov: The Internet & Press Freedom.'  
**Press Freedom Survey 2000.** Washington DC: Freedom House. [www.freedomhouse.com](http://www.freedomhouse.com).

In their 'watchdog' role, the channels of the news media can function to promote government transparency, accountability, and public scrutiny of decision-makers in power, by highlighting policy failures, maladministration by public officials, corruption in the judiciary, and scandals in the corporate sector.<sup>21</sup> Ever since Edmund Burke, the 'fourth estate' has traditionally been regarded as one of the classic checks and balances in the division of powers.<sup>22</sup> Investigative journalism can open the government's record to external scrutiny and critical evaluation, and hold authorities accountable for their actions, whether public sector institutions, non-profit organizations, or private companies. Comparative econometric studies, and historical case studies of developments within particular countries such as Taiwan, have explored evidence for the impact of the news media upon corruption. Brunetti and Weder, amongst others, found that there was less corruption in nations with a free press. The reason, they argue, is that journalist's roles as watchdogs promote the transparency of government decision-making process, and thereby expose and hinder misuse of public office, malfeasance, and financial scandals.<sup>23</sup> In competitive multiparty democracies, voters can use information provided by the media to hold parties and leaders to account by 'kicking the rascals out'.

By contrast, control of the news media is used to reinforce the power of autocratic regimes and to deter criticism of the government by independent journalists, through official government censorship, state ownership of the main radio and television channels, legal restrictions on freedom of expression and publication (such as stringent libel laws and restrictive official secrets acts), limited competition through oligopolies in commercial ownership, and the use of outright violence and intimidation against journalists and broadcasters.<sup>24</sup> In Malaysia, for example, human rights observers report that the state has manipulated the media to stifle internal dissent and forced journalists employed by the international press to modify or suppress news stories unflattering to the regime.<sup>25</sup> Elsewhere governments in Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Saudi Arabia, among others, commonly place serious restrictions on press freedom to criticize government rulers through official regulations, legal restrictions and state censorship.<sup>26</sup> It remains more difficult for governments to censor online communications, but nevertheless in nations such as China and Cuba, state-controlled monopolies provide the only Internet service and thereby filter both access and content.<sup>27</sup> Media freedom organizations demonstrate

<sup>28</sup> See for example the International Federation of Journalists. <http://www.ifj.org/> and the Human Rights Watch. <http://www.hrw.org>

that each year dozens of media professionals are killed or injured in the course of their work. In Colombia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Zimbabwe and Egypt, for example, many journalists, broadcasters and editors have experienced intimidation or harassment, while journalists in many parts of the world face the daily threat of personal danger from wars or imprisonment by the security services.<sup>28</sup>

## THE ROLE OF THE NEWS MEDIA AS CIVIC FORUM

<sup>29</sup> See Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks. 1995. **Communication and Citizenship**. London: Routledge; Peter Dahlgren. 1995. **Television and the Public Sphere**. London: Sage.

<sup>30</sup> Arthur Lupia and Mathew D. McCubbins. 1998. **The Democratic Dilemma**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>31</sup> ACE Project. <http://www.aceproject.org/main/english/me/mea01b.htm>

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, the Report by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on the October 2000 parliamentary elections in Belarus available at [http://www.osce.org/odihr/documents/reports/election\\_reports/by/bel2000fin.pdf](http://www.osce.org/odihr/documents/reports/election_reports/by/bel2000fin.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> P. Andriantsoa, N. Andriasendravorivony, S. Haggblade, B. Minten, M. Rakotojaona, F. Rakotovoavy, and H.S. Razafinimanana. 2005. 'Media proliferation and democratic transition in Africa: The case of Madagascar.' **World Development** 33 (11): 1939-1957.

<sup>34</sup> See Jeremy Tunstall and Michael Palmer. 1991. **Media Moguls**. London: Routledge; Anthony Smith. 1991. **The Age of Behemoths: The Globalization of Mass Media Firms**. New York: Priority Press; Alfonso Sanchez-Taberner. 1993. **Media Concentration in Europe: Commercial Enterprises and the Public Interest**. London: John Libbey.

<sup>35</sup> Ben Bagdikian. 1997. **The Media Monopoly**. Boston, MA: Beacon Press; Leo Bogart. 1995. **Commercial Culture**. Robert McChesney. 1999. **Rich media, poor democracy: communication politics in dubious times**. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press; Robert G. Picard. 1988.

**Press Concentration and Monopoly: New Perspectives on Newspaper Ownership and Operation**. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corp.

<sup>36</sup> S. Hughes and C. Lawson. 2005. 'The barriers to media opening in Latin America.' **Political Communication** 22 (1): 9-25.

Equally vital, in their civic forum role, the free press can strengthen the public sphere, by mediating between citizens and the state, facilitating debate about the major issues of the day, and informing the public about their leaders.<sup>29</sup> If the channels of communication reflect the social and cultural pluralism within each society, in a fair and impartial balance, then multiple interests and voices are heard in public deliberation. This role is particularly important during election campaigns, as fair access to the airwaves by opposition parties, candidates and groups is critical for competitive, free and fair multiparty elections. During campaigns, a free media provides citizens with information to compare and evaluate the retrospective record, prospective policies and leadership characteristics of parties and candidates, providing the essential conditions for informed choice.<sup>30</sup> The role of the news media as a civic forum remain deeply flawed where major newspapers and television stations heavily favor the governing party, in the amount or tone of coverage, rather than being open to a plurality of political viewpoints and parties during campaigns. This principle has been recognized in jurisprudence from countries as varied as Ghana, Sri Lanka, Belize, India, Trinidad and Tobago, and Zambia.<sup>31</sup> There are many cases where electoral observers have reported that pro-government bias on television and radio has failed to provide a level playing field for all parties, exemplified by campaigns in Russia, Belarus, and Mozambique<sup>32</sup>. In Madagascar, for example, Andriantsoa et al argue that the process of liberalization and privatization has undermined the older state-controlled media which once consolidated the grip of autocrats across much of Africa, facilitating multiparty electoral democracies.<sup>33</sup>

By contrast, where the media fails to act as an effective civic forum, this can hinder democratic consolidation. State ownership and control is one important issue, but threats to media pluralism are also raised by over-concentration of private ownership of the media, whether in the hands of broadcasting oligopolies within each nation, or of major multinational corporations with multimedia empires.<sup>34</sup> It is feared that the process of media mergers may have concentrated excessive control in the hands of a few multinational corporations, which remain unaccountable to the public, reducing the diversity of news media outlets.<sup>35</sup> Contemporary observers caution that the quality of democracy still remains limited where state ownership of television has been replaced by private oligopolies and crony capitalism, for example in nations such as Russia, Brazil and Peru which have failed to create fully-independent and pluralistic media systems. Broadcasting cartels, coupled with the failure of regulatory reform, legal policies which restrict critical reporting, and uneven journalistic standards, can all limit the role of the media in its civic forum or watch-dog roles.<sup>36</sup>

## SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

Lastly, the news media also functions as an agenda-setter, providing information about urgent social problems and thereby channeling citizens' concerns to decision-makers in government. Particularly in cases of natural disaster, public officials often suffer from a breakdown in the usual channels of communication. As illustrated by the dramatic failure of government over the Katrina debacle in the United States, and the poor internal communications among official agencies which hindered the delivery of effective emergency relief, timely and accurate information about the scope and nature of any disaster is vital if officials are to respond effectively. In these situations, independent reporters can act as a vital channel of information for decision-makers, helping to make democratic governments more responsive

<sup>37</sup> T. Besley and R. Burgess. 2001. 'Political agency, government responsiveness and the role of the media.' *European Economic Review*. 45(4-6): 629-640.

to the needs of the people. For example, Besley and Burgess examined the Indian case, and established that regional states with higher levels of newspaper circulation proved more active during an emergency in responding to food-shortages.<sup>37</sup> The reason, they suggest, is that political leaders learn about local problems more accurately and in a timely fashion when journalists function as an intermediary by reporting local conditions at the grassroots, and the role of the media as an agenda-setter can also pressure the government to respond to local problems.

## II. DATA, INDICATORS, AND RESEARCH DESIGN

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For all of these reasons, where the press is effective in these roles, we would expect that greater press freedom should help to promote democracy, good governance and thus human development.

### MEASURING PRESS FREEDOM

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To explore some of the evidence, the annual Freedom House index of Press Freedom can be used as the standard cross-national indicator. Press freedom is measured in this index according to how much the diversity of news content is influenced by the structure of the news industry, by legal and administrative decisions, the degree of political influence or control, the economic influences exerted by the government or private entrepreneurs, and actual incidents violating press autonomy, including censorship, harassment and physical threats to journalists. The assessment of press freedom distinguishes between the broadcast and print media, and the resulting ratings are expressed as a 100-point scale for each country under comparison. Evaluations of press freedom in 191 contemporary nations were available in the Freedom House annual index from 1992 to 2004.

To check whether the results of this measure proved reliable, the Freedom House index was compared with the Worldwide Press Freedom Index, which is independently produced by Reporters without Borders. The results of the comparison of these sources, show a strong correlation across both these measures, with just a few outliers where the organizations disagree in their rankings. Both indices differ in their construction, data sources, and conceptualization. Despite this, these organizations largely confirm similar findings, a finding which increases confidence in the reliability of the measures. Many of the countries scoring most highly on press freedom by both these indicators are highly developed nations, such as New Zealand, the Netherlands and Sweden, as expected given the strong linkage between affluence and democracy. But other countries with high press freedom are classified by the UNDP as having only moderate or even low development, including Mali and Benin, Nicaragua and El Salvador, as well as Burkina Fasa. The countries which rank as having the least free media by both organizations include Cuba, Eritrea, China and Turkmenistan.

### MEASURING DEMOCRACY

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The dependent variables are indicators of levels of democracy and good governance. See Appendix A for a description of these. Recent years have seen growing attempts to gauge and measure systematic, valid and reliable indicators of the quality of democracy in a wide range of countries worldwide.<sup>38</sup> Three measures are compared in this study: the Polity IV project's measure of constitutional democracy, Vanhanen's indicator of participatory democracy, and Przeworski et al's classification based on contested democracy. These represent the most widely-cited indicators of democracy commonly used by scholars and policy analysts in comparative research. They each have broad cross-national scope and a lengthy time-series, with data based on annual observations classifying regimes worldwide. Freedom House's index of liberal democracy is also widely used, but this is not employed in

<sup>38</sup> A useful review of these is available from Geraldo L. Munck and Jay Verkuilen. 2002. 'Conceptualizing and measuring democracy: Evaluating alternative indices.' *Comparative Political Studies*. 35 (1): 5-34.



## Appendix A: Description of the variables and data sources

Name	Description and source	Obs.
<b>Ethno-linguistic fractionalization</b>	The share of languages spoken as 'mother tongues' in each country, generally derived from national census data, as reported in the Encyclopedia Britannica 2001. The fractionalization index is computed as one minus the Herfindahl index of ethnolinguistic group share, reflecting the probability that two randomly selected individuals from a population belonged to different groups. <i>Alesina, Devleeschauwer, Easterly, Kurlat and Wacziarg, 2003</i>	181
<b>Polity IV Constitutional Democracy Index</b>	The Polity IV project classifies democracy and autocracy in each nation-year as a composite score of different characteristics relating to authority structures. The dataset constructs a ten-point democracy scale by coding the competitiveness of political participation (1-3), the competitiveness of executive recruitment (1-2), the openness of executive recruitment (1), and the constraints on the chief executive (1-4). Autocracy is measured by negative versions of the same indices. The two scales are combined into a single democracy-autocracy score varying from -10 to +10. The democracy-autocracy index for 2000 was recoded to a 20-point positive scale from low (autocracy) to high (democracy). Monty Marshall and Keith Jaggers, 2003, Polity IV Project: <i>Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2003</i> <a href="http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/polity/">www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/polity/</a>	
<b>Vanhanen Participatory Democracy Index</b>	Vanhanen developed a scaled measure of democracy in each country according to two criteria: the degree of electoral competition (measured by the share of the vote won by the largest party in the national legislature), and also the degree of electoral participation (the proportion of the total population who voted in national legislative elections), which is combined to yield a 100-pt index of Participatory Democracy. <i>Tatu Vanhanen, 2000, 'A new dataset for measuring democracy, 1810-1998'</i> <i>Journal of Peace Research 37(2): 251-265</i>	
<b>Cheibub and Gandhi Contested Democracy Classification</b>	This classification of regimes from 1950-1990 was originally developed by Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub and Limongi, and the time series was subsequently extended to 2000 by Cheibub and Gandhi. This approach defines regimes as autocratic if the chief executive is not elected, the legislature is not elected, there is only one party, or there has been no alternation in power. All other regimes are classified as democratic. In democratic states, therefore, those who govern are selected through contested elections. <i>Jose Cheibub and Jennifer Gandhi, 2005, 'A six-fold measure of democracies and dictatorships.'</i> <i>Unpublished paper</i>	
<b>Political Stability</b>	Indicators which measure perceptions of the likelihood that the government in power will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including terrorism <i>Kaufmann, Kray and Zoido-Lobaton, 2002</i>	177
<b>Voice and Accountability</b>	Indicators measuring the extent to which citizens are able to participate in the selection of governments. This includes the political process, civil liberties, political rights and media independence. <i>Kaufmann, Kray and Zoido-Lobaton, 2002</i>	190
<b>Government Effectiveness</b>	Indicators of the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies. This includes perceptions of the quality of public services, the competence and independence of civil servants, and the ability of the government to implement and deliver public goods. <i>Kaufmann, Kray and Zoido-Lobaton, 2002</i>	186
<b>Human Development Index (HDI)</b>	The Human Development Index (HDI) 2001 is based on longevity, as measured by life expectancy at birth; educational achievement; and standard of living, as measured by per capita GDP (PPP \$US) <i>UNDP Human Development Report 2003</i>	170
<b>Population Size</b>	The estimates total population per state (thousands) <i>World Bank World Development Indicators 2002</i>	187
<b>BritCol</b>	The past colonial history of countries was classified into those which shared a British colonial background (1), and all others (0). <i>CIA The World Factbook 2004, www.cia.gov</i>	191
<b>Middle East</b>	This classified the regional location of nations into those Arab states in the Middle East and North Africa (1) and all others (0).	191

this study as the measure contains freedom of the press as one of its core components. The reason to adopt more than one measure is that no single indicator is best for all purposes, instead as Collier and Adcock suggest, specific choices are best justified pragmatically in terms of the theoretical framework and analytical goals in any study.<sup>39</sup> The most prudent strategy, adopted by this study, is to compare the results of analytical models using alternative indicators, to see if the findings remain robust and consistent irrespective of the specific measures of democracy which are employed for analysis. If so, then this generates greater confidence in the reliability of the results and we can conclude that the main generalizations hold irrespective of the particular measures which are used.

## MEASURING GOOD GOVERNANCE

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The study also draws on the measures of good governance developed by Kaufmann et al for the World Bank.<sup>40</sup> This dataset is based upon subjective perceptions of five indicators of good governance, drawing on multiple surveys of experts, that assessed the degree of political stability, the rule of law, government efficiency, regulatory quality, and levels of corruption in each nation. Political stability is important as this reflects the regular rotation of government office, consolidation of the 'rules of the game', continuity in constitutional practices, and lack of political violence due to acts of terrorism. The rule of law concerns the independence and effectiveness of the judiciary and courts, perceptions of violent or non-violent crime, and the enforceability of contracts. Government efficiency is gauged by perceptions of the quality of the public service and the independence of the civic service from political pressures. Regulatory quality refers to public services and the difficulty of conducting routine business transactions. Lastly, perceptions of corruption reflect the success of a society in developing fair, transparent and predictable rules for social and economic interactions. Subjective judgments may prove unreliable for several reasons, including reliance upon a small number of national 'experts', the use of business leaders and academic scholars as the basis of the judgments, variations in country coverage by different indices, and possible bias towards more favorable evaluations of countries with good economic outcomes. Nevertheless in the absence of other reliable indicators covering a wide range of nations, such as representative surveys of public opinion, these measures provide one of the best available gauges of good governance. It should be noted that none of the indicators of good governance that were selected included measures of freedom of the press as part of their construction. If the free press plays an important role in promoting government accountability and responsiveness, then this should be evident in these indicators. The regression analysis models are presented for the five Kaufmann indicators of good governance and the three standard indicators of democracy provided by Polity IV, Vanhanen, and by Cheibub and Gandhi, to double check whether the key findings are confirmed and the results are robust irrespective of the particular measure which is selected for analysis.

## III. THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE FREE PRESS

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<sup>39</sup> David Collier and Robert Adcock. 1999. 'Democracy and dichotomies: A pragmatic approach to choices about concepts.' *Annual Review of Political Science* 1: 537-565.

<sup>40</sup> Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Zoido-Lobaton. 1999.

'**Governance Matters.**'  
World Bank Policy Research Paper 2196.  
Washington DC: World Bank.  
[www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org);  
Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay,  
and M. Mastruzzi.  
May 2003.

'**Governance Matters III: Governance Indicators 1996-2002.**'

The contemporary pattern of press freedom shows considerable variations around the world. As illustrated in figure 3, as expected, the most liberal media were found in the industrialized nations, including the most affluent economies and longest-standing democracies. Latin America and South-East Asia proved the regions which also scored relatively highly in freedom of the press, with the Arab states proving the least free. Despite the growing audience for the more independent and aggressive style of journalism found in Al Jazeera, and moves to liberalize the press in other nations in the region, this region lagged behind others to a marked extent. The map illustrated in Figure 4 breaks the comparison down by countries around the world, showing important contrasts within Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Although the countries scoring most highly in press freedom tend to be found in North America, Western Europe and Scandinavia, and developed nations in



Figure 3: Press freedom by global region, 2005

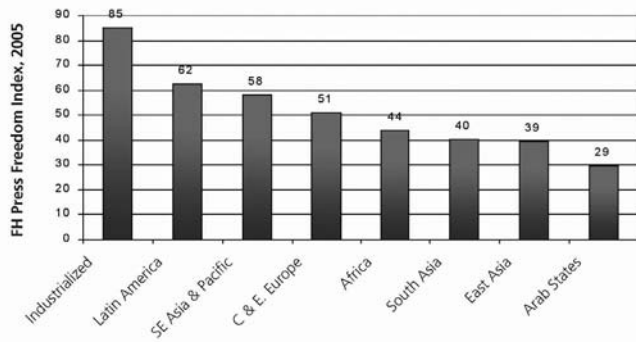
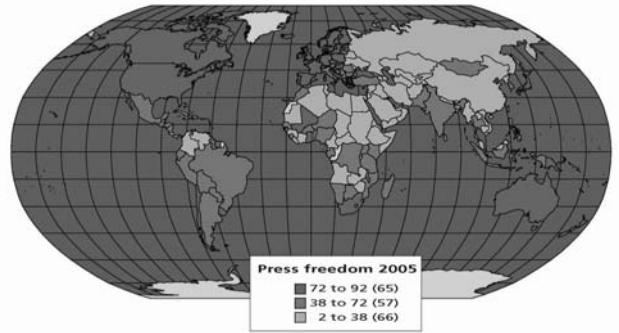


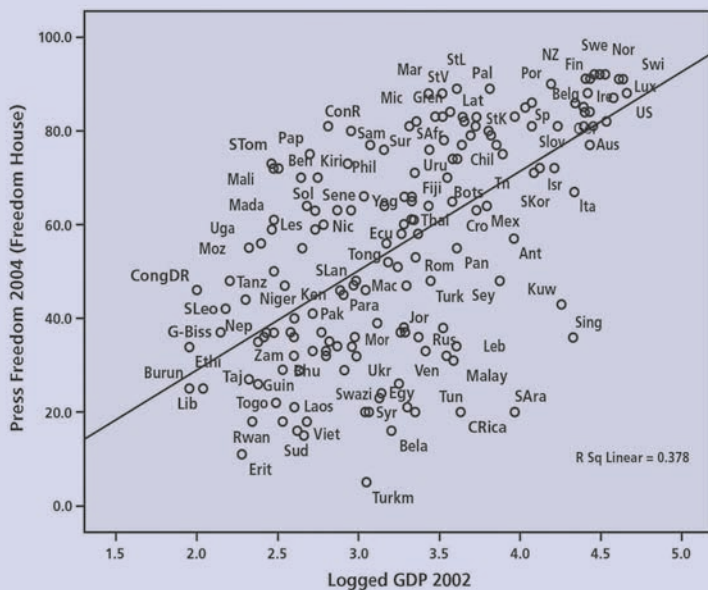
Figure 4: Global map of press freedom, 2005



Asia-Pacific, nevertheless some poorer developing nations, such as Mali, Benin and South Africa, also scored well on journalistic freedom.

The relationship between economic development and press freedom is explored more fully in figure 5, which contrasts both factors. The results show a moderately strong correlation but there are also important outliers in this relationship. Hence there are a range of nations located in the bottom right-hand corner of the scatter-gram which are relatively affluent and yet with restrictions on an independent press, notably Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and Malaysia. In Singapore, for example, the People's Action Party (PAP), founded and originally led by Lee Kuan Yew, has maintained its unbroken rule in government since 1959, despite a regular series of multiparty contests challenging their hegemonic status. One reason contributing to the ruling party's predominance is their strong control of the press and news media, for example the leading newspaper of Singapore, the Straits Times, is often perceived as a propaganda newspaper because it rarely criticizes government policy, and it covers little about the opposition. The owners of the paper, Singapore Press Holdings, have close links to the ruling party and the corporation has a virtual monopoly of the newspaper industry. Government censorship of journalism is common, using the threat or imposition of heavy fines or distribution bans imposed by the Media Development Authority, with these techniques also used against articles seen to be critical of the government published in the international press, including The Economist and International Times Herald Tribune. Internet access is regulated in Singapore, and private ownership of satellite dishes is not allowed. Due to this record, the Reporters Without Borders assessment of Press Freedom Worldwide in 2005 ranked Singapore 140th out of 167 nations.

Figure 5: Press freedom by level of economic development



By contrast, there are other nations which have low per capita GDP and yet which are relatively free in media communications, notably those nations located in the top-left quadrant of Figure 5. One example is Benin, which is widely regarded as a successful African democracy with constitutional checks and balances, multiple parties, a high degree of judicial independence, and a lively partisan press which is often critical of the government. Benin ranks 161st lowest out of 177 states in the 2003 UNDP Human Development Index, with a per capita GDP (in Purchasing Power Parity) of \$1,115. One third of the population lives with incomes below the poverty level and two-thirds of the adult population is illiterate. Despite this, the country is categorized as 'free' by the 2006 Freedom House index, comparable to Argentina, Mexico, and Romania in its record of civil liberties and political rights.

#### IV. THE IMPACT OF THE FREE PRESS ON GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY

The key question is whether press freedom is related to democracy and good governance, even using multivariate regression models controlling for many others factors which are commonly associated with political development. The relationship between wealth and democracy has been a long-standing observation which has withstood repeated tests in the social sciences and accordingly the models entered levels of economic development (measured by logged per capita GDP in Purchasing Power Parity). The models also control for the effects of the historical pattern of colonial legacies. An association between the past type of colonial rule and contemporary patterns of democracy has been noted by several observers; for example Clague, Gleason and Knack report that lasting democracies (characterized by contestation for government office) are most likely to emerge and persist among poor nations in ex-British colonies, even controlling for levels of economic development, ethnic diversity, and the size of the population.<sup>41</sup> The Middle East is also entered into the analysis, since many observers have pointed out that this region has been least affected by the trends in democratization since the start of the third wave, and indeed to be the least democratic region worldwide. The degree of ethnic heterogeneity is also entered into the models, on the grounds that deeply-divided societies are widely assumed to experience greater problems of democratic consolidation. Nations were classified according to the degree of ethnic fractionalization, based on a global dataset created by Alesina and his colleagues.<sup>42</sup> The models also control for the impact of the size of the population in each country. Ever since Dahl and Tuftte, the idea that size matters for democracy has been widely assumed, and Alesina and Spolaore have provided the most detailed recent examination of this proposition.<sup>43</sup> Smaller nations are expected to be easier to govern democratically, for example the smaller the population, the greater the potential for citizen participation in key decisions.

The results of the analysis in Table 1 confirms that the free press is significantly associated with levels of democracy, even after employing the battery of economic and social controls. The results appear to be robust irrespective of the particular indicator of democracy which is selected, despite major differences in the conceptualization and measurement processes used by Polity IV, Vanhanen, and Przeworski et al/Cheibub. Indeed the impact of media liberalization was the most consistent predictor of democracy out of any of the factors under comparison, even stronger than wealth. The pattern was inspected visually in figure 6, using the Polity IV measure of democracy, to examine the goodness of fit and to identify any obvious outliers. As the scatterplot shows, there are a few countries which fall quite far below the line, such as Russia, Guatamala and Bangladesh, suggesting that limits on independent journalism in these nations may be more severe than might be expected from other indicators of democracy, such as holding free and fair elections for the major government offices. And there are other countries well above the line where the free press is particularly strong, given their overall level of democratization.

The models were replicated for the five selected indicators of

<sup>41</sup> Christopher Clague, Suzanne Gleason and Stephen Knack. 2001. 'Determinants of lasting democracy in poor countries: Culture, development and institutions.' *Annals of the American Academy of Social Sciences* 573: 16-41.

<sup>42</sup> Alberto Alesina, Arnaud Devleeschauwer, William Easterly, Sergio Kurlat and Romain Wacziarg. 2003. 'Fractionalization' *Journal of Economic Growth* 8:155-194. For details see: [www.stanford.edu/~wacziarg/papersum.html](http://www.stanford.edu/~wacziarg/papersum.html)

<sup>43</sup> Robert A. Dahl and E.R.Tuftte. 1973. *Size and democracy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press;

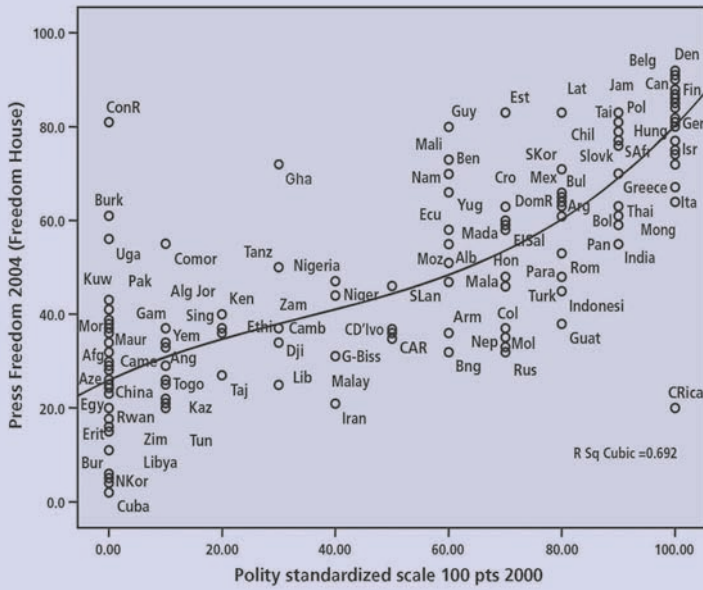
Robert A. Dahl. 1998. *On Democracy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press;

Alberto Alesina and Enrico Spolaore. 2003. *The Size of Nations*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Table 1: The free press and democracy

	Constitutional democracy			Participatory democracy			Contested democracy		
	Polity IV			Vanhanen			Przeworski et al/ Cheibub and Gandhi		
	b	se	p	b	se	p	b	se	p
Press Freedom	1.23	.102	***	.436	.066	***	.073	.013	***
<b>CONTROLS</b>									
Log GDP/Capita	.000	.000	N/s	.000	.000	***	.000	.000	N/s
Ex-British colony	-6.13	4.62	N/s	-6.69	2.59	**	-.362	.497	N/s
Middle East	-10.68	6.88	N/s	-1.48	4.91	N/s	-1.68	.969	
Ethnic fractionalization	-22.2	8.41	***	-21.1	5.08	***	-1.08	.893	N/s
Population size	.000	.000	N/s	.000	.000	N/s	.000	.000	N/s
Constant	3.10			2.1			-2.57		
N. of countries	142			150			181		
Adjusted R2	.673			.558			.568		

Figure 6: Press freedom by level of democratization



good governance and again the results, presented in Table 2, proved significant and consistent. The models show that countries where much of the public has access to the free press usually have greater political stability, rule of law, government efficiency in the policy process, regulatory quality, and the least corruption.

### CONCLUSIONS

Overall the analysis lends considerable support to the claims of liberal theorists about the critical role of the free press, as one of the major components of both democracy and good governance.

Nevertheless there are many questions remaining for future research. The analysis presented here has not been able to explore which of the three roles of the free press - as watch-dog, as civic forum or as agenda-setter - is most important in these relationships. Plausibly, for example, the effectiveness of the press as watch-dogs should have the greatest impact upon stamping out corruption, while their function in calling attention to social problems should influence government effectiveness. It probably requires detailed case-studies focusing upon how the news media work in particular countries to flesh out these linkages. Moreover the limited cross-sectional analysis presented here cannot seek to disentangle some of the reciprocal relationships between the government and the media which may be at work, and time-series analysis of developments over time would provide a more satisfactory handle on these matters. Lastly the analysis has not sought to demonstrate the indirect effects of the free press on levels of human development, as proposed in the last stage of the analytical model. Nevertheless it remains plausible, as many other studies suggest, that improving democracy and good governance will ultimately contribute towards the eradication of poverty, particularly by making governments more accountable and responsive to human needs.<sup>44</sup> The study therefore confirms many of the assumptions about the role of independent journalism, which are pervasive in liberal theory, including the core argument that the free press matters, both intrinsically and instrumentally. Policies which eradicate limits on the free exchange of information and communication, whether due to state censorship, intimidation and harassment of journalists, or private media oligopolies, therefore have important consequences for those seeking to strengthen both good political and human development.

Table 2: The free press and good governance

	Political stability			Government effectiveness			Regulatory quality		
	b	se	p	b	se	p	b	se	p
Press Freedom	.013	.003	***	.436	.066	***	.017	.002	***
<b>CONTROLS</b>									
Log GDP/Capita	.000	.000	***	.000	.000	***	.000	.000	***
Ex-British colony	.010	.128	N/s	.115	.083	N/s	.059	.088	N/s
Middle East	.164	.211	N/s	.360	.144	**	.276	.153	N/s
Ethnic fractionalization	-.948	.243	***	-.428	.157	***	-.347	.167	
Population size	.000	.000	N/s	.000	.000	N/s	.000	.000	N/s
Constant	-.475			-.982					
N. of countries	163			172					
Adjusted R2	.45			.74			.689		

	Rule of Law			Corruption					
	b	se	p	b	se	p			
Press Freedom	.014	.002	***	.012	.002	***			
<b>CONTROLS</b>									
Log GDP/Capita	.000	.000	***	.000	.000	***			
Ex-British colony	.169	.078	*	.073	.089	N/s			
Middle East	.536	.125	***	.296	.153	*			
Ethnic fractionalization	-.551	.147	***	-.466	.168	***			
Population size	.000	.000	N/s	.000	.000	N/s			
Constant	-1.01								
N. of countries	172			170					
Adjusted R2	.77			.73					

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, Joseph T. Siegle, Michael Weinstein and Morton Halperin. 2004. 'Why democracies excel' Foreign Affairs 83(5):57-72; Adam Przeworski, Michael E. Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub and Fernando Limongi. 2000. **Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990**. NY: Cambridge University Press.



# Measuring Change in Media Systems: The Media Sustainability Index

**Mark Whitehouse**, *Director,  
Media Development Division, IREX*

*“How can donors compare the relative needs of various countries when deciding whether to begin or modify a media assistance program? And, how can donors measure change in media systems over time and across countries to determine if a media assistance project is having an effect?”*

The Media Sustainability Index (MSI) was developed to address the need to consistently measure the development of media across time and across countries and capture the areas professional deemed key to developing healthy media systems. The MSI measures media systems according to five key components (or objectives): free speech, professional journalism, plurality of news sources, media business, and supporting institutions. In use since 2001 for Europe and Eurasia and rolling out to the Middle East in 2006, the MSI has proven itself a valuable assessment and measurement tool for donors, policymakers, media development implementers, and the media themselves. The approach to the MSI is distinguished by its view of media as a system of interrelated components, by its involvement of media professionals from each country being assessed in the process, and by its application of replicable and quantifiable indicators on what has essentially been viewed as a subjective exercise.

## WEAKNESSES IN MEASUREMENT AND ASSESSMENT IN THE FIELD OF MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Growing from a small and often overlooked niche of the larger development agenda in the late 1980s, media development has become a vital component of the democracy, governance, development and post-conflict agendas of the major US, European, and private donors. An independent and professional media is seen as vital to the successful development of transition countries, post-conflict societies, as well as an essential component to other development activities such as health, poverty reduction, anti-corruption, and economic development.

Yet, media development still suffers from many of the weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation faced by other activities in the democracy and governance field. This causes two serious problems for donors and implementers: how can donors compare the relative needs of various countries when deciding whether to begin or modify a media assistance program? And, how can donors measure change in media systems over time and across countries to determine if a media assistance project is having an effect?

When donors are considering the development or modification of media assistance programs, they usually undertake specific assessments in each case. However, the scope of each assessment can vary widely from one country to another. Can a policymaker in those conditions say that one country is more suited to media development or deserving of more funds when there is no consistent methodology used to assess the media systems between countries?

Successes are not easily quantifiable nor is it easy to link cause and effect. Donors understandably require implementers to produce project-specific evaluation data and since projects tend to vary considerably from one country to another, there is little possibility to compare results across countries. Additionally, donors' activities over time tend to change in response to funding fluctuations, changing policy priorities, and the changing environment. Implementers' and donors' evaluation data also change, making comparisons across time within a country very difficult.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MSI

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In the late 1990s, IREX began working to develop a tool to evaluate a given country's specific media system. We looked at the various tools available at the time and found them limited for the use of media development professionals. At the same time USAID was in the midst of improving monitoring and evaluation of all programs and in particular, seeking to bring greater rigor to the assessment of democracy and governance programs, including media.

At several USAID media development conferences organized by IREX, the issues of assessment, monitoring, and evaluation were discussed and all present - Western media professionals, local media professionals, donors, and implementers - indicated a need for a sustained effort to measure the media's progress in any given country over time. Additionally, it became clear that such a measure must be comparable across countries. Measures were being developed country by country and some of the existing global or regional measures addressed only part of the equation - most often press freedom, attacks on media, and media professionalism. Attendees were all collecting data specific to their individual programs but one could not determine if Croatia was making greater progress than Romania, let alone whether Romania itself had improved. Beginning in 2000, IREX took the work it had developed and worked with USAID to refine the measure and publish the first Media Sustainability Index (MSI) in 2001.<sup>45</sup>

## THE MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: MEDIA AS A SYSTEM

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The MSI approaches media as a "*system*" characterized by interrelated components that can not only develop with some degree of independence from other components, but also often rely on other components to develop. These components, referred to as "*objectives*" in the MSI, are as follows:

1. *Legal and social norms protect and promote free speech and access to public information.*
2. *Journalism meets professional standards of quality.*
3. *Multiple news sources provide citizens with reliable and objective news.*
4. *Independent media are well-managed businesses, allowing editorial independence.*
5. *Supporting institutions function in the professional interests of independent media.*

These objectives were judged to be the most important aspects of a sustainable and professional independent media system and served as the criteria against which countries were rated.

In surveying the countries of Europe and Eurasia where IREX was working at the time, specific quantifiable indicators for the above objectives were scarce. Existing

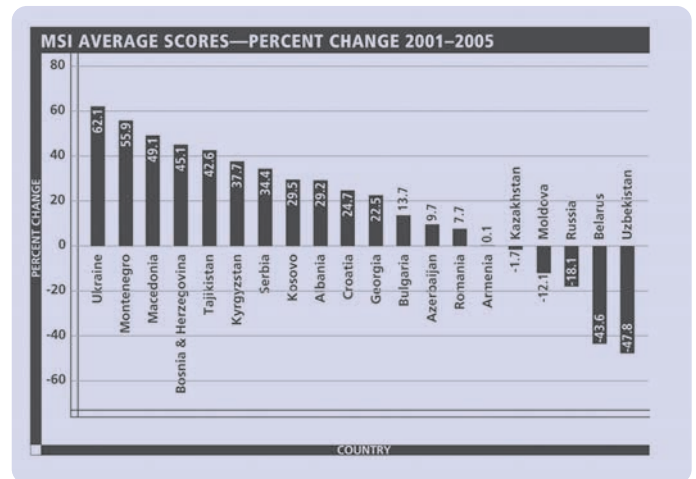
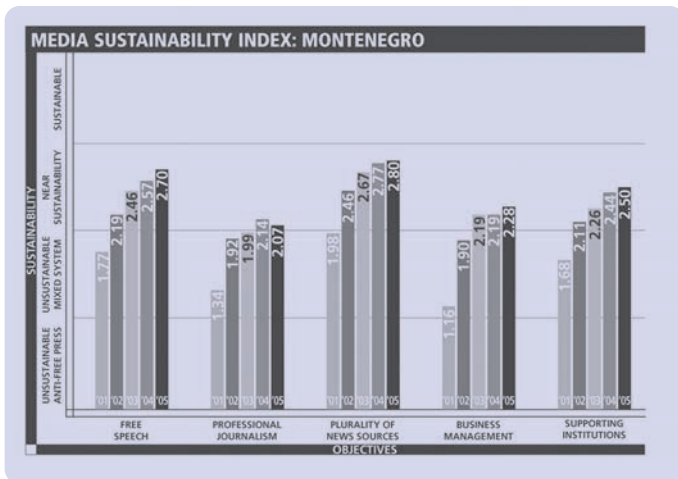
<sup>45</sup> see [www.irex.org/msi](http://www.irex.org/msi)



quantitative data were often unreliable (e.g., circulation of newspapers) or more often the case, not consistently available (e.g., revenue of media outlets, ownership, etc.). Other data were more likely to be qualitative by their very nature - the quality of journalism, the worth of a particular law, the essential services provided by media associations.

The MSI therefore sought to overcome these data weaknesses by adopting a system where indicators for each of the five objectives were scored by media professionals according to a standard set of criteria applied to each objective. Each of the objectives has 7 to 9 indicators rated on a scale of 0-4. The indicators are averaged for each objective to obtain the objective score. This allows a presentation of data as below where one can compare countries and compare countries across time.

Additionally, one can pull out data for specific countries or show changes over time in various formats, as below.



One of the unique aspects of the MSI lies in its use of media professionals in each country as a core component of the process. After scoring the indicators individually according to the criteria provided to them, an IREX-trained moderator convenes the participants for a discussion of the scores and the issues and specific events and incidents "behind" their data. The moderator writes up the discussion which together with input from IREX forms the core of each country chapter.

Country chapters form a key aspect of the MSI. They add substance to the scores, providing examples of events over the past year, a description of the obstacles media professionals themselves face daily, and the strengths of the system that they see in their work.

## THE MSI – LESSONS LEARNED AFTER FIVE YEARS

The MSI has been completed for five consecutive years in the Europe and Eurasia regions and has recently been completed in the Middle East and North Africa. This provides a basis for understanding the MSI and its strengths and weaknesses and provides direction for its further implementation, refinement, and expansion.

## METHODOLOGIES

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While the MSI was developed without any intent for a "Western" or "American" bias in its conception of a media system, there were concerns the five objectives and their indicators would not travel well. However, they have proven remarkably resilient and understandable across the 38 countries in Europe and Eurasia and the Middle East where the MSI has been implemented. Panelists understand the concepts and the indicators and there is an appreciation that one can compare across countries. The methodology is flexible and can be adjusted, on a global basis, as more data is gathered and the MSI expanded, but the concept of applying a standard measure across all countries has stood the test of 5 years of application.<sup>46</sup> It has succeeded in countries with dominant state broadcasters, ones with a strong private media market, ones where print media dominate the independent market and others where broadcast dominates.

## MODERATORS AND PANELISTS

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The quality of the moderator and the panelists for each country affects the quality of the product. Care must be taken in selecting a representative panel and ensuring that the panel is able to speak freely. IREX has at times granted anonymity to panelists and conducted virtual panels when circumstances warrant. The moderator, who convenes and guides the panel discussion and writes the draft of the country chapter must be well-versed in the MSI and understand the underlying methodology.

## THE DESIRE FOR ADDITIONAL DATA

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While the MSI was conceived as a tool to measure media systems in light of incomplete or unreliable quantitative data, policymakers and donors have consistently indicated that there is a desire to obtain basic data, such as may be available. There are projects to acquire and present such data (e.g., WAN newspaper data) but room remains to systematically collect data on ratings, advertising revenue, circulation, etc. There is a growing consensus that the MSI is one component of an evaluative process and points donors, implementers, and policymakers in the right direction for acquiring additional data to develop specific programs or policy responses.

## MSI AS ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION TOOL

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The MSI has proven effective as an assessment tool for donors and implementers. The combination of replicable data, the narrative discussion of the status of the media for each country, and the ability to compare results across countries and across time have proven to be extremely useful. USAID has incorporated the MSI into their evaluation schema for several countries and the World Bank has accepted the MSI as one of their governance indicators. Many other implementers use the MSI as a tool for evaluation and it has been introduced in various universities' coursework

At the same time, it is equally important to understand what the MSI does not do or intend to do. It does not directly and absolutely measure the impact of a specific donor project. One can however correlate donor work with improvements, stagnation, or decline in certain objectives. It can also point to factors outside the

<sup>46</sup> More detailed discussion of methodology is available by contacting IREX or referring to [www.irex.org/msi](http://www.irex.org/msi).

control of donors that affect the media environment. Russia, Belarus, and Uzbekistan all have had excellent donor-supported media development programs yet have seen steady declines in MSI scores - these are largely due to government choices and beyond the control or scope of media development programs. Croatia has witnessed improvement over the last several years in the MSI score, even after most donor assistance ended. The MSI does point to the success of donors' earlier work in supporting sustainable institutions, improving standards, and developing a constituency for media freedoms that set in motion a process of improvement driven from within.

The MSI also shows that the durability of changes in a country needs to be considered. As discussed above, Russia has seen a decline in MSI scores. Yet, several years ago it seemed to be on a path, if at times halting, towards a developed and independent media market. However, it has slid backwards over the past several years due largely to increasing government pressure on media outlets and journalists. The MSI has also captured many of the nuances in this regression since it treats media as a system of interrelated components – it shows how the business of media has not been sliding backwards as a whole and has in fact improved, even as free speech and plurality is rapidly declining in the media and supporting institutions are being pressured. All components do not necessarily move in tandem.

## CONCLUSION

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The MSI has proven a remarkably resilient tool for measuring media systems. It does not claim to be a perfect measure but rather seeks to be transparent in its methodology and data in applying greater methodological rigor to what many believe to be an essentially subjective process - media development. Its transparent methodology, narrative discussion, and annual application allows donors, media development professionals, and policymakers to use the results in assessments, monitoring and evaluation while also allowing them to challenge results, discuss data, and review those contributing to the published results. It has not imposed a US view of a media system nor a general Western view of media. Rather, it has proceeded from basic principles of journalism - primarily professionalism, independence, and plurality of sources.

# A Monitoring & Evaluation Toolkit for Media Development: What do available indicators and integrative approaches have to offer?

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*“Press freedom is understood differently in the various parts of the world... even established democracies do not interpret press freedom in exactly the same way.”*

Christina Holtz-Bacha

As the media development sector continues to professionalize, international donor institutions have increasingly emphasized the need for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) initiatives to gauge the sector’s effectiveness. In response, practitioners within the media assistance community have advocated the development of M&E frameworks for wide dissemination and use on the ground (Davis & Campbell, 2005). During the first Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) held in Amman, Jordan in October 2005, Dr. Gerry Power, Director, Research and Learning, BBC World Service Trust, suggested that research methods should be considered as tools to guide the implementation of media assistance projects and programs and to monitor and evaluate their efficacy. According to Power, the sector should conceptualize M&E in terms of a “*toolkit*” consisting of a broad array of methods from which selections can be made based on the requirements of a particular project or program.

The toolkit metaphor can be extended to make an additional point: one size does not fit all. After all, in assessing the effectiveness of media development initiatives, one size does not fit all. Therefore, we propose an M&E toolkit for media development reflecting broad priorities of the sector as a whole, yet adaptable to the needs of audiences of particular M&E initiatives. This paper argues that the sector should provide an assortment of M&E options to media development professionals who will then decide, in consultation with stakeholders, which tools they will acquire.

In conceptualizing this toolkit, we took stock of media development indicators that are either currently available or have previously been proposed by practitioners and scholars. Based on these indicators, we attempted to extract conceptual priorities reflecting the overarching goals of the sector. These conceptual priorities were subsequently used as categories for our proposed M&E toolkit for media development.

While indicators directly pertaining to media development are relatively scarce, a number of those publicly are available in Appendix A. It is important to note that these country-level indicators do not provide empirical data with which we can directly assess the effectiveness of particular media assistance activities (which are



usually targeted to narrowly defined populations). What these data sources do provide are cross-country level comparisons useful for tracking national, regional, and international trends. Given their scope, they are well suited toward identifying sector-level priorities

Based on our review of the indicators from a list of organizations, authors, and publications relevant to a macro perspective of M&E in media development,<sup>47</sup> we propose the following three M&E categories for the media development community's consideration:

- (1) *Journalistic Practices and Management;*
- (2) *Industry Structure and Access to Media*
- (3) *Legal and Regulatory Environment*

Cognizant of the need for a comprehensive review of available indicators and, more importantly, further deliberation among the sector's professionals and external stakeholders, this three-category M&E toolkit is meant to serve as a tentative organizing framework for the sector's further consideration. In addition, it is not our intent to propose particular measures or operationalizations, a vital task best left to those with first-hand experience in carrying out particular media assistance M&E interventions.

### THREE PROPOSED CATEGORIES FOR THE M&E TOOLKIT

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Developing M&E approaches under the rubric of this three-category toolkit can facilitate assessment of the effectiveness of specific media development projects and programs, while accounting for overarching self-determined goals of the sector. The categories proposed are not mutually exclusive nor are they completely exhaustive. However, they reflect priorities of the sector based on our study of the preceding indicators.

### JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE AND MANAGEMENT

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This category includes indicators related to the quality of journalism, education and training of journalists, and the degree of editorial and journalistic independence. It also includes the quality of institutions that provide support to journalists, such as press councils and journalists' unions. Lastly, this category includes assessments of violence against the press. IREX assesses the standards of journalistic quality based on the following components: free speech; professional journalism; and business management. IREX and Freedom House (FH) both assess diversity of viewpoints in the media. A Codes of Ethics database is available on International Centre For Journalists' website. Centre for the Protection of Journalists and Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) provide information on violence against journalists and media outlets; the latter includes information on whether these attacks are carried out by the state, armed militias, or underground organizations.

USAID (1999) argues that measures be developed in order to assess the state of investigative journalism, work conditions, gender issues in the newsroom, and content analysis of the media for quality comparisons. Christoph Spurk (Personal Communication, November 22, 2005) argues that through content analysis, "we can observe (measure) the fulfillment of... quality standards" of these materials in terms of the following components: number and transparency of sources; diversity of actors and viewpoints; neutrality of language; and separation between fact and opinion, among others (ibid.).

<sup>47</sup> See **Appendix A** for a full list of these sources. See **Appendices B** and **C** for summary charts of available and proposed indicators organized under these categories

## INDUSTRY STRUCTURE AND ACCESS TO MEDIA

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Media industry structure includes state versus private media ownership, the relationship between proprietors and the government, the level of concentration of ownership, and the degree of diversity among the owners. This category can also incorporate the political and economic interests and cultural backgrounds of proprietors. Media access includes cost of access to consumers as well as the size of media audiences based on ratings or subscriptions. Audiences can be further broken down by demographic factors, such as socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, geographic location, and literacy rates.

Sheila Coronel, RSF, and FH account for types of media ownership. FH also provides information on state involvement and intervention. The Media Matters Institute assesses the economic health of the media and the US Government Accounting Office report discusses audience shares of independent publications and broadcasters in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

USAID (2002) proposes systematic evaluation of media assistance funding mixes (i.e. public/private partnerships) and the suitability and duration of funding assistance given political, economic, and security contexts of various countries. USAID (1999) argues for the need to determine concentration of ownership and media consumption patterns. The US Department of State (DOS) proposes tracking the establishment of independent media outlets and opposition parties' access to state-run media.

## LEGAL AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

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The components of the legal and regulatory environment include the following: freedom of the press, speech, and information; criteria for licenses; censorship and libel laws; legal rights and responsibilities of journalists; and punishment for press offenses. In addition, this category includes assessments of monopolistic arrangements and state regulatory bodies.

A database of Media Laws is available on ICJF's website. FH ranks countries based on freedom of the press, treatment of libel, and freedom of information. RSF provides information on freedom of information laws, censorship, and punishment for press offences. RSF and FH assess the levels of state involvement and/or intervention in the media sector. Coronel compares types of press laws in Southeast Asia, and alongside IREX, assesses the availability of public information. US DOS argues for measurement of the awareness levels of journalists and media owners as regards their legal rights and responsibilities.

## CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES IN MONITORING & EVALUATION

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As the donor community continues to emphasize evidence-based approaches to development work, Thomas Carothers (1996) cautions that in some cases, reporting requirements have brought about *"teaching to the test"* attitudes and behaviors on the ground. For example, in assessing USAID democracy assistance in Romania, Carothers (ibid., pp. 114-115) enumerates the following negative impacts of an overemphasis on reporting quantifiable results:

- reductive output reports focus on quantifiable aspects rather than more subtle, substantial features;
- reporting requirements have resulted in project planning geared towards impressive reports versus advancing substantive goals;

- misstatement of actual results to conform to donor expectations;
- perception that the donor doesn't trust local partners given overly-detailed requirements, resulting in self-doubt.

Another critical issue involves the ideological bases of competing approaches. Without broad-based agreement on the sector's indicators of success, we run the risk of advocating internationally unrepresentative standards, especially since the largest organizations which generate these indicators are based in the West. Christina Holtz-Bacha (2005) writes that "*press freedom is understood differently in the various parts of the world... even established democracies do not interpret press freedom in exactly the same way*" (p. 2). Citing Freedom House's Freedom of the Press as an example of an indicator with Western and U.S. biases, Holtz-Bacha questions the argument that political party ownership (i.e. Scandinavia) and state support to media outlets (i.e. France) are necessarily opposed to press freedom. Another example of disagreement regarding the definition of press freedom is the U.S. preference for free market safeguards versus most Western European countries' provision of state financing to public service broadcasters in support of diverse programming (ibid.).

The dangers of "*teaching to the test*" and over representing particular ideological positions and their corresponding policy preferences underscore the importance of carefully deliberating sectoral priorities, conceptualizing indicators of success, and choosing appropriate research methods.

## PROPOSED INTEGRATIVE SOLUTIONS

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Alan Davis (2005) addresses these conceptualization and methodological concerns by offering the following five M&E principles: cultivating local ownership of the monitoring and evaluation process; ongoing grassroots participation in reformulation of indicators; using an appropriate mix of qualitative and quantitative research methods; taking stock of both structure and content of initiatives; and constructing a framework that accounts for linkages between project and sector-wide interventions.

The M&E toolkit proposed earlier responds to Davis' last recommendation by using sector-wide indicators to draw out conceptual priorities under which project-specific M&E initiatives can be subsumed. Certainly, these priorities require revisiting in forthcoming broad-based gatherings of the sector where feedback and input from both local and international representatives can be solicited.

Assessing the relative strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research methods and taking account of the structure and content of media development interventions require increased collaboration among professionals from within the sector, social scientists and policy scholars, and other stakeholders with relevant expertise.

There are many ways in which quantitative and qualitative research tools can be effectively organized and deployed. For a practical and accessible guide to various research approaches, see DFID's Monitoring and Evaluating Information and Communication for Development (ICD) Programmes (Myers, Woods, & Odugbemi, 2005). The World Bank has also published literature that explores strengths and weaknesses of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-model methods of evaluation (e.g. Bamberger, 2000).

The broad range of measures that can be included in the M&E toolkit can help rigorously assess media development initiatives, either individually or when used

*“Contending interpretations of freedoms of speech and of the press in media development require revisiting.”*

in conjunction with other methods. Use of multiple methods can be employed because they provide the benefits of being able to *“address different but complementary questions...”* and reduce uncertainty regarding M&E results (Mark & Shotland, 1987, p. 2). However, we should also be cognizant of the following issues. First, biases skewing the results of one method may also affect other methods. Corollary to this point, use of two or more methods that result in similar findings does not necessarily reduce uncertainty (ibid.). Second, when use of multiple methods show divergent results, we must account for these inconsistencies. It is essential, therefore, that the strengths and weaknesses of each M&E method used are considered and acknowledged in reports.

Increased cooperation among practitioners, academics, and other experts regarding the applicability of analytical frameworks and research methods should be informed by dialogue on at least two levels. First, contending interpretations of freedoms of speech and of the press in media development require revisiting for the purposes of clarifying the sector’s M&E priorities. Since definitions of these freedoms are not universal (Holtz-Bacha, 2005), we need to ask whether the sector should attempt to reach some form of agreement through broad-based deliberation. If agreement is not possible, perhaps the sector can adopt an M&E framework flexible enough to accommodate divergent positions.

Second, various theoretical frameworks and research methods should be evaluated in terms of their usefulness in measuring outputs and outcomes of media development initiatives. As mentioned earlier, measures such as IREX’s Media Sustainability Index and Freedom House’s Freedom of the Press do not provide data that pertain directly to individual media assistance projects and programs. The questions underpinning M&E efforts, therefore, determine the research agenda. For example, measuring the possible effects of a single project requires a different approach to gauging the effectiveness of the sector as a whole in a particular country. In some cases, broader indicators such as national trend data and cross-country comparisons can be more useful. A single project, such as a newsroom capacity-building intervention, will employ a research framework very different from those used in a country-level study of the relationship between exposure to community radio and voting levels in rural areas.

Through partnership with social scientists and other groups with relevant expertise, media development professionals can create M&E models for various types of studies. Whenever possible, indicators of success should be relevant to particular projects, on one hand, and to the underlying objectives of the media development sector, on the other.

Lastly, efforts should be made toward effectively communicating M&E results. It is essential to keep in mind *“who needs to know what and when?”* (Morris, Fitz-Gibbon, & Freeman, 1987, p.7). If M&E reports are to be taken seriously, they must communicate *“conclusions in a form that makes them most understandable and useful to those interested in the evaluation”* (ibid., p.8). Organizations that commission M&E studies and/or wish to build in-house expertise in this area should insist that evaluators’ reports be as clear as possible to pre-identified primary audiences, and should include *“just enough evidence to demonstrate the points being made, but no more”* (Grasso, 2003, p. 512). Moreover, M&E reports should be made available at times when they are most likely to be useful in decision-making cycles (ibid.).

## CONCLUSION

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After reviewing available macro-indicators and identifying a tentative set of sectoral priorities, we proposed three categories for an M&E toolkit for media development. Categorizing the toolkit in terms of the three areas discussed above can facilitate

broad-based deliberation among members of the sector and external stakeholders. Partnerships with social scientists and other experts can help the sector identify the ways in which M&E can be effectively incorporated in the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of media development initiatives.

Bridging the practical and theoretical dimensions of media development is essential in making valid and reliable evidence-based claims with regard to the impact of media assistance on journalistic practices and management, industry structure and access to media, and legal and regulatory frameworks. By adopting the M&E toolkit approach, the sector can take the lead in articulating its own priorities and make these the basis for determining the efficacy of media development efforts.

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## APPENDIX A: SOURCES FOR REVIEW OF INDICATORS

- Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ): Journalists Killed from 1992 to 2005; Journalists in Prison 2005; Journalists Missing 1982 to present; Cases of Attacks on the Press from 2003 to 2005. Accessible online at <http://www.cpj.org/index.html>
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## APPENDIX B: PROPOSED MEASURES IN MEDIA DEVELOPMENT (BY ORGANISATION OR BY AUTHOR)

Name of organization and report referenced	Journalism Practice and Management	Industry Structure and Access to Media	Legal and Regulatory Environment
USAID (1999): The Role of Media in Democracy: A Strategic Approach.	Inventory of journalists skills and training programs; state of investigative journalism; work conditions; gender issues in the newsroom; professional associations; journalistic ethics/corruption; content analysis of media for quality comparisons	Number and types of media; ownership and concentration; support of and from civil society; alternative media; rural media; media consumption patterns; media finance/ advertising	Analysis of legal framework; censorship
USAID (2002): Media Assistance: Best Practices and Priorities	Journalism training in professional values/ethics and practical/technical skills; trainees required to do follow-up surveys, seminars, reunions; legal support and training in local and international laws; up-to-date training materials; cross training for multiple media formats (print, broadcast, online)	Finding appropriate funding mixes especially in very poor countries (i.e. public/private partnership); appropriate definition of sustainability and length of commitments by funding agencies given political, economic, security situation of each country	Appropriate development intervention given country's stage of conflict (i.e. vulnerable, at war, postconflict); mechanisms for donor coordination
US DOS: as quoted in 2005 GAO report cited above.	Quality and quantity of news and information produced; citizens provided info for political and social choices	Keep track of establishment of independent media outlets; financial viability; Opposition parties' access to state run media	Awareness of legal rights and responsibilities of journalists and media owners

APPENDIX C: AVAILABLE MEASURES IN MEDIA DEVELOPMENT (BY ORGANISATION OR BY AUTHOR)

Name of organization, report/s referenced; No. of countries covered	Journalistic Practice and Management	Industry Structure and Access to Media	Legal and Regulatory Environment
Carrington T. & Nelson, M. (2002). In R. Islam et al. (Eds.) The Right to Tell (pp. 225-245). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Institute		Media strength and economic health (MMI data); advertising expenditures (World Association of Newspapers data, 2001)	
CPI: Journalists Killed in 2005; Journalists Missing 1982 to present; Cases of Attacks on the Press in 2005; more than 120 countries	Journalists killed and missing; attacks on the press		
Coronel, S. (2001). The Right to Know. Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism; 8 Southeast Asian countries (Burma; Cambodia; Indonesia; Malaysia; Philippines; Singapore; Thailand; Vietnam)		Media ownership and stakeholders	Free or restricted press; types of press laws; availability of public information
Djankov, S. et al. (2002). Media ownership and prosperity. In R. Islam et al (Eds.) The Right to Tell (pp. 141-165). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Institute	Journalists jailed; media outlets closed (RSF and CPI data)	State ownership of press/TV, by count and by market share	
FH: Freedom of the Press 1980 to 2006; 194 countries in 2006	Diversity of viewpoints	Media ownership and control, journalistic independence; state control of media through advertising and subsidies, etc. (these also have impact on the enabling environment)	Laws on freedom of the press; libel as criminal vs. civil; judicial independence; freedom of information, etc.; government interests; access to sources; censorship and self-censorship
ICFJ: International Journalists' Network online databases; all applicable countries	Codes of Ethics database		Media Laws database
IREX: Media Sustainability Index 2001 to 2005; 20 countries across Europe and Eurasia in 2005	Professional standards of quality; business management; plurality of news sources; existence of supporting institutions		Free speech and access to public information
MMI: 2005 Wealth of Nations Index; 75 countries (70 developing and 5 developed)	Press freedom index	Media strength and economic health; newspaper readership and publishers; literacy rates; access to PCs and Internet, fixed and mobile telephones, cable TV, etc.	
RSF: Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2002 to 2005; 167 countries in 2005.	Attacks on journalists and on the media; impunity of attackers whether from the state, armed militias, or underground organizations	Existence of independent media	Existence of freedom of information laws; censorship; punishment for press offences; monopoly and state regulatory body
US GAO (2005): Independent Media Development Abroad; 9 USAID missions (Ukraine, Croatia; Bosnia-Herzegovina; Kyrgyzstan; Georgia; Mali; Haiti; Indonesia; and Egypt).	Quality and quantity of information produced by partner print and broadcast outlets (Ukraine); quality of indep. broadcast management, surveys of editors and journalists regarding reporting skills and political news editing (Kyrgyzstan); %age of citizens who believe that media reflect views of all citizens; %age of stories... representing two or more viewpoints (Georgia); No. of info. content producers trained; %age of radio stations having trained staff in program prod.; %age of radio broadcasts that employ appropriate comm. techniques (Mali); ave. daily minutes of non-state electronic media local news programming (Kyrgyzstan).	No. of people who buy independent news publications; audience share of independent broadcast media (Bosnia-Herzegovina); internet managed by neutral institution; internet access costs (Mali)	Internet regulatory policies and radio licensing procedures; ave. time to obtain radio licenses (Mali)

# A Road Map for Monitoring & Evaluation in the Media Development Sector

**Alan Davis**, *Director of Strategy & Assessment,*  
*Institute of War and Peace Reporting (IWPR)*

*“Today, whereas the right to free speech remains very much a litmus test for democracy and a rallying cry for those working under authoritarian regimes, it no longer generates the kind of unconditional support it once did.”*

There are at least four solid reasons why the media development sector needs to start prioritising monitoring and evaluation and rooting it as a core competency of its work: Firstly and most obviously, it has a duty to deliver to those it professes to help, and in whose name it seeks and secures support; Secondly, this duty extends to those it asks to trust and fund it and who are in turn responsible to others; Thirdly, if it is serious about its work it needs to develop and apply new learning wherever possible; Fourthly, if it is not already happening, those unwilling or simply unable to demonstrate benefit will find themselves consigned to irrelevancy in an increasingly competitive world.

The media development sector was born out of the samizdat era of a generation ago when it was identified with the struggle for individual and political rights in the Communist bloc. Today, whereas the right to free speech remains very much a litmus test for democracy and a rallying cry for those working under authoritarian regimes, it no longer generates the kind of unconditional support it once did. Driven by political and public demands for greater effectiveness and accountability, donors began focusing on those able to demonstrate impact, on the traditional humanitarian aid sector, which underwent its own rationalisation process at the same time to improve and measure effectiveness. These changes happened, moreover, in concert with an increasing international awareness of and public commitment towards addressing the immediate, overwhelming and tangible needs of the world's poor and chronically ill.

Believing that the media's function and role is crucial in terms of building sustainable societies is not the same as proving it. This issue is further complicated by a growing ambivalence toward the media and the argument that journalists may just as easily incite and inflame as they might support democracy or the rule of law. The sector is therefore facing a double whammy of sorts: confusion over the wisdom of supporting it as well as questions over its actual relevance and impact.

The response should, therefore, be to launch an overdue process of learning that helps guide, inform and improve the impact of our work at both the individual project and the collective sector level. Ultimately it is, of course, in the clear interest of the sector to be able to prove the critical value of media development to the 'world outside'.

It makes most sense to begin with the collective goal and then work back: For the sake of clarity, we might imagine ourselves collectively engaged upon one big macro project with a logical framework which shows a goal of good governance

and democratic development (see figure 1). If we were to continue the logical framework analogy, our project purpose would therefore be to develop media that is more effective in its support of that goal. Outputs would include building the skills and capacity of the media itself; ensuring the media is fully working to exploit the skills and capacity we provide –and finally, improving the media’s ability to impact and effect the governance and development sectors in their widest meaning.

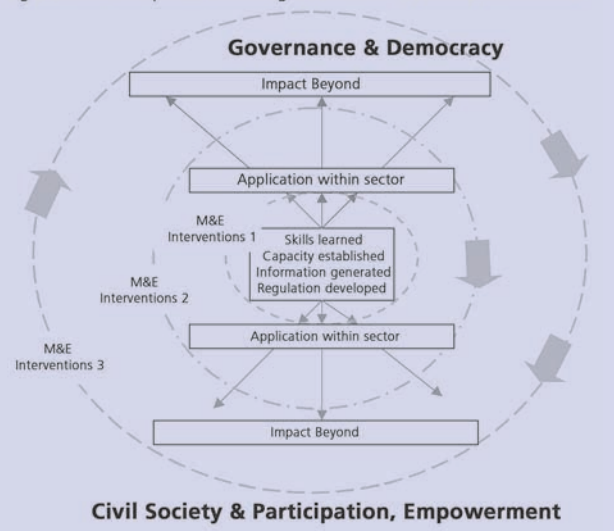
**Fig. 1: The Collective Media Development Project: Monitoring & Evaluation Log-frame**

Goal	Indicators of Verification	Means of Verification	Assumption
<b>Democratic Development</b>			
<b>Purpose</b> Mainstream media better able to impact upon Democratic Development			
<b>Outputs</b> 1. Professional media skills and capacity built 2. New skills and capacity deployed 3. Media activity, reach and content impacts Governance and development			

Developing Figure 1 into a full log-frame may provide us with a useful debating and reference point for the sector, as well as prove helpful in testing the validity of large-scale projects before they move off the drawing board. It should even prove helpful to individual groups to locate, develop and justify their own work. Completing the log-frames would naturally require us to identify appropriate indicators and monitoring processes for each stage, as it would design three separate strands of activities to feed into and deliver the three separate outcomes. The activities themselves would comprise our individual projects that contribute to the whole. Unfortunately, log-frames are traditionally seen as external impositions and hurdles to be overcome at the project submission stage: The level of discipline required usually results in us regarding them as inconveniences rather than as the critical planning mechanisms they really are. And yet, if we are really serious about assessment, we need to rehabilitate the log-frame and acknowledge it is as much an integral part of our toolkit as a spirit-level is to a builder.

## ESSENTIAL M&E INTERVENTIONS

**Fig 2: Media Development Monitoring & Evaluation - 3 Essential Interventions**



Having defined the area of our interest - from the project level through up to the collective impact we seek to have at the level of governance and democratic development - we can then determine three primary areas of activity to focus on in terms of measuring our effect (see Fig 2).

### M&E Interventions 1: The Benefit Transferred

M&E interventions at point 1 in Figure 2 are among the easiest to measure since they focus upon the straight-forward provision of skills, equipment, content or regulation at a project level. The transfer either happens or it does not. Skills can be measured, equipment tested, information produced and disseminated and regulation developed. Of course, even at this most basic of levels, the M&E challenge may require serious baseline research to ensure what is being proposed is wholly relevant –be it training, equipment or regulation.



*“The sector is therefore facing a double whammy of sorts: confusion over the wisdom of supporting it as well as questions over its actual relevance and impact.”*

As proficiency in languages can be tested, so too can proficiency in media skills: In the UK, career progress within local and regional print media has long been dependent upon success in the National Council for Training of Journalists exams. Subjective assessment in areas where overall standards are lacking means we are without clear indicators relating to either the level of skills achieved or the quality of training provided. There is therefore a strong case to argue to develop standardized and inter-linked training modules and objective methods of assessment which measure the impact of the training provided from the point of view of the recipient and not the provider. The comparative nature of objective measuring is also valuable as a diagnostic tool in helping us determine different needs and abilities. We should then consider developing and harmonizing courses and grading according to discipline and levels. While course and testing materials will be culturally and regionally sensitive, this should not ultimately detract from our ability to measure progress in skills training in a wholly effective and objective manner. The need for more systematic and qualifiable skills training applies equally to the managerial side of the business as it does the editorial sector. Similarly, we need acknowledging that skills provision is only one aspect of the direct support our sector provides. Measuring the capacity of organizations established is also crucial as is the value of information generated and suitability of regulatory support given.

## OBJECTIVE MEASURING

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### M&E Interventions 2: The Benefit Applied

If the strategy to develop practical ways of assessing achievements within the area covered by M&E 1 is essentially clear, it is less so in M&E 2: Measuring the degree to which new-found skills or capacity is actually applied, is problematic in everything save the use of equipment. Even then it has to be used correctly in order to maximize benefits. When the issue is training, regulation, the press centre, the journalists' union or the complaints' commission, we need indicators measuring the effect they are having in terms of delivering benefits or outcomes. In the case of training, this might see us measuring the overall quality of material produced by those trained and possibly the effect it has on their non-trained colleagues. With regulation, our focus may be on how it is enforced, independent assessments as to its suitability and testimonials from all those affected and interested parties.

### M&E Interventions 3: The Benefit Beyond

With M&E intervention 3, we look at the influence we have on the world outside. This is the confluence where the interests of many donors start to appear. The greater the benefit we can deliver in terms of supporting and facilitating better governance and democracy, the greater the position our sector will find itself in. Governance has been defined very broadly in Figure 2, to include civil society as it forms part of greater attempts to improve accountability, transparency and the overall behaviour of authority - be it the government, the judiciary, law enforcement and military agencies, or business. The stronger civil society and the more empowered ordinary citizens are, the greater their ability to help determine governance. We might thus consider trying to develop twin and complimentary strategies in M&E 3 - one measuring the role media plays in improving political and economic 'governance', and the other that looks at media's ability to support greater civic-driven governance. In so doing, this top down approach could help guide the planning stages of many individual projects in the future.



Developing proper assessment systems, standards and mechanisms and ensuring they are rooted properly and adopted as best practice, will be a sustained process requiring proper research, consultation, debate and learning across the sector. It will also require the appropriate resources. With the parameters of the challenge and interest now broadly defined, practical work needs to start as a matter of urgency: Results will neither be immediate, nor will they be the product of any single organization. Rather, the greater the process of collaboration and consultation, the more legitimate and relevant the process of developing new measures and systems will be.

The next step is to identify and enable key drivers of this process to focus joint energies upon developing ways to monitor and evaluate work at both the micro and macro level. Given the urgent need for tools and mechanisms to measure each, there is no reason why work should not begin simultaneously upon both. These twin pillars are envisaged as a media and governance index designed to support and inform our work as a group and the development of a wholly practical guidebook aimed at individual organisations and practitioners working at the micro level. Other key pillars for future focus may include curriculum development and a training of trainers (TOT) institute to foster quality-controlled international standards in journalism teaching and development. The employees of separate organizations representative of the sector and comprising serious representation from Southern-based organisations should be the key drivers of this project. They should work jointly upon both pillars and in concert with steering/advisory groups comprised of nominated representatives from all other interested parties quite possibly including those beyond our sector.

## MEDIA & GOVERNANCE INDEX

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*“The need for more systematic and qualifiable skills training applies equally to the managerial side of the business as it does to the editorial sector.”*

The concept of an index which measures media’s ability to impact governance was developed by IWPR and floated as an idea at the Global Forum for Media Development meeting in Amman in October 2005, as part of a possible strategy to improve the collective impact of the media development sector. Whilst there are existing excellent indices which measure media freedoms and sustainability (Freedom House and IREX respectively), we are presently unable to measure and determine objectively media’s influence within societies –and specifically its relationship to governance and overall development, country to country.

The basic concept of a Media-Governance Index envisages a scale of influence that directly relates and feeds into each of the six dimensions of governance as identified by the World Bank: i) Voice and Accountability; ii) Political Instability and Violence; iii) Government Effectiveness; iv) Regulatory Quality; v) Rule of Law, and, vi) Control of Corruption. Given our stated belief that stronger civil society and individual empowerment are key aspects of ensuring good governance, it remains to be seen whether it can be fully incorporated under ‘voice’ or whether a seventh dimension of governance may be necessary. Scoring may be developed and delivered through a full range of aggregate indicators that would themselves be based upon a wide range of data sources and variables. These indicators will draw off existing and new data sources as well as results of substantial, wide-ranging and fully-weighted perception-based analysis. It is foreseen that such an index will look at the media as a whole – and might also break down scoring between state and non-state media. The index will need to be capable of measuring negative as well as positive impacts of media activity in the target country – producing a negative score where overall media behaviour is found to be working against governance and possibly even promoting conflict.

Most importantly, the index will act as an objective benchmark against which our sector will apply itself –seeking to collectively to improve country scores over time. Equally, the index will act as a valuable diagnostic tool for donors and practitioners alike, demonstrating whether the media is found to be impacting governance and if so, in what ways and in which areas. As well as highlighting strategic areas of effectiveness and challenges, it will promote a greater degree of discipline, application and logic in future project proposals. The index will also be designed to ensure it is an important tool for agents of the international community –particularly those international institutions working in the field of governance and development.

Given that this project is designed as a sectoral initiative, and taking into account work already in progress in related areas, it would be preferable if the resulting index could complement and perhaps even be built on to existing indices, such as the IREX Media Sustainability Index. A process of development and discussion is needed to determine the degree to which this is actually possible.

## PRACTICAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION HANDBOOK

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This is envisaged as the first-ever attempt to provide a practical guide for media development practitioners the world over, to help ensure they design and deliver the most relevant and beneficial projects possible. Its ultimate aim is to provide an interlinked and comprehensive toolkit of activities and indicators designed to provide practitioners with much needed advice and practical support. It will be of benefit to those interested in determining the value of projects focusing upon skills transference, and it will also assist measurement of how newly-learned skills have actually been applied. The focus will not simply be on training, but also on ways of measuring the effect of content and production-based projects as well as those involving regulatory and legal systems.

The success of the book will in very large part be determined by its relevance and the collaboration involved in the production process. As presented by Internews at the GFMD, it will take as its model the Sphere project which developed best practice standards and indicators in the humanitarian sector in the 1990s. The authors of the proposed book will be guided by a steering committee with substantial representation from Southern-based organizations –and will involve a full participatory process of consultation and testing. The authors who themselves offer substantial writing, evaluation and project development experience, will be looking to distil findings into a concise yet comprehensive book that provides a thorough grounding in best practise. Full regard will be paid toward ensuring assessment mechanisms involving all relevant stakeholders –including the use of participatory approaches and audience impact measurement systems wherever relevant. The book will be further expanded in year 2, and will provide a basis for serious M&E training across the sector.

## RISKS

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The success of both initiatives detailed above will be heavily dependent upon their ability to incorporate full consultation, participation and learning. Any project to build these twin pillars will consequently incorporate know-how and build upon outside successes and expertise wherever relevant. As well as having to take full account of the interests and opinions of stakeholders, project leaders will consult fully with the donor community. Most importantly, it will also have to pay due regard to the opinions of those who may fear such a strategy will lead to a wholly prescriptive approach that threatens all innovation and creativity within the sector. The intention behind this proposal and developing M&E know-how is precisely the opposite. Creativity, learning and participation will drive this process and the tools will themselves evolve and change over time. Ultimately however, by far the greatest risk is ignoring the clear and pressing fact that the media development sector needs to move forward on these or similar projects as a matter of urgency.





# How Media Matters: Practitioner Experiences

## Section 3: Challenges in Media Matters: Practitioner Experiences

# The Enabling Environment For Free and Independent Media

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### COLLEGE LAW

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This volume seeks to show why media matters. But understanding why media matters depends on the mode of operation of the press and the particular context in which the media exist. Shaping an effective democratic society requires many steps. The formation of media law and media institutions is one of the most important. Laws are frequently looked at in isolation and as interchangeable parts that are separately advanced for the creation of effective and democracy-promoting media. They are also often analyzed and discussed with attention paid merely to their wording. However, each society has a cluster of activities, interactions of laws and the setting in which they exist, that make those laws more or less effective. Different states, at different stages of development, require different strategies for thinking about the role of media and, as a result, for thinking about the design and structure of the environment in which they operate.

Media can only matter – we would argue – in an environment (an "*enabling environment*") that allows for a vigorous, demanding and informative press. It is significant, then, to identify components of the complex legal process that enables media to advance democratic goals.

### THE LINK BETWEEN FREE AND INDEPENDENT MEDIA AND DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

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The notion of 'free' media relates to ownership: something other than total ownership by the state. Media 'independence' goes beyond this, to indicate an optimal degree of editorial discretion, not subject to outside interference whether public (or even private to some extent), in the production of content. Frequently, the essence of transitions to greater democracy is the fragmentation or destruction of a previous monopoly or oligopoly of power, including the monopoly over information as a critical element of the monopoly over power. In many societies, reform means ensuring that there is access for a group of voices not previously included in the public marketplace of ideas. The question then is how the market is opened and to whom. Put differently, what new or additional suppliers in the market for loyalties are supported by what sources of power or money and with what objectives.

Some may wish free and independent media for their own sake. But most tie the claim - certainly the geopolitical claim - for unencumbered media to their role in



*"In many societies, reform means ensuring that there is access for a group of voices not previously included in the public marketplace of ideas. The question then is how the market is opened and to whom."*

reinforcing or fostering democracy. Because there are democratic societies with different profiles of the media, no specific matrix of press development can be considered "essential" as part of the project of democratization. Development of "free and independent" media can itself take many forms, and freedom and independence can have many gradations. It is important to know what kind of press in what kind of society will perform the functions necessary for the process of building democratic institutions to proceed healthily.

The Study of the late 1940s Hutchins Commission, "*A Free and Responsible Press*," identified five possible functions as criteria for the assessment of press performance. The press could do one or more of the following:

- Provide "a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning," a commitment evidenced in part by objective reporting;
- Be "a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism," meaning in part that papers should be "common carriers" of public discussion, at least in the limited sense of carrying views contrary to their own;
- Project "a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society";
- "Present and clarify the goals and values of the society"; and
- Provide "full access to the day's intelligence," thereby serving the public's right to be informed.

The Commission also identified summary tasks that are central to the press's political role: to enlighten the public so that it is capable of self-government, and to serve as a watchdog on government. It might be said that there is often an additional function of the press, namely to provide to various segments of the society a sense that they are represented in the public sphere.

As Professor C. Edwin Baker has written, different conceptions of democracy demand somewhat different functions of the press. Visions of a democratic society that emphasize citizen participation, for example, would underscore the need for media that, as Baker puts it, "*aid groups in pursuing their agendas and mobilizing for struggle and bargaining.*" On the other hand, a more elitist version of democracy requires principally that the media provide sufficient information for those who participate in the public sphere to function rationally, and, of course, perform a watchdog function. In some models, the media has a responsibility to assist in inculcating and transmitting "*proper values.*"

Assuring the existence of free and independent media may require providing, in the marketplace of ideas, instruments for articulating values and summoning public support that are not wholly dependent on the state. Moving towards free and independent media early in the process of transition may also provide a building block for the future stable set of democratic institutions. Even if the media do not perform the function of effective watchdog, of engaging in information-providing and value-transmitting functions in the early days, that may be because of lack of experience. Starting the media early on the right road means that when the watchdog and other functions are necessary, the media will be more prepared. Free and independent media may organically arise in a mature democracy, but artificial steps are necessary in many transition contexts.

Finally, one might argue that the emergence of democratic institutions in transition societies will come faster and with greater public support and involvement if there are free and independent media to develop and inspire public opinion.



Laws that create the structural underpinnings for independent media are necessary for the development of civil society, but they alone do not guarantee how media will function. For free and independent media to "work," the community in question must value the role that the media play. Law alone, efforts of aid-givers alone, or efforts by the host government alone (by subsidy, delivery of newsprint, or control over the means of distribution) rarely ever determine how free, pluralistic, and independent the media can be (though all of these structural aspects are important). What is true across the board is that there is a close interaction between what might be called the legal - institutional and the socio-cultural, the interaction between law and how it is interpreted and implemented, how it is respected and received. In this sense, another important factor for the enabling environment is the response of the citizenry. For example, readership of the serious press declined precipitously in post - Soviet Russia, even though newspapers enjoyed greater freedoms. Though this happened in large part because of price increases at the newsstand, a socio-cultural factor of note is that after a period of euphoria, in some societies, the zest for news about public events, at least in the print media, had declined.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

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*"It may never be known what elements exactly contribute most - or even essentially - to the creation of a culture of democratic values. Perhaps it is the existence of a vibrant non-governmental sector that is vital: organizations that are sensitive, at any moment, to infringements of journalistic rights."*

What is it that makes one society open and tolerant and one not? What is it that produces a citizenry that not only has the sources to be informed but also, in fact, avails itself of them? It is easier and clearer to see what negative steps preclude society from allowing such a culture to develop. The tools of speech repression are easier to identify than those that encourage the productivity and use of information. Good media laws alone do not make a civil society happen, though a legal framework may be helpful. Many are the authoritarian regimes that mastered the language of openness. It may never be known what elements exactly contribute most - or even essentially - to the creation of a culture of democratic values. Perhaps it is the existence of a vibrant non-governmental sector that is vital: organizations that are sensitive, at any moment, to infringements of journalistic rights.

Media law reform and other steps that are taken must be evaluated in a specific way. They should be viewed substantially as helping to constitute a media - sensitive society and evaluated in the way they contribute to this process. Taking laws off the shelf of another society and plugging them into the processes of transition will certainly, alone, be insufficient. The public acts of drafting and debating media laws must be enacted as a drama, a teaching drama that educates the citizenry in the role that the media can play. The process must encourage a rise in consciousness about the value and functioning of free speech and its operation in the society. The very idea of an enabling environment for media reform assumes the importance of particular forms of law for free and independent media. It also presumes the necessity of a certain kind of media structure, sometimes including a prerequisite that the media be indigenous, for the development of democratic institutions.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to measure the effectiveness of a specific intervention designed to render the media more vibrant contributors to a transition toward democratic institutions. It is easier to suggest what range of efforts is more appropriate than another in particular circumstances and at a specific moment in time.

*“The rule of law does not simply provide yet one more vehicle by which government can wield and abuse its awesome power; to the contrary, it establishes principles that constrain the power of government, oblige it to conduct itself according to a series of prescribed and publicly known rules.”*

Neil Kritz

Law can be either an instrument of unbridled public authority, or a mechanism that impedes the free exercise of arbitrary rule while at the same time providing the state the tools to pursue legitimate public objectives. As Neil Kritz has written, *“The rule of law does not simply provide yet one more vehicle by which government can wield and abuse its awesome power; to the contrary, it establishes principles that constrain the power of government, oblige it to conduct itself according to a series of prescribed and publicly known rules.”*

The goals of a legal system committed to the rule of law are predictability and fundamental fairness. Rule of law is therefore intrinsically linked to values associated with democracy and legality, and its focus is very much on process. As such, the rule of law, at a minimum, incorporates clarity and accessibility, legal norms, an administrative process of fairness, impartiality and objectivity, and judicial support. In an enabling environment, the generally applicable normative acts that govern the conduct of public authorities and private persons must be accessible and transparent. Those public bodies to which legislative powers have been delegated must be equipped with the necessary assistance and skills to develop coherent, clear legal rules. Thus, great attention should be devoted to the development of legislative drafting expertise. There are three main benchmarks for evaluating the language and context of media-related statutes in terms of the rule of law: simplicity and clarity, dissemination, and accessibility laws designed to foster media independence may hinder it by increasing the possibility of abuse if they are unclear, confusing, or contradictory.

Furthermore, public administration must conform to legal norms and act only under their authority. The administrative acts of public institutions must be grounded in a legal basis. The purpose of public administration is to facilitate the achievement of legislative objectives. Therefore it must operate pursuant to this fundamental principle of *“legality.”* Perhaps the gravest threat to the exercise of media freedoms comes not from bad laws, but from administrative acts that apply the laws arbitrarily or are completely outside the boundaries of the laws.

Effective media enterprises are businesses as well as instruments of speech, and often quite substantial businesses. They cannot function in an environment in which it is impossible to operate as an enterprise. All the laws regulating business must operate as smoothly as possible. If a special license is necessary for the opening of a foreign bank account, then such a license should be issued or denied based on the application of transparent and consistent criteria. Broadcasters and press enterprises depend on reliable rules concerning property ownership and control. And, of course, as they become more successful, these entities depend on laws relating to the issuance of ownership shares, the development of credit, and the capacity to have secured interests or to insure that the parties with whom they deal are proper financial partners.

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS: FAIRNESS, IMPARTIALITY, AND OBJECTIVITY

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The administrative process must be grounded in a commitment to fairness for all participants. Rule of law precepts should permeate the fabric of governmental decision making. It is of course inherent in the nature of administrative decision making that it involves the exercise of discretion. However, this freedom must be restricted along basic tenets of fairness. The process for licensing news media

outlets such as radio or television broadcasters must be open, objective, and fair, with the authorities acting according to prescribed legal procedural standards and substantive criteria that are applied impartially to all participants in the process. And an independent, effective judiciary is essential for the oversight required under the rule of law.

## THE LEGAL ENVIRONMENT FOR NEWS MEDIA ACTIVITY

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Four aspects of the legal environment in which news media operate and where law is a factor either promoting or impeding news media independence and effectiveness warrant attention:

**(1)** newsgathering; **(2)** content-based regulation; **(3)** content-neutral regulation that has the potential to influence content indirectly; and **(4)** protection of journalists in their professional activity, including protection against physical attacks.

Newsgathering, a key function of the press in a democratic society, is an essential condition of news media effectiveness. Laws concerning newsgathering include those that recognize and guarantee public access to government - controlled information and institutions, with limited exceptions for national security, protection of personal privacy, crime prevention, and other goals. Laws concerning the licensing and accreditation of journalists also relate to this question of effectiveness.

Another set of laws deals with content-based regulation, which we view as intervention by the public authorities, either through "*legal*" means (that is, on the basis of legislative acts or judicially-created norms) or through "*extra - legal*" means (governmental acts that are not grounded in legislative or judicial norms directly targeted at content). These laws, which seek to advance a range of state, social, and individual interests, operate through forms of prior review censorship, conditions of market entry, and regimes of subsequent punishment for perceived abuses of journalistic freedoms. The scope of such content-related concerns and their methods of enforcement represent a useful yardstick by which to measure whether an enabling environment exists.

The third category comprises laws that are not targeted directly at editorial content (that is, are content - neutral on their face), but which have an incidental impact and therefore create the risk of external manipulation in their application, or else laws that are intended to shield media from external influence.

Finally, there is an examination of issues related to protection of journalists in their professional activity. There are at least two components of this category. The first relates to the matter of journalists' job security, and focuses on "*internal press freedom*" or the relationship between journalists and media owners. The second concerns the matter of physical security: journalists often must endure the threat or the reality of physical attacks upon them from either public or private persons, and the extent to which the legal system protects them is also a key element in an enabling environment.

Increasingly, access to the information bases of the Internet is a major indicator of the openness of a society. One question is whether domestic journalists and editors have sufficient access to inform their publications and make them more attractive to readers. This is a question of training, availability, and cost. Restrictive states have sought ways to ration access to the Internet, through high transmission fees, limited licenses for Internet Service Providers, or specific approval for use of such facilities. An enabling environment would promote the use of access to the Internet by the press, as well as by citizens at large.

The Internet appears, at least for the elite, to be one of the least expensive means of gaining a wide variety of views without the intermediation of the state.

Internet cafes can become the new coffeehouses of political discourse. On the other hand, they can, and in some societies do, mask a policy in which access is restricted to particular physical locations, and the computers have access to a highly censored series of websites and servers.

The regulation of access to signals from satellites, including direct broadcast satellites, is another "*new technology*" set of rules with implications for transitions to democracy. These rules include prohibitions on satellite dishes or policing of dishes that are pointed to prohibited satellites or a satellite that is carrying undesirable channels. In modern democratic societies, the process of developing appropriate and stable institutions increasingly relies on associations and groups that are independent of government. A strong civil society also demands and oversees legal constraints on state power and the accountability of state actors.

The increased role of civil society marks a shift from "*government*" to "*governance*," with governance involving a far larger group of participants and players. According to the World Bank, "*Good governance is epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policy making, a bureaucracy imbued with professional ethos acting in furtherance of the public good, the rule of law, transparent processes, and a strong civil society participating in public affairs. Poor governance is characterized by arbitrary policy making, unaccountable bureaucracies, unenforced or unjust legal systems, the abuse of executive power, a civil society unengaged in public life, and widespread corruption.*"

One important element of the enabling environment is continuing attention to public understanding, public perceptions, and public demand that undergirds a society hospitable to free and independent media. The very functioning of the rule of law in the media field has its own educational benefits. But as free speech norms are fragile even in the most stable or democratic systems, their acceptance cannot be taken for granted. In the United States, non-governmental organizations like the Freedom Forum are constantly testing the public pulse on attitudes regarding free speech principles. Segments of the press, large newspapers, broadcasters, and motion picture companies invest in campaigns to educate and foster tolerance, acceptance, and comprehension of the complexities of living in a free society.

This is an outermost circle of the enabling environment: a circle in which citizen preferences are a key to the long-term operability of the rule of law and a system of laws that facilitate the contribution the media can make to the democratization process.

The character of the citizenry and its capacity to use such elements of the press that are available are important when discussing the broader elements of an enabling environment. Indeed, media independence may depend on the capacity of the audience to treat information wisely and critically and draw inferences from it. There is a special kind of literacy that might be demanded, not just literacy in the conventional sense, but literacy that encompasses a desire to acquire, interpret, and apply information as part of a civil society.

To the extent that the independence of media depends on advertising or subscriber support, the state of the economy in general is also significant. Financially struggling media have marked transitions worldwide. Without a viable advertising economy or a vigorous economy that provides workers with salaries that allow them to be potential subscribers – media may become dependent on government subsidy or industry sectors that bias output.



*“The major resource for enhancing the enabling environment is indigenous talent because, ultimately, the answers must almost always be local.”*

At its broadest, of course, what counts is the development of a custom or attitude, a general notion in the society that information about government is available, important, and trustworthy. It is difficult to sustain excellent free and independent media without a public that has a continuous appreciation of the need for its output. Education, literacy, tradition, desire, financial capacity, and public demand are all elements that combine to bring about such a situation.

The major resource for enhancing the enabling environment is indigenous talent because, ultimately, the answers must almost always be local. One approach is to ask what forms of assistance are most useful in strengthening local media and, following that, what tools exist to facilitate an enabling environment for effective media reform. One consequence of the aid pattern is that a number of organizations have developed that specialize in providing technical assistance. To some extent, this specialization has been along industrial lines. Some organizations foster independent broadcasters while others are more expert in dealing with newspapers and other print publications.

There are entities that specialize, as well, by region. One NGO specializes in establishing emergency radio stations in conflict zones where a neutral and objective voice is needed. In a number of countries in central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, techniques employed include training journalists, building associations, giving attention to media infrastructure, building business skills, and addressing the law and policy environments in which the media function.

Media programs financed by USAID ordinarily avoid direct payments to media outlets, instead providing mostly non – material assistance (training, advice, and cooperative projects). Those programs providing greater direct material assistance usually articulate such aid in terms of apolitical professional needs. These precautions are taken because of some of the obvious hazards inherent in making direct payments to stations rather than investing in infrastructure. If a donor country or foundation makes contributions based on the political approach of the print media or television station, it may be charged with precisely the kind of content – based distinction for which a government would ordinarily be condemned with at home.

## CONCLUSION

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Our effort has been to identify certain key elements of an enabling environment for media law reform, focusing on the enabling environment for media law reform. The objective has been to ask which steps assist in the development of free and independent media. We have sought to identify the relationship between media reform and the growth of democratic societies, examining the specific elements of media law that are part of media reform and the larger context in which these laws are developed.

Thus, we assume that the steps toward an enabling environment are related in some substantial and reciprocal way to the nature of the relevant society's political development. Each step in political and legal transitions contributes to the state of an enabling environment for independent media. At the same time those independent media structures may also promote the achievement of the broader political goals.

In this process, the concept of the enabling environment is central. It is not only particular laws themselves that must be addressed, but the institutional structure which administers those laws, including the courts, regulatory agencies, and the culture of censorship or its absence. In some societies there is little effective law. What we mean by "law" may take the form not just of legislation emanating from a parliament, but other forms as well, including orders or actions of the executive branch. In any society, there will be those who support and those who oppose the public policy assumptions that underlie this effort

Many persons within and without the state who favor development of civil society will look for ways to further the process of incipient change. They will seek

ways to bolster those in power that are inclined to foster openness and reform. They will also seek ways to augment a pluralistic society's access to additional means of communication in order to disseminate information, opinions, and views.

NGOs have employed a variety of techniques to assist willing governments in these transitions. Institutions like the Independent Journalism Foundation have established training institutes. Other NGOs, like Internews and the Open Society Institute, directly fostered the development of independent media. More generally, Western governments have also encouraged a small but significant effort to address more comprehensively the need for legal structures that enable media reform.

In the specific area of legal norms and institutions, strategies or tools which deserve consideration include: the analysis of competing legislative media models; the analysis of how emerging economic legislation will affect the development of media; the assistance of media law specialists in the drafting of legislation; consultation with specialists from countries that have undertaken similar efforts; development of skills in lobbying government effectively for desired legislative solutions; and ongoing attention to the developing institutional structure in order to understand how it functions.

Those committed to developing free and independent media have explored how steps toward change can be specifically related in some substantial way to the nature of the relevant society's political development. There is not yet a Rosetta Stone that decodes how distinct elements of the enabling environment can be related to the stages of a society as it passes, for example, from state control to more democratic forms. Development of one will have to wait one day.

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# Strategies for Media Development

*“Following the events of 9/11, the democracy and governance field has been seen increasingly as a counterbalance to terrorism. Now more than ever, democracy and governance assistance rests on the assumption that promoting democracy abroad is crucial to ensuring security interests at home.”*

**Ann Hudock**, DPhil, Assistant Representative,  
The Asia Foundation, Vietnam

In 1999, USAID published a strategic framework with the ambitious title “*The Role of Media in Democracy*”. It was intended to guide its field staff and development partners who were thinking about investing in and carrying out media sector support. The framework drew on the operational experiences of field missions around the world, and benefited considerably from the expertise of USAID staff and its implementing partners.

At the time the document was published, there were pockets of operational experience of providing media assistance within USAID, but little written work that analyzed how these efforts added up to a national media sector that supported democracy. There were few published studies or cases within USAID that allowed practitioners to learn from experiences across regions or to reflect on international good practice.

After reviewing the range of global experiences in media assistance, and considering USAID’s own engagement in that area, key elements of a media sector support program were outlined:

- Shaping the legal enabling environment
- Strengthening constituencies for media sector reform (including media law and policy organizations, media watchdogs, research institutes, professional associations, and an educated readership that values vibrant media)
- Removing barriers to access
- Training (journalists and media managers)
- Supporting capitalization of media

The framework suggested that answers to three key questions could be used to help shape media sector support:

- Who holds power to communicate in a society?
- Who has access to the means of communication?
- Who is communicated to?<sup>1</sup>

Almost 10 years on there is a wealth of literature based on current programs to complement the strategic framework.<sup>2</sup> While research and publications have

<sup>1</sup> Hudock, Ann, “**The Role of Media in Democracy**” (Washington, DC: USAID, 1999). P. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Notable among these newer contributions to the field include Krishna Kumar’s **Promoting Independent Media: Strategies for Democracy Assistance** (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006); Ellen Hume’s **The Media Missionaries: American Support for Journalistic Excellence** (Knight Foundation, 2004); Rick Rockwell and Noreene Janus’ **Media Power in Central America** (University of Illinois Press, 2003); and Monroe Price and Peter Krug’s “**The Enabling Environment for Free and Independent Media: Contribution to Transparent and Accountable Governance**” (USAID, 2002). Rick Rockwell and Noreene Janus served as consultants to USAID and assisted with the research that informed the 1999 strategic framework. Their 2003 book is an outgrowth of that work with USAID.

contributed to the development of the field of media assistance and hopefully sharpened programs on the ground, the key questions posed in the USAID strategic framework in 1999 remain relevant. The broader context within which the original framework was crafted, however, has changed dramatically.

*There are three fundamental and significant ways in which the overall context for providing media sector support has shifted.*

**First**, the democracy and governance field has matured, and promoting media sector development has emerged as a category of assistance in its own right. Media assistance has come of age and is no longer seen solely as a sub-set or on the sidelines of a civil society support program or advocacy efforts. A vibrant and healthy media sector supports broader good governance goals including free and fair elections, anti-corruption and even economic development. There is now a momentum to media sector assistance as evidenced by the convening of the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD).<sup>3</sup>

**Second**, and perhaps related, as the democracy and governance field has become more established, more has been asked of the work carried out. Following the events of 9/11, the democracy and governance field has been seen increasingly as a counterbalance to terrorism. Now more than ever, democracy and governance assistance rests on the assumption that promoting democracy abroad is crucial to ensuring security interests at home.

The danger though, is that media assistance will focus on the media as a tool for governments' public diplomacy, rather than an independent institution. In such an environment, global security concerns may trump free expression and provide political cover for further restrictions on both access to information and civil liberties. These more recent developments create new challenges for the media and for media sector support.

**Third**, new and emerging technologies break the boundaries of traditional media sectors and challenge the preeminence of traditional outlets as instruments of democratic development. For example, since early 2001 blogging has become a popular and influential means of shaping public opinion and they have forced mass media to consider its own role and operations. Dan Rather discovered the power of blogs when he presented documents on 60 Minutes that called into question President Bush's military service. Conservative bloggers, however, produced evidence and arguments that the documents were forgeries and CBS was forced to apologize for inadequate reporting. This scandal marked a turning point for blogs' role alongside the mainstream media and their potential ability to report news and exert political pressure. In the wake of 9/11, and in the face of concentration of media ownership and insidious controls of media by governments - some authoritarian, others supposedly democratic - outlets for people's non-violent expression are essential for stability and the overall health of existing democracies.

But "*citizen journalists*" as bloggers have been called, will not replace the mainstream media, even if they have challenged or even changed the way it operates. Blogs may be more democratic in that they invite fluid and open communication, but not all are responsible, reliable sources of information, or serving the public interest. The sheer numbers of blogs creates a glut of information that may discourage people from trawling through to find what is relevant to them. Bloggers are not connected to one another, so their ability to usher in an information revolution may be limited by their fragmentation. By contrast mainstream media as a whole tends to represent a broader viewpoint. A recent article in the Financial Times suggested that blogs might be more powerful in restricted societies such

<sup>3</sup>Some of the most important contributions include Chapter 10 of the World Development Report 2002, "**Building Institutions for Markets**" and the subsequent book based on that material entitled **The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development**, edited by Roumeen Islam and published by the World Bank in 2002.

as Iran or China where they allow people to present their views and access information not available through official channels.

While the context has changed since the original USAID framework for media assistance, the framework itself also rested on some assumptions that should be revisited and updated. Namely, the mapping of media assistance programs and recommendations for strategic support rested on the notion that the ultimate goal was to create "*independent*" and "*sustainable*" media. What is needed now is some consideration of the limitations of "*free*" and "*independent*" media in supporting democracy. Perhaps the most effective way to approach media assistance as a means of securing democracy is to consider how to democratize the media so that disenfranchised groups can access the means of communications for peaceful expression. Additional focus is needed to ensure that the media does fulfill its role in keeping governments to account, fosters debate, and provides citizens with informative programming (rather than solely entertainment).<sup>4</sup>

## CONCLUSION: DEMOCRATIZING MEDIA

*"Perhaps the most effective way to approach media assistance as a means of securing democracy is to consider how to democratize the media so that disenfranchised groups can access the means of communications for peaceful expression."*

"*Independent*" and "*sustainable*" media does not necessarily or by definition contribute to democracy. Media that is independent of government control often suffers from corporate influence. Financially sustainable media may rely heavily on entertainment programming to draw large audiences and advertising revenues while doing little to serve the public interest.

New approaches are required that look beyond the media sector to support "*mediation*" between citizens and government through alternative channels.<sup>5</sup> Community radio for instance would offer localized content and programming and give voice to the voiceless through traditional forms of expression such as drama and song. By specifying what kind of media advances democracy, it is possible to develop more targeted and meaningful programs.

Democratic media systems are ones that provide space for expression of diverse views, supply relevant and timely information to citizens, and hold governments to account. Assessing how democratic a media system is in a particular country requires exploration of three interrelated and fundamental questions:

- How is information mediated in society?
- Who is mediating information?
- Who is left out of the mediation process?

The answers to these questions can serve as signposts on a roadmap of the media landscape. They suggest strategic opportunities where external support may have maximum impact in terms of democratizing the media. Monroe Price and Peter Krug assert, "*It is important to know what kind of press in what kind of society will perform the functions necessary for the process of building democratic institutions to proceed healthily.*"<sup>6</sup>

Absent from the 1999 framework of media support activities, are programs that deliberately reach out to the poor and disenfranchised, move beyond the elite and urban-based media consumers, and reflect a broad range of views, using channels that are accessible to the greatest numbers of people (appropriate technology, local languages, etc.). The framework deliberately left aside the issues of public media and how it interacted with independent media or how it did or did not support democracy. In order to truly understand and appreciate how the media can contribute to democracy, consideration must be given to the quality of discourse in the media, the degree of access people have to information, and the level of oversight the media can have over government functions.

<sup>4</sup> Trevor Butterworth, "**Blogged Off**" Financial Times, February 18/19, 2006, W1-W2.

<sup>5</sup> Research on the case studies presented here, and sections of this text, were initially prepared for the **Ford Foundation and the Aspen Institute** for the 2003 Stone Soup Project. The author is grateful to both for their financial support and their comments on the original draft.

<sup>6</sup> Monroe Price and Peter Krug, **The Enabling Environment for Free and Independent Media** (Washington, DC: USAID, 2000).



Just as bloggers have proven to be an additional source of mediation in a democratic society, more attention needs to be given to uncovering and fostering other forms of mediation and communication that promote and sustain democracy. Assistance for these outlets or modes of expression should be seen as integral to media sector support.

Already examples exist of donors supporting non-traditional mechanisms such as community radio. Some of these provide powerful indication of what is possible to accomplish outside the mainstream media, and in some cases, how these can contribute to democracy more so than the mainstream media. By broadening the focus of media assistance from supporting only "independent" and "sustainable" media, new realms of possibilities are opening up to foster democratic media.

## CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY RADIO:

*"Democratizing the media takes on real urgency as it gives greater voice to disenfranchised groups. Such support can promote peace and stability as well as vibrant democracy."*

The Gobi Wave Information Center, Mongolia's first independent regional media enterprise, demonstrates the power of connecting previously unreachable populations to relevant economic information. Gobi Wave, as the station is known, was part of the Gobi Regional Economic Growth Initiative, a five - year rural economic development project funded by USAID and managed by Mercy Corps in partnership with Land O'Lakes and PACT.<sup>7</sup> Established on the initiative of a group of Gobi journalists, the radio was created as an independent, financially sustainable media enterprise that could provide herders and other Gobi people with critical information to improve their lives. The Gobi Initiative provided training and technical assistance to help the station get underway. Journalists forged relationships with local and international institutions (including local NGOs, businesses, and local government) and solicited support from these partners. On air 12 hours a day, Gobi Wave serves local needs through a combination of informative and entertaining programming, all for an annual budget of \$8,000.<sup>8</sup> In short, Gobi Wave has programming that touches on every aspect of life in the region where it broadcasts.

Community radio often works where other radio or media do not, because it offers localized programs in local languages, uses inexpensive technology, and is an instrument that is easily adapted.<sup>9</sup> As such, community radio can be a complementary local form of public service broadcasting. One of the main challenges now for community radio is the legislative environment, particularly in Latin America and other regions where privatization threatens space for community airwaves.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The following section is adapted from Layton Croft, "Oasis in the Desert: Partnership Breeds Partnership," The Bridge Mercy Corps Civil Society Newsletter 3 (Second Quarter, 2001): 7.

## CASE STUDY: E-GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

<sup>8</sup> This information on Gobi Wave programming is adapted from Bill Siemering, independent media consultant.

<sup>9</sup> There are 4,000 community radio stations in Latin America. Mali and South Africa have been at the forefront of community radio in Africa. Asia has not seen such a proliferation of community radios, but Nepal and Sri Lanka have been the pioneers.

<sup>10</sup> Alfonso Gumucio Dagron, interview with the author, August 4, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> This section benefited from the research assistance of Calvert Jones.

The Gyandoot project offers another model of connecting previously underserved populations, providing them with information, and enabling them to use this information to improve their lives by ensuring greater government responsiveness.<sup>11</sup> Established in the rural, impoverished Dhar region of central India, Gyandoot is a community - based, government-to-citizen project commissioned by the Madhya Pradesh government in late 1999. Managed by an operational team called the Gyandoot Samiti, the project launched a regional Intranet with the aim to bring invaluable information, and improved governance to the isolated Dhar villagers, about 60 percent of whom live under the poverty line.

The government initially established twenty information kiosks, each equipped with a computer, modem, and some backup power, in the Dhar villages.

Covering nearly half the population of the district, the information kiosks were designed to cater to local needs and to be cost-effective and locally sustainable. As a result of its efforts, previously uninformed farmers now come to markets armed with up-to-date knowledge of prevailing market prices for their crops. Underserved villagers whose complaints about delivery of public services used to disappear into inefficient bureaucratic channels now see immediate government responses to emails.<sup>12</sup>

As Gyandoot grew in popularity, it evolved to meet the changing needs of the communities it serves. To that end, village meetings were held regularly to gauge public opinion about the viability and usefulness of the cyber kiosks, and to track local needs. Using that input, the Samiti expanded the services offered at the cyber kiosks to include, not only information about the market and job availability, but also opportunities for filing public grievances, registering applications, and increasing the transparency and responsiveness of government. In one village of thirty-nine households, a complaint filed through the cyber kiosk regarding the village's lack of drinking water garnered a response within two days, a hand pump mechanic promptly arrived to remedy the problem. Before Gyandoot, the village had waited six months without a government response.<sup>13</sup>

Like many pioneering government-to-citizen projects using IT, Gyandoot has encountered several difficulties that the Samiti is currently tackling. According to a World Bank-commissioned study conducted in the summer of 2002 by the Center for Electronic Governance, the main problems for Gyandoot included power outages, connectivity, and government response.<sup>14</sup>

Having addressed power failures and connectivity, the project designers have also attempted to solve the trickier problems relating to the government's inability to respond effectively to the Gyandoot system. A study conducted by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in mid-2001 found that 40 percent of 481 respondents who had used the kiosk from three villages in Dhar, received immediate government responses to services requested, 25 percent received responses within a week, and 10 percent within 15 days.<sup>15</sup> But by the time the Center for Electronic Governance conducted its study a year later, the studies showed that, while Gyandoot had substantially improved the flow of information between government and local Dhar communities, government's response was still slow (though generally superior to what it was before Gyandoot took off). Enquiries into the state of affairs on the side of the government revealed that the relevant departments were often disorganized, inadequately equipped, and overwhelmed by the number of requests for services flowing in from Gyandoot's intranet.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Soutik Biswas, "Digital Empowerment: Seeds of E-Volution" (2000), <http://www.gyandoot.nic.in/gyandoot/outlook.html>. For many personal examples, see Gyandoot's home page, <http://www.gyandoot.nic.in>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Center for Electronic Governance, Indian Institute of Management, "An Evaluation of Gyandoot" (Ahmedabad, India: 2002), 8-10. The World Bank Group points to this 2002 study for information about how the project is faring, but the study itself is somewhat limited. At the start, the Center admits that the lack of public awareness about Gyandoot meant that a very small sample of users in the villages could be surveyed to determine public opinion. The conclusions in the study relying on just those surveys, therefore, are not statistically valid, and should only be considered a useful glimpse into how Gyandoot is generally viewed. See [www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/bnpp/Gyandoot.PDF](http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/bnpp/Gyandoot.PDF).

<sup>15</sup> Anwar Jafri, et al., "Information Communication Technologies and Governance: The Gyandoot Experiment in Dhar District of Madhya Pradesh, India." (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2002), 20. See [http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/working\\_papers/wp160.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/working_papers/wp160.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Center for Electronic Governance, Indian Institute of Management, "An Evaluation of Gyandoot" (Ahmedabad, India: 2002), 7-8.

<sup>17</sup> Details of this project were taken from the Philadelphia Inquirer "Citizen Voices '99" reprint of the Philadelphia Inquirer's civic dialogue on the 1999 mayoral election, sponsored by the Editorial Board and the Philadelphia Compact.

## INDEPENDENT COMMERCIAL MEDIA

Commercial media also offer examples of how to serve democratic interests by providing more than entertainment, and by reflecting a broad range of views.

The Philadelphia Inquirer Editorial Board's "Citizens Voices '99" project promoted a civic dialogue on the 1999 Philadelphia mayoral election.<sup>17</sup> The Citizens Voices project gathered hundreds of citizens in follow-up forums throughout the year to discuss the issues that the initial forums revealed to be most on people's minds: education, jobs, neighborhood quality, safety, and better government.

The Philadelphia Inquirer presented "choice frameworks" on these issues, modeled

<sup>18</sup> For more information on these issue frameworks see <http://www.nifi.org>.

on the guides used by the National Issues Forums.<sup>18</sup>

Each issue is presented as a set of distinct choices, each with its own logic, benefits, costs, and core values.

At an Issues Convention, Citizens Voices participants used these frameworks to deliberate on what should be done about the five issues in Philadelphia and to compare their views with what the mayoral candidates were saying. A group of Citizen Voice's participants quizzed the mayoral candidates in a televised forum.

Citizen forums such as these changed the discourse of the mayoral race and required the candidates to reframe their campaigns to respond to citizens' concerns. The broadened dialogue was captured in a variety of ways in the pages and the website of the Philadelphia Inquirer.

Democratizing the media takes on real urgency as it gives greater voice to disenfranchised groups. Such support can promote peace and stability as well as vibrant democracy. Democratizing the media is becoming ever more pressing as it faces pressure to promote government messages or it finds that access to information is limited.

As a result, there is a greater need for dynamic, democratic media that can represent a range of voices and provide platforms for free expression.

# Affordable Capital: Turning Press Freedom Heroes into Entrepreneurs

**Sasa Vucinic**, *Director, Media Development Loan Fund*

## MEDIA IS A BUSINESS

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*“I deliberately do not say that they have to be profitable; in this context achieving self-sustainability is already good enough.”*

While everyone recognizes and agrees that producing newspapers is a very different type of business to producing shoes, running a bank or building a sports stadium, the fundamental and plain fact is just that: media is a business.

Personally, like everyone else, I prefer to think about the independent media in the developing world in romantic and heroic terms, to imagine that courage will always be the greatest quality shared by leading independent journalists. Courage to tell the truth in hostile environments; courage to report objectively on abuses of power and suppression of human rights; and, above all, courage to risk one's life for one's fellow citizens' right to know.

Unfortunately, courage alone is not enough to ensure the survival of any media outlet or guarantee the success of a media business. There are countless examples of great journalists founding excellent newspapers, radio stations and TV companies which have shone brightly for a short time but have failed to make the transition from news outlet to news business.

I assume that no one will dispute that media companies carry special importance for the societies in which they operate. While independent news organisations are commercial enterprises, they are much more than that: they themselves are social institutions, with a set of professional values - a commitment to truthful and ethical journalism - that start with their owners, leaders and core journalists, and develop over time into an institutional culture. The existence of this type of professional media company is a prerequisite for any functioning democracy. They provide the information needed for citizen participation in the democratic process and the political life of the nation, and for the functioning of market economies. They give a voice to the otherwise unheard and open the government and the economic affairs of a nation to public scrutiny and debate. They expose corruption and deal with the issues critical to countries in transition: health, economic development, treatment of minorities, distribution of wealth and the environment. They participate in setting and defining the national agenda.

But, just after putting on paper the previous paragraph, I felt an urge - for the sake of regaining balance in this article - to repeat the first sentence: media is a business.

True, it is a very specific type of a business with an enormously important social role to play but, nevertheless, at the end of the day, media is a business. Media companies are born by the rules of the market, have to live and compete according to the rules of the market and, if not successful in the face of competition, market rules will inevitably lead to them closing their doors no matter how important, unique and brave they are.

By virtue of such an important social role being placed in the body of a commercial enterprise, the dual nature of media companies forces them to face a huge challenge: on one side they have to meet the demands of their social role, while at the same time they have to run the market race, just as any other player. Social Ying and market Yang, all packed into one institution.

As if this dual nature were not already difficult enough to manage, their "*social Ying*" – that special role the media can play in a society - brings with it even greater challenges.

In some countries, journalists who are seen as "stubborn" and "not willing to cooperate" are simply assassinated. In other, much more fortunate countries, a silent war is being waged against independent media by governments or vested political and other interests (*or both*) seeking to control the flow and distribution of information.

These days economic assaults are far more common than violent attacks on journalists and media businesses - they are also certainly more difficult to trace and perhaps just as effective. Ranging from governments, big business or advertisers withdrawing advertising from a critical news outlet, to businessmen or politicians bringing punitive law suits for alleged defamation, there is a wide range of well developed "financial strangulation strategies" which can be thrown at a stubborn media company.

Severe financial pressure can push the company into bankruptcy. But, in reality, this pressure does not even need to be that effective; it does not need to achieve its ultimate goal - bankruptcy - at all. It is enough if it undermines a media company's objectivity from the inside. It is not simply a lack of moral strength that leads a journalist to lose his or her objectivity. In some cases, struggling media companies may be unable to pay journalists a decent wage, or even not at all, which means that influence to "*just bend*" the editorial coverage can become - to some - irresistible.

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## ACHIEVING THE HOLY GRAIL OF SELF- SUFFICIENCY

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Given this background, wisdom would claim, there is only one way to ensure editorial independence and, therefore, the proper social role of a media company: an independent media company must be self-sustainable. To be socially relevant, to successfully resist undue political and other influences, media companies must be able to achieve the holy grail of their market Yang nature and make the ends meet. I deliberately do not say that they have to be profitable; in this context achieving self-sustainability is already good enough.

So, if we agree on the importance and role of the media enterprise and condition sine qua non - that it has to be self-sustainable - the next logical question would be: how can the international media support community help news outlets make the most of their dedication to objectivity and accuracy by assisting them to build solid businesses around the core values of independent journalism?

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## THE ANSWER, IN MY MIND, IS SIMPLE: BY PROVIDING A BUSINESS SOLUTION - AFFORDABLE CAPITAL.

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Like businesses of any kind in the North - from Finland to Canada - media companies in emerging democracies need capital to be properly launched, to develop and to grow. An undercapitalised company has minimal chances of survival. In this



*“In most cases, the only available financing is likely to be the sort that comes with strings attached.”*

respect, the business of producing sausages and the business of producing news are the same. But the fact is that in almost all transitional countries, affordable capital is simply not available to media businesses. There are many reasons for this.

Local financial institutions often will not risk provoking a government by providing funds to a news business whose objectivity the authorities view as hostile. Or there may be less sinister, perfectly legitimate business reasons for refusing to provide investment or credit. In many countries few, if any, independent media companies have ever become viable. When presented with a loan application from a young business in a sector with a poor record of economic performance, and with many competitors under little pressure to provide genuine returns, it is not surprising that commercial lenders either refuse to provide financing outright or condition loans on prohibitive interest rates.

So what options remain for a radio station that needs new transmitters if no regular financial institution is willing to provide affordable credit? In most cases, the only available financing is likely to be the sort that comes with strings attached. Funds might be offered by a business trying to curry favour with the government to win a contract, or a politician looking for a supportive mouthpiece. Either way, the financing on offer will be dependent on the editorial line supporting the financier's concerns or interests. Every day, due to nothing more than financial pressures and lack of affordable capital, independent news outlets that were a force for positive social change become allies of vested interests. And in doing so, they not only stop being part of the solution, they become part of the problem.

The Media Development Loan Fund subscribes to the philosophy that a lack of affordable capital is the core problem and the main obstacle to the development of the independent media sector. This shortage of capital is preventing media enterprises from making the "*quantum leap*" to self-sustainability which would allow them to really serve their social role.

## A RESPONSE TO THE SHORTAGE OF AFFORDABLE CAPITAL

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Since MDLF was established, more than a 100 projects for 54 independent media companies in 17 countries have been financed in the developing world. MDLF has provided \$50 million in low-cost financing (in the form of loans, lease and equity investments), collecting more than \$20 million in principal repayments and about \$4.5 million in interest and dividends. During the whole decade of operations, only 3% of the total amount loaned and invested were written off as losses - to the surprise of "*real bankers*". This is a better result than some banks can claim on their credit card business, which is considered to be one of the safest areas of credit provision.

Financing the development of a media company is not as capital intensive as building a dam or a highway, and \$50 million can get you a long way. In fact, it is amazing how much can be achieved with even a small loan or investment.

In 1995, under pressure from the then authoritarian government of Slovakia, every printing house in Bratislava refused to print the independent daily newspaper SME. In doing so, it provided one of the classic examples of attempted financial strangulation. For six months, the newspaper's publishing company - Petit Press - printed the daily in a town 100 kilometres away and delivered the paper to the capital by car for distribution. To meet the distribution deadline the paper had to be finalised by 4pm every day, which made it less competitive and, as a result, led to a significant circulation decline. With the company facing bankruptcy,

Petit Press took a loan from MDLF of \$350,000 to purchase a small second-hand refurbished printing machine and installed it in Bratislava. Suddenly things went back to normal – in fact, even better than normal. With the usual deadline of 10pm reinstated, SME was competitive again and the circulation shot up. With its new-found financial strength, SME was able to survive a whole range of intimidation by the authorities, from large fines and court cases to attacks by the intelligence services. Petit Press now publishes more than 30 publications and employs over 550 staff.

Another example of how a relatively small investment can create huge and long-lasting impact comes from Indonesia. After President Suharto's resignation and the opening-up of the media in Indonesia, a small group of journalists formed KBR 68H, the nation's only independent radio news agency. Their brilliantly innovative idea was to link the existing local radio stations all over archipelago into a radio network which they would feed with news and information programming created in Jakarta. Each member station is free to pick, choose and broadcast only those parts of the programming they like, all for free. In return, they provide advertising time to the news agency, which it sells to advertisers. Revenues generated in this way are split between the news agency and member stations. Today, radio news agency KBR 68H produces more than 18 hours of programming a day - from news and information, to education and entertainment - while the radio network has grown to link more than 450 radio stations, with more than 14 million listeners all over Indonesia. In addition to specialised technology advice, MDLF's equity investment in this project was \$400,000.

## US\$50 MILLION: A DROP IN THE OCEAN OF DEMAND

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But, no matter how small the capital needs might be to assist one individual media company to achieve self-sustainability, we should not be deceived and underestimate the global need for these funds. Analyse for a second the figure of \$50 million in affordable capital which MDLF has provided to the independent media sector. It might appear significant at first glance. But if you take a look at the bigger picture and divide this same number of dollars by the number of countries in which the independent media sector would benefit from this kind of assistance, it suddenly makes it look like a drop of water in an ocean of demand.

By saying that providing low-cost capital to any sector, including the media, would contribute to its rapid development, one can hardly claim to have made a new discovery. Governments, as well as international financial and development agencies, know this well. When the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of the World Bank Group wants to assist the development of small and medium size enterprises in any one country, it provides low-cost capital to local entrepreneurs via a local bank acting as an intermediary. Several years later the results of this investment become obvious in the form of hundreds of newly established and profitable small businesses. When the EU decides that it wants to assist the development of a strong aeronautical industry, it sets aside (and grants) a host of concessionary loans. A decade later, results could not be more visible: half of the world now flies Airbus.

So, it is hard to resist the conclusion that there is one obvious difference between the success of Airbus and the still struggling-for-survival independent media sector in the developing world: the determination of those who control affordable capital to make it available to media companies.

Try to imagine how the independent media sector would look like had it opened access to the wide range of affordable loans, equity financing, angel and venture

capital. There would be no reason for it not to become an Airbus-type market success story. And the "social Ying" of a media company's nature would come as an additional benefit.

When the conditions are right, loan-making and equity financing is an ideal strategy for long-term media assistance. It encourages media companies to focus on meeting the needs and interests of their audiences, and enforces fiscal discipline in order to generate adequate earnings for interests and loan repayments. However, it can be a harsh medication and is not the solution to the sustainability problems of all media companies.

When it comes to implementation, political and economic considerations must be carefully examined before embarking on lending and, if a proper vetting procedure is not followed in identifying a borrower, there is always the danger of providing a loan that cannot be repaid, one that becomes an unbearable burden for a media company and which can even contribute to its closure.

## GOING BEYOND DUE DILIGENCE

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A detailed investment procedure and extensive due diligence afford an opportunity to closely examine the journalistic quality of a newspaper or broadcaster, as well as the company's financial position and the vision and capacity of the management. Before any financing is provided, the media company - with the lender's support - must also develop a detailed and realistic business plan. This plan will project future business performance, setting out a roadmap that provides for repayments throughout the loan period and, ultimately, for the lasting viability of the outlet.

But providing affordable financing alone is not enough. Any loan must be closely monitored and other types of support and assistance - in particular capacity building in business development, general and financial management, but also specialized consulting and even technology assistance - should be made available to help the media company make the most of its loan. The challenge is to turn press freedom heroes into entrepreneurs, enabling them to establish an enduring platform for their journalism. This requires long-term commitment by media assistance organisations and the development of a close relationship of advice and support with the borrower. Not only does this help media companies get the most out of the financing, it also leaves a lasting legacy once the financing relationship has ended.

## NEEDED: NEW FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS AND SERVICES

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If the answer to the problem of the development of independent media is so simple - access to affordable capital - and if it is so market-driven, why don't we turn to the market to provide us with the needed capital? General wisdom says that markets should be able to recognise this need (if it really is there) and should eventually be able and willing to fulfil it (if business prospects really exist).

The simple answer to this question contains both good and bad news. The bad news is that there is no market willing to provide this type of financing. Yet the good news is that the first financial instruments were recently introduced that may indicate a way for financial markets to provide the capital that is needed.

Earlier this year, Media Development Loan Fund issued two types of "Free Press Investment Notes" in the United States. Any US citizen can now purchase this

*“The challenge is to turn press freedom heroes into entrepreneurs, enabling them to establish an enduring platform for their journalism.”*

bond-like investment product. The minimum investment is \$1,000; the interest MDLF will pay on each note is determined by the investor, limited to a maximum of 3 per cent per year; the term of the investment can be anything between 1 and 10 years. The first investment note was issued by MDLF alone and proceeds can be used for investments in any type of media, while the second investment note was issued in cooperation with the World Association of Newspapers, and proceeds can be used for investments in newspapers only.

In Europe, MDLF has been involved in the issuing of a much more complex financial instrument, which - in addition to MDLF - brought together three additional partners: Swiss private bank Vontobel, Zurich-based social investment services provider responsAbility and the Swiss Development Agency (SDC). The result of this unusual partnership is the structured financial product “*VONCERT responsAbility Media Development*”, listed on the Zurich stock exchange. Voncerc combines a loan to MDLF at an interest rate of 1% per year (20% of the investment amount) with an investment (the remaining 80%) in a Vontobel swap note. The result for the investor is a simple bond-like product that includes a substantial social component, as 20 per cent of the investment will be reinvested in independent media through MDLF. The minimum investment in Voncerc is 100 Swiss Francs, but the most appealing characteristic of this product is that you can buy it and sell it any day of the week on the Zurich stock exchange.

Could these financial products be understood as the first sign that financial markets are warming to the idea of providing affordable capital to independent media in the developing world? Could this be a beginning of a trend? It is too early to say. For the time being, these are just the first isolated attempts which, if left to stand alone, are not likely to bring about the radical change that is needed. But even if these are just the first small steps, they are made in the right direction, and they have the potential to signal a whole new approach to providing affordable capital to independent media. It is only when attempts like these become a trend that the independent media sector will have a reason to look at its future with optimism.

# Ideological, Legal, Economic and Professional Obstacles to Media Development in Africa

**Jeanette Minnie, Zambezi Fox:**  
*International Freedom of Expression and Media Consultant*

*"The practice of media in Africa is therefore constantly trapped in a quagmire of fragmented and contradictory legal frameworks and policies, where country constitutions recognise either the rights of freedom of expression and/or the freedom of the press, but at the same time retain and exercise laws that fundamentally breach these rights."*

Conditions for the practice of media vary widely in Africa. That a plethora of problems exist is not in dispute, fuelled both by a lack of technical and financial resources as well as contestation about the role and professional standards of the media. Privately owned media is frequently perceived by governments as "the opposition" and not as an independent "fourth estate", that along with the executive, parliament and judiciary, play an important oversight role in providing checks and balances to safeguard the public against abuses of power. Media freedom and development of the media in Africa will never truly flourish until these basic ideological contestations about the democratic rights and role of the media are settled.

The practice of media in Africa is therefore constantly trapped in a quagmire of fragmented and contradictory legal frameworks and policies, where country constitutions recognise either the rights of freedom of expression and/or the freedom of the press, but at the same time retain and exercise laws that fundamentally breach these rights. In a broader context it is part of the same malaise in which multiparty democratic systems in various countries exist in name, but are subverted in practice. In some instances these 'smokescreen' democracies are simply the new and slightly less convenient way of staying in power.

But there is light at the end of the tunnel. The 2006 MISA John Manyara Award for Investigative Journalism in 11 African countries was jointly won in August by entries from Malawi and South Africa. The Malawian story exposed the corruption and fraud of a government minister who used government funds to pay for his wedding. He was subsequently charged, convicted and jailed - the first cabinet minister in Malawi to suffer this fate under a new presidential policy of cleaning up corruption - and the journalist, for a change, is still free, alive and walking around. The three journalists in the South African entry are also still walking around, but have been embroiled in court battles, including the first instance of pre-publication censorship of their newspaper since the apartheid era. They exposed how funds for a state oil deal landed up in the coffers of the ruling party - a few months ahead of the country's national election in 2004.



The suppression and state closure of privately owned print media in Zimbabwe is well known. It is equally oppressive in relation to broadcasting. The Voice of the People (VOP) community radio station in Zimbabwe was raided by the authorities in early 2002 and then bombed in August 2002. No one has been arrested or charged for this offence. Despite such massive intimidation, VOP was back on the air three months later. They were raided again in 2005 and John Masuku, the Director, some staff and members of the board were later arrested. Administrative staff was initially held in detention as hostages to force the Director to give himself up to the police, which he did, spending five days in detention. Masuku, now out on bail, some of the journalists and the board - 10 people in all - have been charged for broadcasting illegally in the country and are now fighting for survival in the courts.

In their opinion, they were not breaking any laws, although Zimbabwe's government has steadfastly refused to make any broadcasting licenses available to community or privately owned radio stations in the country. Despite numerous applications from such stations, only the state broadcasting stations (television and radio) are licensed.

But three broadcasters found a loophole in the law. It is not illegal to transmit signals into the country from transmitters based outside of Zimbabwe's borders. Voice of the People, Voice of America and SW Radio Africa in the UK (staffed by Zimbabweans), all broadcast programmes into the country from transmitters based outside the country on short wave or medium wave signals. Nevertheless, should VOP lose the case, this would have serious implications for all three stations and the capacity of the public to express alternative views.

In neighbouring Botswana, it is a totally different story. Media diversity is under threat because of economic practices that threaten the sustainability of a diverse and plural media. There are an estimated 13 newspapers and 4 broadcasters in a country with a population of only a half a million people. By African standards, it enjoys a vibrant economy (but under pressure currently), and a relatively free media. The state-owned national television and radio services are nevertheless government controlled. The extent of its editorial independence waxes and wanes according to the whims of cabinet ministers and senior state officials. There are two privately owned radio stations that broadcast in the capital district only, and one private television station. The private newspapers, because of financial limitations, also distribute mainly inside the capital district with very limited circulation to outlying towns and rural areas. The state owned daily, by contrast, distributes throughout the country.

Cover prices of private newspapers in Botswana - dictated by market realities are very low. Buying a newspaper versus buying food, or paying for public transport, is a hard reality in terms of consumerism in many African countries. Newspapers therefore have to be sustained by advertising income. The state daily in Botswana, however, has no cover price and is distributed free of charge. Unsurprisingly, it is the biggest circulating newspaper in the country by a big margin, and therefore also attracts the biggest slice of the advertising cake.

In legal terms there may not be a state monopoly of the media in Botswana, but in economic terms there definitely is. This is a straightforward example of unfair competition between the state and the private sector. Furthermore, the spectre of state control of the media always looms in the background, because to this day, the government of Botswana has not withdrawn draft legislation from the late 1990's that would impose a state-controlled media council who would make the

*"Our politicians are confused about what a public broadcaster is."*

*Pemal Dube,  
Chairperson, Botswana  
Press Council*

rules for professional media practice in the country. This legislation is deliberately retained in a state of limbo to keep journalists and the media in line. Legislation has been enacted to transform the state broadcasters (television and radio) into public broadcasters. But according to Pamela Dube, the chairperson of Botswana's (non-state) Press Council, *"our politicians are confused about what a public broadcaster is"*.

One strategy to counter the problem would be for smaller private sector media houses to establish consortiums. In these they could pool resources in relation to the purchase of paper, the printing costs of their newspapers and the distribution of their newspapers, as well as collectively negotiate for advertising contracts. If they don't, many of them may not survive in a small market in a country where the state newspaper is the major market competitor.

In South Africa, internationally regarded as a bastion of democracy in Africa since its peaceful transition to multiracial democratic rule in 1994, worrying trends are emerging. For similar purposes to that proposed for Botswana an association of small independent local and community newspapers was recently established in this country. One of their aims is to oppose small local newspapers that are owned by local governments (municipalities), claiming they are a form of public media. This is a very worrying development in South Africa, where, until recently, state ownership of the print media never existed. This is another example of unfair media competition between the state and the private sector. Another aim of the association is to protect pluralism and diversity by providing capacity to small newspapers to prevent them from being swallowed up by the four large and historically dominant private sector media companies in the country. Members of this association negotiate collectively for big advertising contracts, for instance from big chains of retailers, which individually they would not be able to win.

The state in South Africa is also wading heavily into the area of community radios by funding certain forms of programming. They also receive subsidies from the state for broadcasting equipment and technology. It is feared that incrementally community radios in South Africa will, or already are, losing their independence from the state by becoming financially dependent on the state.

## THE REALITIES FOR COMMUNITY MEDIA

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The sustainability of community radios in Africa is generally an issue of concern. Unlike private commercial radios, these stations face a battle of survival and depend on foreign donor aid. In South Africa, a state Media Diversity and Development Agency assists them to some degree with funding (including small print media projects) to which various foreign donor agencies contribute, and by national mainstream private media companies. But the MDDA is nowhere close to meeting the development needs of these 80 or more stations.

Veteran South African community radio pioneer and consultant, Zane Abraham, is very critical of many stations in this sector. *"Many community radios in South Africa are nothing more than music juke boxes. It's rubbish that communities own or control these stations. They are operated and controlled by a small number of full-time staff that use the services of unpaid volunteers - who are often exploited."* Many poverty-stricken volunteers agree to provide these unpaid services because *"the community radio is the warmest place they know"*. He also questions whether community radios play a significant role in development. "Community development is 90% about a community and only 10% about a radio. Do all these communities really need a radio station - or perhaps only a few programmes on a privately owned or public broadcaster assisted by listeners groups?"

In relation to ownership he recommends a hybrid model that combines ownership by a private business investor/manager with substantial community involvement in the choice of programmes and voices of the station. Such models have existed for some time in West Africa and have emerged in countries such as Zambia (Breeze FM) and in Malawi (Capital Radio which broadcasts in 3 regions of the country). The latter two stations are owned and managed by small business entrepreneurs, but provide extensive programming aimed at rural and poor communities and co-produce and broadcast cross border programming that saves on costs, for instance in relation to HIV and AIDS.

Other financial obstacles to media development in Africa include the high import duties payable on equipment, onerous limitations on foreign ownership in many countries, which inhibit investment in the media, and the absence of media development funds to assist media entrepreneurs in Africa. Media owners and journalists however, warn that such funds should not fall under the control of governments, because of the danger of political control.

Two such models exist in the sub-region of Southern Africa. Zambia benefits from a Media Trust Fund for development of media houses and the Southern African Media Development Fund (SAMDEF) provides assistance to privately owned media houses in any of the 14-member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It makes use of a revolving loan fund to finance media development on favourable loan terms and has invested US\$30 - million in media enterprises over the last 10 years. Some of these include joint ventures such as a number of newspapers purchasing and sharing a printing press (Angola and Mozambique). In many instances SAMDEF also provides - tailor made in-house training for its clients to address weaknesses in the development of business and management systems. A number of other training institutions in Southern Africa also provide training in media management. These forms of training are essential with respect to journalists and others who start newspapers without any media business skills and in harsh economic environments with limited advertising markets. These are limited even more in instances where the state applies pressure to businesses not to place advertising in the privately owned press, but in their own state-owned newspapers and broadcasters.

## IF IT'S NOT OF THE STATE, IT WILL BE OF THE POLITICIANS

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A plethora of laws constrain media from holding governments and other powerful interest groups accountable in Africa. These include a swathe of criminal defamation and so-called "insult" laws under which a large proportion of journalists are prosecuted. The litany of such detentions and prosecutions from the Africa Office of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) cross my desk at least twice a week. Below is a standard example:

*"The IFJ today called for the immediate and unconditional release of Maman Abou and Oumarou Kéïta, editor and editor-in-chief of the independent weekly newspaper Le Républicain. The two journalists, who are accused of publishing false news and slandering the State of Niger, have been in detention since Friday August 4. They were arrested in relation to an article published on July 28 and written by Oumarou. The Prime Minister, Hama Hamadou, was said to be 'courting' the Iranians intensively at a point when the Western chancelleries and companies are likely to be shut down. On June 21 the private newspaper, L'Opinion, was banned from appearing on the newsstands, following the publication on June 21 of an article considered to be defamatory and injurious to the Head of the State and his family. On July 5 the editor of L'Opinion, Zakari Alzouma, was arrested after publishing another weekly magazine*

called *L'Opinions*. Last May, the Prime Minister, Hama Amadou, threatened during a press conference, to jail journalists".

'Insult' laws prevent the media from criticising heads of state, other government ministers and foreign dignitaries. Their legal origins wind through colonialism back to the legal customs and traditions that protected monarchs in medieval Europe.

Some African governments and politicians have moved away from crude censorship practices such as closing down newspaper and radio stations to more sophisticated measures. In Malawi this includes political ownership of private media. Many media houses are owned by politicians from across the political spectrum in their personal capacities.

## SKILLS AND TRAINING

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The professional standards of journalists in Africa are generally regarded as low, by themselves and by outside observers, despite the injection of substantial amounts of donor aid over the last decade. Discussions at many media development seminars and workshops testify to this perception. Lack of structured incremental training and lack of quality control within the media both play a role. Many owners are not too concerned about standards, as long as their companies make profits. Editors in many countries send their journalists on short courses, but take little interest in the content and make few attempts to assess or implement new skills once these journalists return to their jobs. Many editors won't release staff to go on courses, because these disrupt their work schedules. Some also become irritable when the latest '*flavour of the month*' theme specific course takes place about 'the environment' or 'elections' or 'change management' or 'HIV and AIDS'. In some countries there are a great many such courses on offer by a great many international and local NGOs, while editors often say what they really need is ongoing basic journalism skills training to address the high turnover of staff in their newsrooms. In some countries the media is beginning to hire subject experts such as university educated economists and environmentalists, and training them to become journalists, instead of hiring untrained or poorly educated journalists and trying to impart advanced beat specific knowledge to them. But this attitude takes place at the top end of more strongly resourced media houses. In other countries that lack natural resources interesting to the "North" or who do not enjoy international 'hot spot' status, extremely little training of journalists or other developments takes place. Sierra Leone - briefly in the international limelight a few years ago - comes to mind.

Cognisant of the problems associated with off site training of journalists and the sceptical attitudes of editors to these, a network of gender and media activists in Southern Africa, known as Gender Links, and an allied sub-regional network spanning 14 countries known as GEMSA, which also includes the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and the Southern African Editors Forum (SAEF), have started pioneering the concept of training that takes place directly inside newsrooms, with dramatic results. In big media houses such as state broadcasters, such courses can last for a whole morning. In smaller newsrooms they may only last for one hour. But in both instances editorial executives first have to agree to the training that will take place and have a say in the content. They consequently take a direct interest in, observe and even participate in the training. They expect their journalists to apply their skills afterwards and check that they do. Substantial improvements to the number of women voices in the media have been established by quantitative and qualitative monitoring in a number of instances.

*"In some countries there are a great many such courses on offer by a great many international and local NGOs, while editors often say what they really need is ongoing basic journalism skills training to address the high turnover of staff in their newsrooms."*

The representation of women in government increased in 2004/5 in some (but not in all) countries where engendered media, elections and democracy training took place 6-8 weeks before national elections, but not in all.<sup>19</sup> It is too early to draw any conclusions, but such courses will be replicated in future and be subjected to further study. Other positive outcomes in relation to these training courses occurred in countries where the number of women MPs did not increase or not significantly. Outcries in the media resulted in the presidents of Botswana and South Africa significantly increasing the number of women in government. At another level, women sources in election coverage increased from 13% to 22% in South Africa and from 17% to 25% in Mauritius and Swaziland over this period.

Such developments are worth noting and debating because women constitute more than half the population in African countries and democratically are entitled to equitable representation as much as any other groups in government and in the media. On site training is very cost effective because it does not involve the cost of transporting and accommodating large groups of journalists to one venue and no venue overheads are involved. Only the trainers have to be paid for. These organisations now intend to conduct newsroom training in no less than the 366 newsrooms of the SADC region by the end of 2007 in a project known as the "Media Action Plan on Gender and HIV and AIDS" (MAP) led by SAEF.

## HIGH STAFF TURNOVER AND LOW PAY

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One of the reasons for high staff turnover in newsrooms is the low levels of pay granted to journalists in Africa. Recently a World Bank official said they had become rather sceptical about investing money in the training of journalists, because the high turn over of staff translated into money down the drain. Many journalists regard their jobs as only temporary and more experienced practitioners leave in droves to pursue more lucrative careers as public relations officers. Journalists' associations need to be strengthened significantly to tackle media owners in this regard.

## CURRENT INITIATIVES

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Four significant developments are currently taking place to improve the prospects for media development in Africa. One is a continent-wide consultation of media practitioners, owners, trainers and indigenous media assistance organisations by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, supported by DFID, in a project to develop a framework of strategies for strengthening Africa's media (STREAM).

A separate initiative is to establish an African Forum for Media Development as one constituent regional leg of the new and emerging Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) that seeks to give organised representation and voice to the media development and assistance sector.

A third initiative is that of the BBC World Service Trust which is conducting research through a number of African universities into issues such as media ownership, the transformation of state broadcasters into public broadcasters and media law and policy in Africa. Although these initiatives are taking place independently, they are communicating with each other to explore mutual synergies.

Whatever the outcomes of these international approaches, there exists a surprisingly rich and large tapestry of indigenous African media freedom and development organisations who have or are growing significant institutional capacity in terms of tackling the continent's challenges and who are increasingly developing cross -

<sup>19</sup> Gender Links. **Gender elections and the media training: Report** February 2005 and **Gender Link's Annual Report** (March 2004 – February 2005).



border, sub-regional and international linkages. They are casting a jealous eye over these and other international initiatives, to enforce the ideals of African identity and ownership.

In relation to media freedom and the accountability role of the media, the burden still largely rests on African media practitioners and citizens who support freedom of speech, to fight for these freedoms through public awareness campaigns and attempting media legal reforms. These are essential and long-term strategies with few quick results. Sustained support to this sector is crucial. The Network of African Freedom of Expression Organisations (NAFEO) was recently established to improve African cooperation in this respect. As a former President of the World Association of Newspapers, K. Prescott Low, once said about press freedom organisations in general: "*They are doing God's work*".

# A Rich Complex Landscape: Challenges and Advances in Media Development in Latin America

**Jaime Abello Banfi**, Executive Director,  
*Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano*

*“On a yearly basis, a Latin American citizen on average, buys less than one book, sees less than one movie at the cinema, buys half a CD in the legal market and will buy a newspaper a maximum of ten times. Access to the Internet in the region does not reach more than ten percent of the population. However, the average citizen is daily exposed to open television and radio services.”*

Mastrini and Becerra

At the start of the 21st century, the governments of the twenty countries of the Americas, with the exception of Cuba, that share the Spanish and Portuguese languages and common cultural roots, have been elected in regular elections, with the participation of competing political parties.

Since the overthrow of the military regimes of the Seventies and Eighties, Latin American societies continue to face numerous challenges. These include the consolidation of democratic governance, enforcement of human rights, economic growth and integration into competitive global markets, poverty eradication, the achievement of higher levels of social fairness and inclusion, and the fight against corruption, impunity and violence. Unfortunately, the democratization process has not yet empowered vast sectors of the population in the full exercise of citizenship, through participation in political processes. Nor has it significantly alleviated poverty. On average over 40% of the population live below the poverty line. A sad reality is that Latin America, considered as a whole, has the highest income inequality worldwide: 20% of the richest population has an income 20 times greater than that of 20% of the poorest.

The uneven development of Latin American societies is clearly reflected in the media sector itself. Within its diversity, media in the region show a number of common characteristics, such as the existence of sophisticated and profitable mass media in big cities, and of very weak media in the countryside and poorest communities.

There is bad news and good news when talking about media and their potential to contribute to good governance and sustainable development in Latin America. Hope resides in the progressive strengthening of civil society, the rise of a vigorous community alternative media movement, the growing signals of renewal and modernization of media companies and the personal commitment of a new generation of editors and journalists, who are keen on ethics and journalism for public interest, whilst dedicating themselves with growing interest to journalistic investigation and the art of storytelling for their communities.

## KEY CHALLENGES: MEDIA CONCENTRATION, INFORMATION CONTROL AND PRESSURES ON JOURNALISTS

*“On a yearly basis, a Latin American citizen on average, buys less than one book, sees less than one movie at the cinema, buys half a CD in the legal market and will buy a newspaper a maximum of ten times. Access to the Internet in the*

*“According to data from Latinobarómetro, the support for democracy ranges between a maximum of 63% and a minimum of 48% during the decade 1995-2005, with most years fluctuating over 50%. A great part of the stagnation of this indicator is mostly attributed to the representation of democracy by the media.”*

*region does not reach more than ten percent of the population. However, the average citizen is daily exposed to open television and radio services. Furthermore, low levels of access to media in Latin America are accompanied by the phenomenon of a highly concentrated ownership structure which means that the four top companies in each market dominate (as a regional average) more than seventy percent of the market and the audience”.*<sup>20</sup>

Mastrini and Becerra, the authors of the above analysis, also highlight that the concentration of the media was consolidated after two decades of liberalisation, deregulation and privatization of the sector, which allowed the incorporation of international investors, the migration of capital from one industry to another, and the continuous erosion of state intervention in the control of these activities. Four conglomerates - Televisa (Mexico), Cisneros (Venezuela), Globo (Brazil) and Clarin (Argentina) - are the leading players of the regional market. In Colombia, for instance, two networks control the TV market between themselves, accessing 90% of the audience and the potential advertising market of 42 million individuals. The structural concentration of media in Latin America has led to a lack of diversity in content and points of view, the exclusion from the news agenda of voices, topics and interests of civil society groups, regional and ethnic minorities, along with a loss of independence in information - gathering and distribution. The latter has been caused by possible conflicts between the news agenda, and the wide and diverse economic interests of the media owners.

Even though state censorship is a thing of the past, and press and freedom of speech are guaranteed in the constitutions of the region, difficulties not only come from concentration and the ensuing lack of pluralism, but also from the dangers faced by those journalists who do try to work under the ethical principles of the profession. This is especially true in the case of journalists working in the provinces far from the political and economic capitals, where they operate outside the protective umbrella of big media enterprises. According to Reporters without Borders, seven journalists were killed in 2005 in Central and South America. Five more have lost their lives to their profession in 2006. Most of the crimes remain unsolved, and acts of aggression, intimidation and de facto censorship are frequent, facilitated by the occasional complicity of local authorities and judges. Corrupt politicians and policemen, armed illegal groups, urban gangs, drug trafficking and illegal mafias have replaced the ferocity of the dirty war of old authoritarian regimes. Like their autocratic predecessors, these new forces promote crimes, assaults and threats against critical and independent media in Latin America, especially in the peripheral and border regions of Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Paraguay and some Central American countries.

Latin America is also the stage for a real battle between media interests to control information. As in other parts of the world, the political parties, governments, business, and pressure groups are not just sources for reporters, but direct producers of information themselves, using their web pages and PR teams to persuade or impose their side of the story. Strategic communication or news management is an elegant way to call this kind of information control. In many parts of the continent it is still sometimes exerted in a pre – modern fashion, not only with threats and violence, but with such tactics as favoritism in the allocation of radio and TV broadcasting licenses, protection of the dominant position of the bigger networks, pressures from major commercial advertisers, conditional allocation of publicity contracts tied to public budgets, withdrawal of sources and access to difficult journalists, gifts to reporters, creation of trash media to undermine the reputation of journalists, as well as judicial harassment.

<sup>20</sup> Guillermo Mastrini and Martin Becerra, Journalists and Tycoons. **“Structure and concentration of cultural industries in Latin America”** (Prometeo, Buenos Aires, 2006)

In the capital cities, a source of permanent tension is the relationship between the elected and their cronies. Some of the best achievements of the Latin American media in recent times have been written by investigative journalists denouncing the corruption of Presidents such as Fujimori in Peru, Menem in Argentina, Alemán in Nicaragua, Salinas de Gortari in Mexico, Gutiérrez in Ecuador, Calderón and Rodríguez in Costa Rica.

Nevertheless, risks faced daily in the exercise of press freedom, or the achievements of investigative journalism in its fight against corruption and intolerance are not enough for the Latin American democracies to retain the solidarity with, and respect (being eroded a little more every day) towards the media and journalists. Most of these countries simply do not have sufficiently effective and reliable judiciary systems to timely and appropriately punish the cases of abuse that may be committed by journalists and the media. And demands for greater social responsibility for media and journalists have served as an excuse to justify hostile regulatory initiatives on the part of the State that threaten freedom of the press, as is the case of the law on contents adopted in Venezuela.<sup>21</sup> Legal efforts to enforce principles of social responsibility in the media are the worst solution for the Latin American context, in comparison with the establishment of training in journalism ethics, self-regulation of the media and education of the public on their rights as citizens and consumers.

The eroding legitimacy of the media is one dimension of a transformation under way in the region: the progressive reframing of the relation between media and audiences. As in other parts of the world, the sprouting of the Internet in Latin America has begun to upset the rules of the game, by affecting professional practices and financial management of media, by progressively undermining the traditional logic of production and the economic model of the quality media that was once the pride of the metropolitan newspapers.

Although the population remains connected to media, especially to the big radio and television networks, which are still very profitable businesses, the credibility of journalistic content is being undermined by a lack of trust. With all the possibilities of direct access to diverse flows of information, that allow the comparison of versions, the audience is becoming more demanding on identifying arrogance, partiality or human mistakes, that are so frequent in modern journalism. This has highlighted a typical Latin American problem: traditional mass media are perceived more as power-players than as services to their citizens.

A UNDP report, "*Democracy in Latin America: Towards a democracy of citizens*" (2004), contains revealing data. When answering a question on who exerts power in these countries, 65.2% of a transnational group of opinion leaders identified the media as the second de facto power behind private economic power (at 79.7%), while recognition for the power of public institutions did not reach 50%. Media are frequently perceived as an uncontrolled power that goes beyond news gathering, which serves particular interests and has replaced judges and political parties. The group surveyed said that the media shape public opinion, disqualify people, determine surveys, and consequently influence governance the most. The same report states that, although democracy has extended widely in Latin America, its roots are not deep; to the point that the proportion of Latin Americans willing to sacrifice democracy for real economic progress surpasses 50%.<sup>22</sup>

According to data from Latinobarómetro,<sup>23</sup> the support for democracy ranges between a maximum of 63% and a minimum of 48% during the decade 1995-2005, with most years fluctuating over 50%. A great part of the stagnation

<sup>21</sup> "Laws passed since late 2004 have introduced onerous new restrictions on the media. The Law of Social Responsibility in Radio and Television, approved by the **National Assembly** in December 2004, establishes detailed regulations for the content of television and radio programs. For example, stations deemed to "condone or incite" public disturbances or publish messages "contrary to the security of the nation" are subject to heavy fines and can be ordered to suspend broadcasting for seventy-two hours; on a second offense they may forfeit their broadcasting license for up to five years.... In March 2005, amendments to the Criminal Code came into force which extended the scope of Venezuela's **desacato** (disrespect) laws, and increased penalties for **desacato**, criminal defamation, and libel. By broadening its **desacato** provisions, Venezuela ignored the recommendations of the **InterAmerican Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)** and bucked a continentwide trend toward the repeal of this type of law." **Human Rights Watch, World Report 2006, page 213 ; www.hrw.org**

<sup>22</sup> Publisher by **UNDP, 2004**

<sup>23</sup> More information on the **Latinobarómetro** available on: <http://www.latinobarometro.org/>

of this indicator is mostly attributed to the representation of democracy by the media. These have contributed to the trivialization of politics, to the loss of prestige of the parties, mass non-involvement in politics and to the ascent of populist "caudillos". But media have also paid the price, as can be seen in the erosion of the credibility formerly enjoyed by television networks.

Another problem affecting media performance in Latin America is that most journalists are badly paid with temporary or non-existent work contracts and suffer from lack of proper working conditions, which reinforces their vulnerability to pressures and other risks, self-censorship and corruption such as avoiding denunciations or serving as transmitters for printing whatever benefits their sources. In provinces, it is frequent to find radio and television journalists without work contracts, whose only alternative is to sell advertising along with their search for news. On top of the difficult working conditions, one has to add the lack of sufficient training for journalists to face the demands of this profession and the challenge of providing quality journalist information to society. The percentage of media enterprises systematically investing in training programs promoting quality in news processes has been minimal until now. It is true that media companies in Latin America invest more on technology and equipment than on supporting and improving human resources.

These issues are associated with a low level of management within media companies and narrow advertising markets in which advertising by public institutions has a lot of weight. The ethics of individual journalists need to be supported by a professional core ethics and standards within media business characterized by transparency, clear guidelines and norms. Many experts point out that owners and executives lack an adequate understanding of the responsibility between communication media and society. Debate around transparency and social responsibility of the media is opening little by little.

## PATHWAYS TO PROGRESS: COMMUNITY RADIO, NEW MEDIA AND JOURNALISM SUPPORT INITIATIVES

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Latin America is looking for a way to attain sustainable development and democratic governance. Within this context, the existence of a healthy media system is needed, one that is able to contribute in a significant way to the formation of citizenship and sees access to information as a right of the population. Attaining these objectives depends not only on the total enforcement of legal and constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression in the region, but also on the possibility of attaining professionalism in journalism practices, in an open and pluralistic environment with a variety of media acting independently. This requires, in turn, well-managed media enterprises facilitating editorial independence.

To ensure this, we need institutions and projects supporting media and journalists to compensate for the narrow remit of the market.

An interesting dynamic can be observed in the media sectors of most Latin America. Community radio has become a vibrant alternative medium, although the restraints on it imposed by former state control have been replaced by the hostility of the big commercial broadcasting enterprises to it. Community radio provides channels for cultural recognition and democratic participation for traditionally marginalised communities, such as rural workers, indigenous groups and other ethnical minorities. For example, Colombia has around 460 community radio stations with an agenda centered on the effects of the internal armed conflict, public services provision and other topics of community interest. In one of the most conflicted areas, the Magdalena Medio, the AREMAG Net has 22 young people communication collectives, 17 communication collectives dealing with sexual and



reproductive health, 8 collectives on citizens' communication and 8 schools for radio broadcasts. As a result, the network has managed to access financial public accounts in 80% of the municipalities located in its area of influence. It has also seen the inauguration of seven (7) local news reports which strengthen the process of public opinion awareness in the region. Community radio has in these cases surpassed its role as a mediator for resolving daily problems (such as getting wheelchairs for conflict victims) to become one of the mechanisms for citizen participation through the creation of public forums and the monitoring of elected officials.

As a result, magazines and other new media have appeared in print media. They still have limited coverage and are devoted to investigative and narrative journalism reportages. The Internet is a terrain for global experimentation where Latin American journalists and new initiatives dare to search for new narrative and business models, taking advantage of the fact that no corporate connection is needed in order to generate conceptual or informative value, or to gain outreach and credibility.

During the last decade a striking academic and political debate has been generated throughout the region concerning the political performance of media and journalists, the right to information and citizens' participation in media. Media monitoring observatories and critique networks have appeared, such as Calandria in Peru and the Observatorio da Imprensa in Brazil. A great number of countries have adopted new laws for citizens' access to information. Media have been among the leaders in this campaign.

There is a great demand for journalism training, especially in those countries experiencing democratic transition processes. Step-by-step journalism enterprises commit themselves to investing in editors and reporters. In the last fifteen years, almost all countries have created new journalists' organizations dedicated to the promotion of quality and socially responsible journalism. Some of them are operating at the regional level along with traditional owners and workers unions.

Most of the projects undertaken in journalist's education and training and in other areas of media development have been financed through local resources and funds provided by inter-governmental organisations operating in the region. Latin America has not been a priority for the main donors focusing on media development except for those interested in defending freedom of speech.

Among the most interesting experiences to support media and journalism in Latin America are the following:

#### **ANDI - AGÊNCIA DE NOTÍCIAS DOS DIREITOS DA INFÂNCIA (NEWS AGENCY FOR CHILDREN RIGHTS), BRASÍLIA, BRAZIL.**

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ANDI's mission is to contribute to the development of a journalistic culture in which childhood and adolescence rights are considered a priority, and an institutional culture where communication is considered a strategic tool for social mobilization and change. Through the monitoring of media, mobilization and qualification of journalists and the promotion of increased, diverse sources of information, ANDI has contributed to the rise in the coverage of topics related to childhood and adolescence in Brazil: from 10,700 articles published in newspapers in 1996 to 161,807 articles in 2004. The quality of coverage also increased in a significant way, with an increase of 45% in the number of articles focused on the search for solutions. In this way, ANDI contributes to forming Brazilian public opinion on the topic, and supporting social actors in order to be able to act and acquire the proper influence on public policy formulation. This experience is being extended to all the states throughout Brazil, and is also being replicated in other Latin American countries.

**FNPI - FUNDACIÓN NUEVO PERIODISMO IBEROAMERICANO (IBERIAN AMERICAN NEW JOURNALISM FOUNDATION), CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA.**

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FNPI works for the professional development of journalists and the search for quality in journalistic practices, with a pedagogical model inspired by its founder and president, Gabriel Garcia Marquez. FNPI organizes workshops lasting a week or more where leading journalists and editors from all over the world discuss the ethics and the nuts and bolts of their craft with Latin American editors and reporters, through extended conversations of very hands on nature. Thanks to the possibilities offered by the linguistic community of the regional languages, Spanish and Portuguese, FNPI operates its programs at a regional level, including its annual awards. Since April 1995, more than 4,000 reporters and editors from all over Latin America have participated in nearly 200 workshops and seminars organized by FNPI, in 38 cities of the continent, generating a big network of experiences and knowledge exchange. FNPI has found that there exists a big demand from Latin America journalists for topics such as ethics, journalistic investigation, narrative journalism and coverage of social and political issues.

**PYS - INSTITUTO PRENSA Y SOCIEDAD (PRESS AND SOCIETY INSTITUTE), LIMA PERU.**

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IPPYS is an association promoting freedom of information and independent journalism. It carries out situation reports in several Latin American countries, develops specialized studies, and promotes debate on the role of the media. The institute directs a monitoring network in several Latin American countries and develops a vigorous supporting program to investigative journalism in Latin America.

**KNIGHT CENTER FOR JOURNALISM IN THE AMERICAS, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN, USA.**

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The Center has been supporting the creation of local, independent and self - sustainable organizations, in different Latin American countries. These organizations are dedicated to fight for freedom of speech and to train journalists with a support model combining journalist training with the acquisition of organizational competences.

**CONCLUSION**

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Latin America is a vibrant continent juggling both problems and opportunities. However its societies are opening, civil society is growing stronger and governance is improving. This trend provides international funders with the opportunity to support and partner with regional and local Latin American organizations, to obtain tangible results from their actions on media development, focused on generating a positive transformation of professional and entrepreneurial practices in the search for journalistic quality. What has been done in recent years in the media development field shows the existence of a great interest and response, coming from practitioners, enterprises and civil society organisations alike. They share a determination to enhance and strengthen their abilities to fulfil a relevant role in the quest to achieve good governance, accountability, sustainable development, poverty eradication and the other Millennium Development Goals that guide the international development agenda.

# Arab Media Lagging Behind: Freedom of Expression, Lost Credibility, and the Rise of Independent Media

**Ibrahim Nawar**, *Chief Executive, Arab Press freedom Watch (APFW)*

The most single famous television outlet in the world in the first few years of the 21st century belongs to the Arab World. Al Jazeera, first praised, then lambasted, then bombed by the United States, is simply the best known of over 100 satellite TV channels that have appeared in the Arab World in the last decade. But while there is no question these channels, and the arrival of the Internet, have brought change, much of it positive in the information landscape of the region, this paper will argue there is a danger they create an unrealistic rosy image of the Arab media world.

## DEMOCRACY, FREEDOM OF EXPRESSIONS AND MEDIA SYSTEMS IN THE ARAB WORLD

*“Media reform and political reform in the Arab world should go hand in hand. It is nonsense to talk about democracy when citizens are denied their right to speak without fear.”*

Media reform and political reform in the Arab world should go hand in hand. It is nonsense to talk about democracy when citizens are denied their right to speak without fear. Democracy cannot be established without freedom of speech. Freedom of expression in turn rests on four foundations: access to information; access to communication; freedom of association in the form of trade unions and professional organizations; and a fair and independent judiciary.

In all four areas, the 22 countries of the Arab world suffer serious deficits. The professional standards and ethics of journalism accordingly mirror these deficits in all countries, without exception albeit to different degrees. The need for media development in the Arab world based on freedom of expression is a priority and should be given a lot of attention by media practitioners, donors (governments and others), NGOs and international organizations.

The status of freedom of expression and quality media is not even across the Arab world. Loosely, we can define three categories of information environment in region: semi-open, semi-closed, and fully closed.

*“Media reflect this fractured and antagonistic social space, damaging prospects of the growth of democratic polities and civil society, both of which at some level rely on a base level of consensus about deep cultural norms to underlie and frame debates, difference, and diversity at higher levels.”*

We can do this considering a number of factors. First, there are the major externals such as the available degree of access to information, communication, professional organizations and an independent and fair judiciary. Then, there are other factors more directly related to the activities of the media sector, such as the integration of ICTs into production, the degree of competition, market transparency, models of ownership and administration, training, media laws and policies and ownership concentration.

No Arab country can claim to have a fully open media system. Even in the best case scenario, the media system is restricted by a degree of state or private sector monopoly or oligopoly, a degree of restrictive media laws and a degree of media policy dedicated to glorifying the country's rulers.

The media discourse in most Arab countries mirrors the aspirations of the ruler at the expense of the people's, who in most cases fall victims to the political discourse delivered by the media.

Among countries with semi-open media systems we can count Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon and Palestine. The semi-closed group includes the six countries of the Arab Gulf - Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman, as well as Yemen, Tunisia, Algeria and Mauritania. The last group of entirely closed systems includes Syria, Libya and Sudan.

Somalia and Iraq cannot be judged easily because of the chaos of war. The collapse of the central government in Somalia has resulted in the emergence of dozens of new media outlets protected by warlords, religious groups and tribal chiefs, as well as an entirely deregulated telecommunications industry which has to count as one of the more successful in Africa. The situation in Iraq is very similar with regard to the fragmentation of broadcast media, as the destruction of the central state has left the country with a diminished capacity to produce good journalism, due mostly to the lack of safety. Consequently, the professional standards, ethics and industrial relations of the media in both Iraq and Somalia are very poor. This is no reflection on the quality of individual journalists and their great courage in doing their work.

## THE QUANDARY AROUND MEDIA TRAINING PROGRAMMES

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One question that is often asked is whether to provide assistance to media organizations in closed media systems, such as the one in Syria. This needs to be examined against the experience of organizations such as the BBC World Service Trust and the Thomson Foundation that have provided media training and development assistance to Syrian state controlled newspapers, radio and TV stations. The question will arise from time to time, even in countries that enjoy a semi-open media system such as Egypt or Morocco.

Journalists who receive training in areas such as investigative journalism often complain that what they have learnt from training cannot be used in the workplace because of restrictions. But the counterargument exists that donors should not wait for democracy to arrive and freedom of speech to be implemented in order to embark on serious plans to build a good base of professional journalists. The experiences in Egypt, Morocco and Jordan show that good journalism is best positioned to fight for freedom of the press. Bad journalism has always been a tool in the hands of political power.

## NEW TECHNOLOGIES, NEW MESSAGES?

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Technology is neutral. New and advanced Internet and satellite technologies may be used for progressive or regressive ends. The new age of satellite TV stations has brought to the fore some liberal thinking – just as it has revived conservative and regressive thinking. In the same manner, the Internet is used as a vibrant tool by extremists as much as liberals.

## DEFINING 'DEVELOPMENT' OF THE ARAB MEDIA

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Media development in the Arab world can be interpreted in two ways. The first is a modernist superficial sense of providing better material circumstances in terms of technology, machinery and salaries, in isolation of the surrounding political, social, economic and cultural environment. The second is deeper and more meaningful and looks at the wider process around media, trying to ensure that media development creates free, independent, plural and efficient media capable of engaging the general public in political reform and providing a solid base for national dialogue about democracy, social and cultural change.

Rich Arab Gulf states, loaded with money to spend on media development, have followed the superficial interpretation. They provide their media with the latest technology and machinery and pay their staff well. But none of that is related to political reform or democratic change.

Ailing media organizations in countries such as Syria or Libya, by contrast, suffer from low IT and technological standards, as the state is not spending as much because of budget constraints.

## PRINT AND BROADCAST MEDIA: TWO LEVELS OF REGULATION

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One of the main features of the Arab world is the high rate of illiteracy. This is a fact well understood by Arab governments and has a deep impact on media policy in the region. Because of the high illiteracy rate, radio and TV stations hold the main power within the media, and are accordingly heavily regulated and mainly under state control. Even in cases that allowed private radio or TV stations, news and political programs are prohibited unless news are bought or borrowed from the state radio and television (examples found in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan).

By contrast, Arab governments in their policy of regulating the media show far less concern about what can be described as *"elite media"*, newspapers and magazines for example which by definition engage only the literate, at the same time as doing everything to prevent the spread of technologies with populist potential, such as radio.

The spread of satellite dishes and Internet cafes is posing a serious threat to this traditional policy, as both cross sovereign boundaries easily with media that has the potential to reach the masses.

## MEDIA CONCENTRATION

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Media concentration in the Arab world is slowly replacing the aging state monopoly. Oil money, privatization programs, satellite technology and the decay of state - controlled media have opened the way for new media conglomerates. The Lebanese civil war from 1975 to 1990 and the collapse of the national media



structure, in what had been the Arab World's most advanced media landscape, encouraged the Saudis to start a huge media drive based physically outside the Arab world. In a matter of just over a decade, the Saudis found themselves in control of an overseas and transnational media empire that consisted of more than a dozen of newspapers, satellite radio and TV stations, an international news agency and huge production and distribution facilities across the world.

By the start of the 21st century, the Saudi royal family, their affiliates and front people and companies had gained control of Orbit News Network, Arab Radio and Television (ART), MBC Network, al - Arabiya News Channel, Saudi Research and Marketing, Tihama Advertising Agency and a distribution network. In addition, the overseas Saudi media expansion reached out to Lebanon through partnership agreements and stocks (Al-Mustaqbal TV, LBC, Al - Nahar newspaper).

They also bought into Egypt (an ART deal with state-owned television to buy out specialised satellite TV channels) and Morocco (Othman Omeir's deal with the Moroccan Othman bin Jelloun to buy Marroc Soir Group). The Saudi Omeir also launched the first Arabic language daily online paper "*elaph.com*" in 2001.

The Saudi expansion in the Arab media is geared for the promotion of Saudi foreign policy and Saudi culture, protecting the Saudi royal family and regime from opposition and launching attacks on countries hostile to Saudi policy. In short, Saudi's media empire has been built to buy political influence in the Arab world.

## THE IMPACT OF SATELLITE MEDIA: A TALE OF TWO FORCES

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A deep culture divide has emerged from the spread of satellite media in the Arab world.<sup>24</sup> On the one hand, conservative and religious TV channels such as Al - Majd network, Al - Haqiqa, Iqra'a and Al - Anwar are driving the hearts and the minds of viewers towards social and political conservatism. They are making serious efforts to re-establish a culture of authority and obscurantism. On the opposite side other radio and TV channels are promoting sexualised video clips (amongst youth hungry for sex), gay culture, dance and Western music.

The result is the creation of a deep divide between two large groups of audience, one is being largely westernized and another is being driven aggressively towards a very particular interpretation of what traditional values are. Any trip to the countryside in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan or even in the Gulf region, will reveal this striking divide. One group self-consciously grows beards and adopts dress that is ostentatiously Islamic, in contrast to the second group who sport fashioned hairstyles and wear modern Western - style clothes. One group is dedicated to listening to tapes of the Holy Quran, religious speeches and fatwas, while the other is fond of watching video clips, listening to Western pop music and reading gossips about pop stars.

Media reflect this fractured and antagonistic social space, damaging prospects of the growth of democratic polities and civil society, both of which at some level rely on a base level of consensus about deep cultural norms to underlie and frame debates, difference, and diversity at higher levels. Whether it is genuine Public Service Broadcasting, built carefully out of state control to reflect and integrate different strands of society, community-level media to encourage bottom - up involvement, genuine and honest competition in the commercial space, or a combination of all of these and other initiatives besides, media in the Arab world currently fail to fulfil their social and political remit.

<sup>24</sup> The establishment of the **Saudi Research and Marketing** in London 1978 marked the beginning of the new Saudi media empire.. Then, the televised war of Iraq in 1991 brought with it the idea of establishing the first Saudi satellite television station, **Middle East Broadcasting Centre (MBC)**. The Saudis also bought the ailing American news agency **United Press International (UPI)** around the same time.

Saudi oil money was not alone in seeking political influence through acquiring media power. The Emirates most influential ruling families, Al Nahyan and Al Maktoum showed strong desire during the 1980s to become regional media players. This desire was later translated into satellite TV networks (Abu Dhabi and Dubai) and huge media projects (Dubai Media City). Once they felt they had enough money to compete regionally, the Qataris followed suit. In the mid - 1990s, they went into partnership with the BBC World Service and bought half of the stocks of the monthly "Almushahed" magazine. The aim was to develop the BBC Arabic language magazine into a weekly edition, part of a bigger project to buy out the BBC team that previously worked in the joint venture (BBC - Orbit) satellite TV station. It was against this background that al Jazeera was born in 1996, controlled financially by the Emir of Qatar. His entrusted man Sheikh Hamad Bin Thamer is the Chief Executive of Al Jazeera and his old teacher Sheikh Youssef al-Qaradhwai, generally thought of as a conservative cleric, is the real force behind the editorial team. In fact, Kuwait is alone among the oil-rich Arab Gulf states that has not joined the drive to buy political influence through building its own media empire.

Meanwhile, running in parallel to the media controlled by oil money, the totalitarian regimes in Syria and Libya are still in control of most of the media in these two countries, in both print and broadcast. The Egyptian state occupies a slightly softer position of control over its media, as a service provider (the NileSat satellite) and a facilities house (October Media City), rather than exercising direct control as a market leader in the media competition.

Saudi Arabia is by far the leader with its media empire. But they are being aggressively challenged by Al Jazeera, Al Manar and the Iranian Arabic language Al - Alam television station. Once the real mirror of the Arab world, the Lebanese media has fallen victim to political influence and oil money. Saudis have a lot of influence on the Lebanese media, as have the Syrians.

This new kind of media concentration has started to supercede the old state monopolies of media – but they should both be fought against. They both play against diversity in the media, against fair competition and distort the process of creating a healthy public sphere. The Arab world needs anti - trust laws prohibiting monopoly and encouraging competition.

## GROWING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, BUT JUST NOT AT HOME

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Satellite radio and television stations and overseas-based Arabic language newspapers and magazines have presented the old local Arab media with a double challenge: the advanced technology and the degree of freedom exhibited in published or aired materials. One has to realise, however, that this degree of freedom of speech is mainly dedicated to dealing with pan - Arab issues or issues relating to "other" Arab countries rather than dealing with issues of concern to the people at home.

For example, Al Jazeera will deal boldly with the situation in Lebanon or Palestine, where Israel stands in the court of international public opinion. But it will keep a blind eye on what may be happening inside Qatar, its sponsor state, with regard to corruption, power struggles within the ruling family, or Qatari foreign policy, which is often controversial within the Arab World.

In cases like this, we can see that the deficit in freedoms in mainstream media is compensated for by the use of chatrooms and debating saloons which text streams that appear on satellite TV screens.

The margin of freedom of expression could never have stayed as low as it was before the satellite age. Satellite and Internet technologies have provided advocates of freedom of expression and media professionals alike with tools to break the old barriers and to open a new horizon for freedom of speech. That is not to deny the positive role of the cross-border Arab media, both print and broadcast, but to put this role in the right context. Furthermore, the rise of democratic political forces opposing Arab regimes has encouraged local forces to provide the independent media with a new spirit. So, it is not only the technology, but also the social and political struggle that has pushed the line for more freedom in Egypt, Morocco and Lebanon and even in Saudi Arabia, which is inevitably mirrored in the media.

Print outlets at the national level which are genuinely independent, such as the Algerian daily *Elkhabar*, the Egyptian daily *Almasry al - Youm*, the Moroccan daily *Assabah*, and many other titles in the print sector need to be developed to be able to compete with cross-border print titles, such as *al-Hayat* and *al-Sharq al – Awsat*.

## SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

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To develop these newspapers, journalists and media management should provide a list of priorities and urgent needs. They need to develop their advertising and subscription business models, on the editorial side develop foreign language skills, and train their editorial staff to access different sources of information. Journalists need to learn the skills of objective reporting and investigative journalism. Marketing staff need to develop their professional skills. There are many other areas of concern such as editorial management, models of management and administration, and fighting through tough market conditions in order to sustain success

Arab radio and TV stations are mostly owned by governments and their services are run on policies and basis drawn up by government officials. Although some of them have undergone some relatively drastic operations to develop their performance, they still suffer from genuine inability to win public support. There are many reforms that need to be introduced to develop the broadcast sector in the Arab world. The first and the most urgent reform is to take this sector out of government control, not easy since some governments will resist as long as possible. The alternative is to open the broadcast sector to fair competition. The right to broadcast should not be restricted by law to big companies or by an unfair licensing system. At the moment satellite uplinks are allowed in some Arab countries via the so - called free media cities but terrestrial transmission is prohibited. This restriction should be removed in order to encourage advertising agencies to advertise with independent radio and TV stations.

Independent media organizations should be financially transparent, editorially objective and managerially efficient. Foreign donors should look at developing the media hand in hand with the broader process of encouraging political reform. International support of regimes known for their violations of freedom of expression puts donor foreign policy in question and casts doubts about the real objectives of foreign donors.

# Media Assistance in the Former Soviet Union: A Job Well Done?

**Manana Aslamazyan**, *Director General*,  
*Internews Russia*

*“The Russian media law, was one of the best. However, it concentrated on the regulation of journalistic and editorial independence, rather than on the regulation of economic relations within the media industry. Therefore the law could not protect the media from the economic tools that were subsequently used to consolidate state control: monopolisation, taxes, and buy-outs.”*

Media development activities have been carried out on the territory of the former Soviet Union (FSU) for the last 15 years. Due to the absence of indigenous non – profits at the outset of this process, these projects were largely created and implemented by foreign NGOs which opened their own representative offices in the countries of the FSU. Hundreds of Americans and Europeans have worked in these countries from the beginning of the 1990s. The collapse of the great empire was accompanied by the construction of new states, and each one of these was striving to create its own new media system. Replacing the old state media monopolies were thousands of small local media companies, which had few staff educated in media disciplines, no experience, and no money, but did have a passionate desire to change society and help their fellow citizens in the building of these newly independent states. Western donors were willing to support them through transfer of knowledge and experience of their own media industries, introducing international journalistic standards and promoting ideas of freedom of speech and democracy.

Can we consider the job concluded, a job well done? Many of us who participated in all these processes are, 15 years later, bound by feelings of dissatisfaction and disappointment. What were the achievements and failures of this - from the point of view of history - relatively short period? Is it possible to identify particular laws of development in different countries of the former Soviet empire?

## NEW MEDIA LEGISLATION FOR A NEW ERA

At the beginning of the 1990s, all of the FSU countries sponsored new media legislation. This provided the basis for the appearance of new, private media, which had never existed during the days of the USSR. It seemed that it was only necessary to give permission for new media systems to arise and they would create themselves. The Russian media law, written by three legal experts - Mikhail Fedotov, Yuri Baturin and Yuri Entin - was one of the best.

## THE EMERGENCE OF AN INDIGENOUS NGO SECTOR

However, like the laws in other countries, it concentrated on the regulation of journalistic and editorial independence, rather than on the regulation of economic relations within the media industry. Written right at the start of the period of transition (1990 – 1991), the authors could not foresee what kind of procedures and protections of economic relationships of the media might be required ten years in the future. Therefore the law could not protect the media

*"The global tendency of the transition toward a total entertainment culture in the place of balanced news was immediately and enthusiastically accepted into these new media communities."*

from the economic tools that were subsequently used to consolidate state control: monopolisation, taxes, and buy-outs.

The new laws served the creation of new media and particularly those small, inexperienced media companies for which assistance was designed in the early 1990s. Government-financed institutions such as USAID and Tacis as well as private foundations such as the Open Society Institute, the Ford Foundation and the McArthur Foundation, financed such aid work. These projects were carried out by existing American and European NGOs which had the know-how and resources to submit proposals to, and win, the international donors' grant and contract competitions. The representative offices of these NGOs were usually run by young foreign enthusiasts, with some knowledge of the Russian language, a genuine desire to help society, and a little experience in management. Projects at that time consisted chiefly of the organisation of seminars, where the trainers were foreign journalists, documentary makers and managers. Their desire to transfer their experience was genuine, and their practical experience was indeed useful to the young generation of new journalists and managers who were thirsty for information and advice. One should also note that at this time, neither the donors, nor the implementers, nor those on the receiving end, had any experience of media assistance. As USAID analyst Krishna Kumar wrote later

*"USAID media assistance strategies in Russia evolved in response to rapidly changing conditions and experimentation. While other post-authoritarian media transitions (including east-central Europe after 1989) provided some shared lessons, post-Soviet Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) presented unique challenges. Neither the Russians nor the Western donor community had any experience with the transitions of such large, entrenched post-totalitarian centralized economies toward market-democratic systems. In the earliest years, USAID Russia focused on journalism training, the clearest, most obvious need to help overcome ingrained habits of seven decades of state-controlled media."*

At that time in the FSU there were not only no independent media, but the NGO sector was completely undeveloped. Although the legislation on non-commercial organisations in certain countries (like Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia) developed almost parallel to the development of new media systems, in others (Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan) the legislative process moved far more slowly. Very few local NGOs were independently carrying out media assistance at the beginning of the 90s. The obvious exceptions were the Glasnost Defence Foundation, founded on the initiative of Russian cinematographers in 1991, and the first Russian associations - the Russian Association of Independent Broadcasters (RANV), the International Association of Radio and Television (MART), and several Ukrainian associations, but they, too, were largely funded by Western donors. Local legislation on NGOs and the growing professionalism of many domestic specialists in the area of media assistance led to the creation after a few years of greater numbers of local non-commercial organisations - which were no longer headed by foreigners but by local activists. Western foundations did provide assistance to such organisations. They grew in experience, ideas, good practice initiatives and gained greater financial support.

Yet these processes took place slowly and unevenly. Today, after 15 years it is possible to speak of the development of a system of media NGOs in Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. However, they are almost non-existent or else very weak in Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Belarus and Moldova.



Private international foundations were more helpful to local NGOs than the major intergovernmental institutions such as Tacis, which even today remains deeply cautious about directly financing local organisations, preferring to have a European NGO as the lead implementer. Domestic philanthropy is developing extremely slowly and very few media assistance projects are financed by local donors. It is, therefore, thanks almost exclusively to international support that tens of thousands of journalists have been trained, hundreds of associations have been founded, documentary films continue to be produced, various exchange projects are taking place, conferences organised, and so on.

Nevertheless, democratic movements in different countries of the FSU are highly critical of many of their local media. The development of media cannot be separated from the social, political, economic, cultural and technological trends of the societies in which they operate. Naturally, just as the economies of these countries differ from each other, the media industries are also different. At the beginning of the 21st century, there are several tendencies noticeable in the more-developed Russian, Ukrainian and Kazakh television markets. On the one hand, all of the national channels are under direct or indirect state control, and the authoritarian model of information management has been re-established - with information flows strictly controlled, the themes and participants of the small number of talk shows having to be approved in advance. The new state - capitalist elites have carried out take-overs and bought controlling stakes in commercial media companies. Loyal owners of the major media companies, especially television channels, are now appointed - and if foreign companies gain a share, then only with permission from the authorities.

On the other hand, advertising volume is undergoing radical growth, bringing with it a growth in competition, all taking place alongside a natural fragmentation of the audience. New television projects are appearing, as are new technical mechanisms for the distribution of television. The industry is on the rise - new channels are appearing, alongside an avalanche of new local TV programmes and films.

What holds the media community back is the strengthening of state control over all the major elements in society, through corruption and the selective application of the law with regard to the loyal and the disloyal. These reasons lie at the root of many conflicts between the journalistic community and media owners. This is also the explanation why the toughening of the regimes in the FSU led to cuts in information broadcasting and to the fast expansion of entertainment content.

## JOURNALISM ETHICS IN THE FACE OF BIG BUSINESS

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Unfortunately, the journalistic community has not been able to stand up to "big money" - the highest journalistic ethical standards and responsibility to the public have been sacrificed on the altar of a quiet life. The global tendency of the transition toward a total entertainment culture in the place of balanced news was immediately and enthusiastically accepted into these new media communities. Fear of losing their profitable businesses dictates the behaviour of new media owners, making them excessively conservative with regard to journalistic initiatives. The absence of self-regulatory institutions in the media sphere further exacerbates problematic attitudes toward international financial assistance and

*“After the tremendous growth and rise in democratic changes in post - Soviet societies, rapid economic growth has been accompanied by a steady decline in personal freedoms, including that of freedom of speech.”*

the non-commercial sector. Isolationism is now evident not only in countries like Belarus and Uzbekistan, where international and domestic NGOs have been closed down one after the other over the past year, but in Russia also, where a new law on non-commercial organisations has been introduced to place further controls on the activities of the sector. At the time of the law's passing, government and pro-government spokesmen cultivated the view in society that NGOs exist only to promote the interests of foreign states to undermine Russia, or as money laundering fronts.

The media and the NGO community can do little to battle these trends, which are apparent throughout the FSU (with the possible exceptions of Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, where these tendencies exist, but proceed more slowly according to the relative success of recent "revolutions"). The xenophobic separation between "us" and "them" is becoming stronger. Many countries are seeing the appearance of quasi NGOs - including in the media assistance field itself - which are loyal to or even created by the state, to compete against "disloyal" independent NGOs.

## THE RESURGENCE OF THE AUTHORITARIAN INFORMATION MODEL

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After the tremendous growth and rise in democratic changes in post - Soviet societies, rapid economic growth has been accompanied by a steady decline in personal freedoms, including that of freedom of speech.

This is one of the lessons which must be learned in the field of media development assistance. International assistance, Western experience and professionalism had a decidedly positive influence on the development of media in the former Soviet Union. However like any new process, this one also had its failings. It is foolish to believe that it is possible to radically change the situation in another country simply by assisting its media industry. The media do not survive in a vacuum: they are part and parcel of the societies they exist to inform and entertain - they cannot be protected from local political and economic developments, unless they are made dependent on foreign government finance, which in turn makes them untrustworthy in the eyes of the public. In addition, the focus on assistance only for new, independent media meant that the state media were left out and consequently changed little in terms of their internal processes and relationship to the state during the whole 15 year period. The FSU states protected and supported state broadcasters - as a consequence they made terrific technical advances and continue to reach the biggest audiences - but they remain on the whole instruments for government propaganda.

What could have been done differently? This is not an exhaustive analysis, but here are some suggestions for future media project implementers:

- International media assistance should operate under principles and strategies that are more flexible, and donors should be better informed of each other's activities and cooperate more effectively;
- Financing - and if necessary strengthening - local NGOs should be a priority for carrying out media assistance projects right from the start - the creation of legitimate local organisations capable of reaching out to local media in an effective way is essential, and without gaining experience in carrying out significant projects, local NGOs cannot mature and establish themselves with a foothold in their societies;
- More emphasis should be placed on providing assistance to develop

leadership and leaders capable of influencing the situation in their own environments;

- Support should be given not just to new media companies, but to state ones too, in order to ensure the creation of a more even playing field, common goals for editorial independence, greater cooperation between media companies, networking and production exchange programmes;
- Western media companies and associations - as well as international and foreign NGOs to help, should be brought in to the process of media assistance. Part of the problem in the FSU was that international NGOs have been sometimes too divorced from the real economic aspects of major media business, with the consequence that projects were sometimes idealistic rather than practical in nature;
- The number of foreign exchange projects should be increased, with management internships at well-known globally recognised media companies;
- Greater attention should be paid to cultural differences and traditions;
- More inter-regional and cross-boarder projects need to be developed in order to foster good practice transfer between neighbouring countries and regions. Media assistance programmes have often focused on seminars and training, whereas some of the best and most popular projects have been the ones which contained elements of actual production, with real television and radio products as an end result, that could be exchanged between broadcasters, and lead to genuinely improved mutual understanding and progress.

In conclusion, media assistance programmes in the FSU have had a tremendously positive impact on the nascent independent media communities in these countries, providing ongoing training and support for the ever growing number of new media managers, editors and journalists. Nevertheless, it is necessary to learn the lessons of these early assistance initiatives, taking into account the current problems in these countries in order to develop new ways of assisting media operating in difficult, often authoritarian, and sensitive environments.

# Staying Alive: Media Independence in Southeast Asia

## Editor's Note

This article was written prior to the 19 September 2006 coup by the Thai Military.

However, the overall contribution by the author is still very much valid as an analysis of the overall media situation in South East Asia and of the dominant trends in Thailand itself.

At the time of going to press two weeks after the coup, the situation for the media in Thailand remains unclear.

We have decided, therefore, to keep the author's contribution intact.

**Kavi Chongkittavorn**, *Editor, The Nation,*  
*Chairperson, Southeast Asian Press Alliance*

*"In the past years, cabinet members and affiliated business partners of the Thaksin's government have regularly filed criminal and civil defamation suits against a number of Thai editors and newspapers and free media advocates."*

At 9.40 am on Monday 12 September 2005, an earthquake shook the Thai press. Home entertainment tycoon Paiboon Damrongchaitham, CEO of GMM Grammy Plc, announced that he had acquired 32.43 per cent of Mathichon and was planning to takeover the country's most respected 27 - year old Thai - language newspaper in a few days. His announcement immediately caused public outrage and generated instant support for the beleaguered daily. Internet bulletin boards were jammed with condemnations and SMS among university students were packed with threatening words to boycott Grammy products and its artists if the company did not pull out from the deal. Within hours, civil society organizations and consumer groups marched to Mathichon's headquarters to show support. Others wearing black t-shirts laid wreaths in front of Grammy's building. The next morning, all print media, both English and Thai, published editorials universally condemning the hostile takeover as immoral and politically - motivated. One newspaper though, the Daily News, was completely blind to the controversy as Grammy had a huge investment in the paper.

By Tuesday noon, hectic renegotiations between representatives of Mathichon and Grammy began amid growing public resentments. Media professional organizations held discussion groups and ended their meetings with bouquets of flowers to Mathichon's editorial staffers. By Wednesday morning, media activists, intelligentsia and journalists stepped up the pressure by jointly issuing statements questioning Paiboon's motive in this hostile bid. Bankers and Mathichon's shareholders came forward and pledged to provide loans and make their shares available for the publisher to fight the takeover. Even Paiboon's respected university lecturer, Dr. Darunee Hirunrak, made a personal appeal to Paiboon to pull back and let Mathichon operate freely without any interference. By 5.00 pm the same day, the game was over. At a press conference, Paiboon's brother, Sumeth Damrongchaitham, announced that Grammy had already struck a compromise with Mathichon and that the company would reduce its shares to 22.43 per cent and gave much needed assurance that the paper would continue to operate as freely as before.

*“The Thai public was not as gullible and ignorant as one would have thought. It did care about good and responsible press.”*

On the day the takeover of Mathichon was announced, Paiboon had also bought 23.4 per cent shares of the Bangkok Post Plc, publisher of Bangkok Post, the country's oldest English language newspaper. Although it caused less resentment and commotion than Mathichon's share acquisitions, the public and free media advocacy groups expressed serious concerns that the takeover would affect the Post's independent reporting. With strong outside support, the Post's editorial staff decided to write to their management boards, including Robert Kwok, owner of Hong Kong based South China Morning Post, about the need to reaffirm editorial independence. It was a rather unusual step that such guarantee be asked in such an open manner. The Post's editors and journalists also went to Government House to stage a demonstration and demanded a say in the appointment of the top editorial staff. In response, the Post's publisher and CEOs made a public pledge in a press conference that the editorial staff would be allowed full independence. This development is extremely remarkable considering the Post's rather conservative outlook as well as the attitude of Suthikiart Chirathiwat, the Post's executive director, not renowned for promoting press freedom and media integrity. He removed two editors in 2004 and 2005, who were critical of the government of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his overall policies.

## STRUGGLE FOR AN INDEPENDENT PRESS

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Albeit a brief tussle, the attempted hostile takeover of Mathichon was a historic event that has united the press and public sectors. Combined pressure and solid support from the general public and civil society organizations has literally blocked Grammy's purchase and saved the paper. As such, it set forth a new benchmark for Thai journalism. It was the first time public support served as catalyst to halt a hostile bid. The Thai public was not gullible and ignorant as one would have thought. It did care about good and responsible press. After all, people had never fought for press freedom before. Such unpredictable outbursts showed that a usually benign public was willing to fight for independent and free media that represents their voices and concerns, especially at a time of political uncertainties and increased state control.

But the struggle for independent press in Thailand has just begun. The Thai press continues to face mounting pressure from the government. On 3 October 2005, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra filed two defamation suits against a veteran journalist, Sondhi Limthongkul, publisher of Phujadkarn and ThaiDay, and demanded 500 million baht or US\$12.5 million in damages. Thaksin pointed out that he filed criminal and civil lawsuits against Sondhi and his co-host Sarocha Porn-udomsak because they repeatedly accused him of being disloyal to the monarchy in their TV current affair program. It was the first time Thaksin filed a lawsuit against a journalist. Several weeks later, he subsequently withdrew the case in December citing the recommendations by HM the King during his birthday's speech urging him to be more open to criticism.

In the past years, cabinet members and affiliated business partners of the Thaksin's government have regularly filed criminal and civil defamation suits against a number of Thai editors and newspapers and free media advocates. In August 2005, two government agencies sued the Bangkok Post for criminal defamation for one billion baht or US\$25 million for falsely reported about the condition of the new Suvannabhumi Airport. In the same month, Yaowaret Shinawatra, Thaksin's young sister, filed criminal and civil lawsuits against the Thai Post for another story related to the airport's construction. In June 2004, the Shin Corp Group, which belonged to the Thaksin family, sued Supinya Klangnarong,



*“A survey done by New York-based Freedom House last May in 194 countries showed that Southeast Asia did not have any free media, except ‘partly free’ and ‘not free media’ categories.”*

a free media advocate, for 400 million baht or US\$10 million in damages. It is interesting to note that Shin Corp Group was purchased on 27 January 2006 by Singapore’s Temasak Holdings. Other high-profile defamation suits including the 10 billion baht or US\$450 million filed by Picnic Corporation, owned by family members of former deputy commerce minister Suriya Lapwisuthisin, against Mathichon and a five-billion baht or US\$225 million suit against its sister business, the business daily Prachachat Turakij.

Mathichon’s dramatic struggle for survival and the increased number of defamation cases in Thailand reveal the kind of challenges the Thai media will have to confront in the future. Each legal outcome will have direct bearing on freedom of expression in the country. In the case of Thaksin’s lawsuits, any favourable ruling for the Prime Minister could have dire consequences for future reporting on government officials and the country’s press freedom. It is imperative that these developments and their significance be understood. The paper’s triumph against the hostile bid could be short-lived because the Grammy Group can and will use the tyranny of market mechanism and excess capitals in the future, to prey on Mathichon again or purchase other media outlets. Indeed, the daily will not be the last to face a new form of media intimidation and control.

Throughout Southeast Asia, especially in the countries which have free or semi-free media, press freedom is at risk. Nowadays power wielders are very skillful in muzzling freedom of expression using sophisticated means including financial measures to control media ownership, anti-press legislations to cow media, as well as filing defamation lawsuits against journalists demanding ridiculously high amount of financial payouts.

Southeast Asia is a very diverse region in terms of politics, economic and religion. It is a miniature of global politics - from absolute to constitutional monarchies, from guided and highly regulated to free for all democracies and from despotic socialism to capitalist autocracies. The region also houses the world’s largest Islamic country - Indonesia - as well as the world’s largest Buddhist communities combining Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Burma. The Philippine is also a major Christian country in Asia. These diversities are reflected in the region’s quality of media and its independence. The media is usually government-controlled or privately-run. Regional media also varies greatly depending on media quality and independence in each country. A survey done by New York-based Freedom House last May in 194 countries showed that Southeast Asia did not have any free media, except “partly free” and “not free media” categories. The region’s freest media in Thailand and the Philippines were included in the “partly free” category. The former’s rapid deterioration of press freedom and the latter’s tighter control of media ownership and the high numbers of Filipino journalists killed were responsible for the poor scoring. Thailand’s press freedom fell from 90th in 2004 to 95th in 2005 and 107th in 2006. In 2000, Thailand was ranked 29th in a similar survey.

## FREE MEDIA IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Using local and regional values and norms, the Southeast Asian media can be grouped into four groups: First is the free media country such as the Philippines, Indonesia and Cambodia. The latter two represent the biggest change in the region as new comers joining the free media world. Only recently have they enjoyed free media--Indonesia since 1998 and Cambodia since 1992.

The Filipino media remains the region’s freest and most versatile as well as all encompassing, although not perfect as many Filipino tabloids continue to print rumors for facts and other forms of sensationalism. Electronic media is one of the most interactive but could be dangerous and defamatory. Finally, with nearly 50

journalists killed in the past ten years, the Philippines remains one of the world's most dangerous place to work for journalists.

In Indonesia, independent media is booming but quality remains an issue. It is estimated that nearly 2,000 new dailies and 900 new radio stations emerged since 1998 after the departure of President Suharto with a total of 35,000 journalists working today. In the past five years, the Indonesian media has been free to produce almost any kind of political information. Such media freedom has increased public awareness about national political and economic conditions. As the world's largest Islamic country, Indonesia's free media has a crucial role to play in promoting and raise awareness of moderate Islam and democracy. There were fears originally that fundamental Islamic political groups would use the media and subsequently polarize society by reporting on issues related to disenchantments with politics, democracy and economic hardship. So far, this has not happened thanks to the conduct of Indonesian journalists.

Despite their good work though, journalists still need fundamental media and ethical training to improve quality and professionalism. Soon Indonesia will be the second country in Southeast Asia to adopt an access to information law. The draft has been completed and is currently up for the vote in the National Assembly. Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has also reaffirmed his government's policy to promote free press and democratization both in his country and the ASEAN region.

The Cambodian press has come a long way. Over the past decade, Cambodian journalists have gone through trials and errors in exercising freedom of expression. They have been eager and very serious with media freedom. The UN played a key role in administrating the once war-torn country and instilled democratic value as well as institutions. Cambodian media is generally very fierce but the government, which has been under Prime Minister Hun Sen since 1992, has successfully co-opted media and tamed them. Intimidation and killing of journalists have occurred quite frequently especially during election time. Professional media associations, six in total, are trying to protect and promote freedom of expression. Lack of funding and solidarity among Cambodian journalists has weakened their bargaining power to fight against anti-free media legislations, promote their campaign against corruption etc.

## PARTLY FREE MEDIA IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Thailand, now rated as a "partly free media" country used to boast the region's freest press before the government of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. On the whole Thai media is still free but it no longer acts as an effective watchdog. In the past five years, the Thaksin government has efficiently divided the media community through stock acquisitions, target advertising allocations and other economic incentives and access to government news and information. These strategies ensure that dissenting views are systematically muffled. Thaksin's populist policies including the implementation of 41-billion-dollar mega projects, which will start in later 2006, need tamed and controlled media to succeed.

In 1997 Thailand was the first country in Southeast Asia to enact the access to information law. The Thais were overwhelmed and poured into government offices throughout the country to obtain information related to their villages or communities. They wanted to be informed citizens and to participate in the country's decision making process and promote civil participation. Currently though the access to information law is abused and used as an instrument to delay information disclosure instead of encouraging it.

The third group is "controlled media" as in Singapore and Malaysia. Issues considered sensitive to the government must be treated carefully. Self-censorship is the norm. Other non-political issues such as economic and trade can be reported quite freely, especially if positive on the economic performance by government sectors. Any news that increases the legitimacy of the ruling party and strengthens its grip is welcome. Any news deemed detrimental to the ruling party's reputation and governance must be avoided. Journalists in both countries are well-paid and their editors are appointed either by the ruling parties or someone close to the leaders in power.

In Malaysia for instance, most of what is published or broadcasted is sanctioned by the government, with the exception of Malaysiakini in Kuala Lumpur. As the region's first online newspaper, it is the only independent news source in the country. Set up in 1999 Malaysiakini has successfully used and exploited existing loopholes in the government's information and communication technology policies: to lure foreign investors in this highly competitive area, the government has repeatedly pledged not to censor information in cyber space. In 2006, Malaysiakini plans to launch a broadband regional TV called 247 TV News.

The fourth group is the media serving as the government's mouthpiece in Brunei, Burma, Laos and Vietnam. Journalists write and present news following government guidelines. All views are sanctioned by the government or propaganda departments. Brunei, with its political system of absolute monarchy possesses a local media that is quite tamed and passive. So the media in these countries is pivotal as part of the national-building process.

Burma is the most extreme case where journalists enjoy no freedom with regards to writing or broadcasting. Only state media carries day to day news. About 90 Burmese journalists scattered along the Thai - Burmese border and Chiang Mai, work for various news outlets and live in Thailand. They follow Burmese developments from inside the border. Some of them find jobs with international news agencies such as BBC, CNN and Radio Free Asia. To prepare for the future democratization of Burma, journalists in exile have been receiving on-the-job training from various donors and foundations. They are being taught about journalism as well as knowledge of world affairs. Burmese journalists in exile need to network with others in the region for alert, information exchange and solidarity. Each year several dozens of Burmese journalists inside Burma receive media training clandestinely in undisclosed locations funded by Western media advocacy groups.

## REFERENCES FOR CONCLUSION

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Quality and independence in Southeast Asian media is highly uneven. As free press proliferates in Indonesia and Cambodia, better trained journalists who understand media ethics and good writing are much needed. Better organized independent media organizations could strengthen media solidarity and raise the standard of professionalism in these countries. To sustain the level of independent press in Thailand and the Philippines, economic viability and better management is a prerequisite. Ways must be found to prevent independent media from corporate takeovers by vested interest groups, which can usurp a decade old history of free press in the blink of an eye. To promote freedom of expression in controlled media environments, long-term outreach programs, specific to the unique conditions of each individual country, must be carefully mapped out. Using local media resources and wisdoms are imperative to ensure relevancy and acceptability.

# Media Development in Challenging Environments: Uzbekistan after Andijan

**Andrew Stroehlein**, *Media Director, the International Crisis Group*

*"Knowing how to gather information and write a good English-language article for a paper in the free societies of New York or London was little value to a person upon return to authoritarian Tashkent."*

In the harshest authoritarian states, the scope for media development work is severely restricted. Authoritarian countries such as Uzbekistan, Burma and North Korea, although all presenting different scenarios, pose tough challenges regarding media assistance. However, these countries and their populations should not be forgotten. One such specific challenge is the Republic of Uzbekistan, which will require a set of specific strategies to help support the future development of media and democracy in the country.

Though increasingly difficult to implement on the ground, media development and freedom of information projects are still possible for the Central Asian state. A close look at the opportunities there demonstrates just what might be achievable if the international community makes a well-funded and concerted response to a deteriorating situation

The two key aspects of media development, infrastructure improvement and journalism training, have both received some attention in Uzbekistan in the past, with international media NGOs such as the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), Internews and others involved in the region for many years thanks to strong donor support from a wide variety of international sources. Working inside Uzbekistan was never easy: over the last five years in particular, these NGOs and their local representatives were finding it increasingly tough. Requirements for state registration and re - registration were only one small part of the pressure that the regime put on these organizations. Indirect and not so indirect threats by security services against local NGO staff were a regular feature of media development efforts in the country. And never far from anyone's mind was the risk of being taken into custody by the security services, where torture has been copiously documented by human rights groups and labeled "systematic" by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture.

This dangerous and difficult mix turned extremely toxic following the Andijan massacre of 13 May 2005, when state security forces fired on mostly unarmed civilian demonstrators killing hundreds, perhaps even one thousand. After that, as the regime's ongoing paranoia about the media, NGOs and media development in particular expanded into open denunciations of journalists, both international correspondents and local staff of major outlets such as ARD, BBC, CNN, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Associated Press, Deutsche Welle, and Ferghana.ru, as well as local staff of NGOs, such as IWPR.<sup>25</sup> As an example amongst many, the BBC announced on 26 October 2005 it was suspending its news gathering operations in Uzbekistan and withdrawing all local staff after continued persecution of its employees by the authorities.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> The regime's campaign against NGOs post-Andijan extends beyond media development NGOs as well. See "Uzbek Government Exerting Pressure on Local NGOs to Close 'Voluntarily'" EurasiaNet, 4 October 2005 at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/civilsociety/articles/eav100405.shtml>. Also, "Hard Times for Uzbek Charities", Reporting Central Asia (IWPR), 1 October 2005, at: [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/rca2/rca2\\_413\\_2\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/rca2/rca2_413_2_eng.txt). A chronology of harassment of RFE/RL is at: [http://www.rferl.org/specials/uzbek\\_unrest/Uzbek-harass-chron.pdf](http://www.rferl.org/specials/uzbek_unrest/Uzbek-harass-chron.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> "Harassed' BBC shuts Uzbek office", <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4380166.stm>

*“But although the obstacles are many and the dangers to staff are great, the prospects are not as hopeless as it may first appear.”*

In such an atmosphere, conventional media development projects are very nearly impossible inside the country, and yet the need has clearly never been greater, so creative solutions must be found. What is needed, and what is still possible to implement, are *“lifeboat strategies”*, projects that can maintain media skills and journalistic integrity - not to mention provide independent information to and about the country - in the expectation of future change to a more reasonable government.

As with other sectors of the economy, media cannot be left to wither and die and then be expected to somehow resurrect themselves when the regime is gone to create professional institutions instantly from scratch. Preparations need to be made now, so that when society does open up again, skilled, responsible journalists and effective media infrastructure can respond quickly to meet the information needs of a transforming country.

## CREATING STAND-BY NEWSPAPER INFRASTRUCTURE

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Developing media technology on the ground to update the country's decrepit publishing and distribution capacity seems impossible at this time. The funding of an independent printing press, which proved effective in disseminating information in Kyrgyzstan even when official channels were blocked,<sup>27</sup> is clearly not feasible in Uzbekistan today. But preparations can and should be made for the rapid establishment of such a printing press for immediate deployment when the ice starts to break under the regime. Hand in hand with this, a plan should be developed to create new news gathering and distribution networks throughout the country as quickly as possible. The goal should be to have a ready - to - roll capability to take advantage of any new political flux to establish a small daily paper in the shortest time possible given technical constraints.

## BOOSTING JOURNALISM TRAINING BY AND FOR CENTRAL ASIANS

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Lifeboat strategies for Uzbek media can include training for Uzbek journalists, but new approaches are needed. In the past, journalism training in Central Asia has focused on class work and on - the - job training in the West as well as training workshops in the region led by western journalists. Both have seen their day. Training in the West was always complicated by language issues, and, more importantly, by the fact that it related experiences that were wholly inappropriate and inapplicable in the Central Asian context. Knowing how to gather information and write a good English language article for a paper in the free societies of New York or London was little value to a person upon return to authoritarian Tashkent. Training by Westerners in Central Asian capitals also suffered from similar problems, but a dearth of high-quality journalists and journalism trainers in the region made it necessary.

This is no longer the case. After many years of training journalists and *“training the trainers”* projects by Western NGOs, the region has a reasonably strong domestic capacity for journalism training. There are talented journalists from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (mostly now living outside Uzbekistan), who have years of reporting behind them and experience as journalism trainers, both for on - the - job training and classroom training, and they can provide instruction in local languages. In general, young journalists can learn much more from them than they would from a Western journalist, because these experienced Central Asians have dealt with the problems journalists face in the region - oftentimes problems that Western journalists find difficult even to imagine. The exchange of experiences between journalists from different

<sup>27</sup> The democracy-promotion NGO **Freedom House** was responsible for the independent printing press, set up in Bishkek in November 2003 with funding from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights & Labor. The US Embassy in Bishkek also provided generators when public electricity supplies proved inconsistent.



countries in the region is particularly useful: learning how to handle political pressure or obstructive officials, for example.<sup>28</sup>

International donors should support the establishment of an independent journalism training centre for the region. The trainers and lecturers should be experienced Central Asian journalists who ideally teach only part-time so their practical skills aren't dulled. The centre should develop special efforts to reach out to Uzbekistan's journalists with both short-term training programs and longer term in-residence possibilities for teachers and students to improve their skills outside of the country.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PROJECTS AND A CENTRAL ASIAN NEWS AGENCY

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After the Andijan massacre and the crackdown on journalists and media support NGOs that followed, news gathering and reporting went from extremely difficult to nearly impossible. About the only independent sources of news Uzbekistan's citizens can access are via the Internet and by shortwave radio broadcast. These outlets need to carry on their work, but more avenues to information need to be opened up. The case for a new Central Asian news agency is strong.

As of early 2006, there were only two US-funded projects to establish regional news agencies, one with IWPR and one with Internews. The latter project, called "Newsfactory", is more agency-like in its extensive reach to small media outlets in towns throughout Kazakhstan. It should be expanded to take in other countries in the region, especially Uzbekistan, though not by working with existing Uzbek media outlets, as it does in Kazakhstan. The Uzbek outlets are simply too closely controlled by the regime to provide objective reporting or any potential for publishing outside material. A network of anonymous correspondents across Uzbekistan should be created, with editors in Almaty or Bishkek coordinating their reports and protecting their identity. These reports can be entered into the agency system and thus offer regional media access to independent daily reports from across Uzbekistan.

Getting the reports back into Uzbekistan will be difficult. They could enter existing systems online, on shortwave radio, and on broadcast outlets in neighbouring countries, which many Uzbekistan citizens can easily access. But more distribution routes are needed.

## NEW FM RADIO STATIONS

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FM broadcasts in Uzbek from radio stations just over the border in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan would reach the largest number of Uzbekistan's citizens. Although it may increase friction between Tashkent and its neighbours, if political reluctance in Astana and Bishkek can be overcome, the potential for large audiences and real-time reporting makes FM radio the most effective medium.

## SMALL-SCALE NEWSPAPERS FOR UZBEKISTAN'S MIGRANTS AND TRADERS

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Newspapers printed abroad and distributed to shuttle traders on the borders and to migrant workers, in neighbouring countries (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) and in Russia, would reach important audiences with information not tightly controlled by Tashkent. People may find them too dangerous to bring into Uzbekistan, but they would be passed around in border towns outside Uzbekistan, and the stories will be carried into Uzbekistan in the memories of the readers. The target audiences will come to rely on these new newspapers more quickly if they report not only news items but also business information professionally useful for these economically active groups.

There is certainly more scope for online news aimed at Uzbekistan. True, Internet

<sup>28</sup> For further discussion of the benefits of involving locals as journalism trainers in the region see Kuban Mambetaliev, "Donor Policies in Support of the Mass Media in Central Asia", a paper delivered at the International Donors Policy Forum on Media Development in London, UK, 13-14 October 2005.

## EXPANDING ONLINE NEWS

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access is limited within the country, but online reports are read by the most influential and best educated - both those in the current regime and, presumably, anyone likely to play a decision-making role in a future government. EurasiaNet, IWPR, Transitions Online and others publish excellent web-based material (the first two with significant Russian - language output), but they have limited capacity: each can only produce a handful of stories about Uzbekistan every month. The websites of RFE/RL and BBC World Service deliver news in Uzbek, but again, harassment of both has been fierce. Tribune - uz.info has material in Uzbek and Russian, but it tends to cover what the outside world is saying about Uzbekistan more than report from within the country itself, and it is not a source of independent journalism. None of the above provide a dedicated daily news service about Uzbekistan for Uzbek citizens. Ferghana.ru has come closest to providing a daily service, but without resources for an expanded network of correspondents, it takes much of its information on Uzbekistan from other sources, with a heavy reliance on state news agencies (especially the Russian ITAR - TASS and RIA Novosti) and on Kyrgyzstan's AKIPress. An expanded news agency project, as proposed above, could offer its Uzbek material online for free, possibly by having that particular material underwritten by international donors.

The Uzbek regime has been very actively engaged in Internet censorship, closing down and threatening local websites and blocking certain external sites. Though their ability to block outside websites doesn't seem to be nearly as comprehensive as China's, it would be beneficial for groups that have taken an interest in providing advice on avoiding the censors in China to add Uzbekistan as a focus country.<sup>29</sup>

## UNDERGROUND NEWS GATHERING PROJECTS

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Asking journalists to collect information inside Uzbekistan presents serious practical and ethical problems. The risks are great, but there are numerous journalists and activists who are willing to take that risk, and the value of their reports is irreplaceable. Editors must take all measures possible to protect the identity of their correspondents, who essentially work underground with no open office, no legal registration and no accreditation. Anonymous correspondents must have appropriate cover - jobs that help them gain access to useful sources, and they can never be open about their work as journalists, not even with colleagues or indeed, in many instances, with interviewees.

Questioning of official sources as a way of trying to ensure balance and objectivity can be undertaken by other writers, who are located outside the country. In some cases and for some stories, correspondents on the ground may only act as fixers who identify potential sources and pass phone numbers to their editors, so journalists working from safety abroad can then ask controversial questions.

## JOURNALIST PROTECTION FUND

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Apart from helping to finance the expansion of the news agency and the further development of these other projects, the international community can provide support in other crucial ways. The Open Society Institute (OSI) has been looking into the establishment of a legal defence fund for litigation in support of media freedom worldwide. Funding for legal defence itself in the strictest sense, of course, would be of little value for journalists who cross the authorities in

<sup>29</sup> The openNet Initiative should soon complete its extensive report on the Internet in Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan. But part of OSI's project would involve supporting media freedom cases in international fora, which can bring international attention to the crimes of repressive regimes. There are, for example, a few cases pending before the UN Human Rights Commission involving the closure of media outlets in Uzbekistan.

What is also sorely needed for Uzbekistan is a journalist protection fund. It is essential that any journalist running into trouble as a result of working with an undercover news gathering project has a retirement option other than torture in an Uzbek prison. Some international journalism groups, such as the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), are trying to meet these needs, but their human and financial resources are extremely limited. In 2005, CPJ worked with eight Uzbek journalists in exile, but it had to dedicate a substantial portion of its global emergency funds to do so. If underground reporting is expanded as it should be, donors will have to help boost resources for journalist protection.

## SATELLITE TV

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A region-wide satellite television station is another project already in the pipeline that would benefit from expansion, additional outside support and extra attention to Uzbekistan. With funding from USAID, Internews is hatching a new satellite station to broadcast primarily in Russian to Central Asia. In addition to broadcasting via satellite direct to Central Asian homes, this new station would, like the agency project, act as a content exchange hub between different existing TV outlets in the region. It is an ambitious and somewhat costly project, but it has impressive potential for the spread of information.

Unfortunately, while the technical aspects are coming together, the station will face a severe shortage of independent content. The partner stations in the region are controlled by state or state-friendly owners, so without independently produced material, there is a danger the new satellite station will look more like a propaganda exchange. What is needed is funding for the development and production of more independent TV content in the freer Central Asian states of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and perhaps elsewhere outside Uzbekistan. Such material could come from freelance journalists, activists or production companies, but this will require additional finances, which would be best dispersed through a middle-man donor with both excellent regional knowledge and an ability to handle numerous small-scale grants.

## LOWER THE LIFEBOATS

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As with too many repressive regimes around the world, the situation in Uzbekistan could all too easily lead to despair and a feeling that it might simply be better to wait until political changes present wider scope for democracy support projects. But although the obstacles are many and the dangers to staff are great, the prospects are not as hopeless as it may first appear. What emerges from a careful analysis is that limited openings do exist even in a highly authoritarian state, and there are a number of very real opportunities to promote journalistic professionalism and freedom of information.

Of course, not all of these projects would be possible for all such states around the world, and Uzbekistan does have something of an advantage because the country has benefited from a small wave of media development projects in the late 1990s and early years of this decade, which have laid the groundwork and produced able journalists who are now prepared to carry on that tradition, even if from exile. In fact, it is thanks to these journalists that the world learned the details of the Andijan massacre from first - hand accounts. If no one maintains

these media development efforts, there is unlikely to be anyone on the ground to report the next massacre.

Apart from maintaining at least some check on the exercise of power, freedom of information and skilled media professionals can also help cushion the blow when a despotic system finally unravels. A dramatic political upheaval without quick - responding, experienced, balanced reporting on the ground is a recipe both for heightened chaos and violence domestically, and for ill-informed decision - making among the international community as they attempt to respond to rapidly changing events. Rather than lament a lack of opportunities, policy makers ought to actively and generously pursue the lifeboat strategies that will help societies ride out the rough waters toward which they seem inevitably headed.

# CRISIS AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE: LESSONS FROM PAKISTAN'S EARTHQUAKE ZONES.

**Adnan Rehmat**, *Chairman, Intermedia*

*"Our most vivid lesson of recent months, however, is that the abrupt phase-out of emergency stations in the absence of a parallel emergence of a commercial broadcast sector is limiting the proliferation of moderate messages. A vacuum has been created inside the region's public sphere. The platforms that were balancing out the voices of religious intolerance are no longer functioning. It remains to be seen whether this vacuum will be captured by extremist voices."*

When Pakistan's worst natural disaster struck on October 8, 2005, over 80,000 died - including 30,000 children in classrooms - more than 100,000 sustained injuries and 3.5 million were displaced, according to official estimates. The earthquake of 7.2 magnitude on the Richter Scale devastated large swathes of Pakistan-administered Kashmir and North West Frontier Province (NWFP)

One of the untold stories of the disaster is that the quake hit a region in which independent local broadcast media were banned and information tightly controlled through the state-owned AJK Radio and AJK TV. Even "local" newspapers were, and still are, printed outside the state, mostly in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. An open media policy allowing for private ownership of the airwaves in Pakistan, instituted by Islamabad in late 2002, had largely bypassed Kashmir.

Nevertheless, the earthquake had a devastating impact on the local state - controlled media in affected areas. Dozens of journalists were killed or went missing, and newspaper offices and press clubs were destroyed. The only source of mass information - the state-run Kashmir Radio and TV - was silenced by the earthquake: 40 of its 160 staff were killed, and its buildings wrecked. The business of local news generation came to a halt. The disaster presented the classic paradox: news about the calamity and its impact was going out to the world at large, but those affected - at least 3.5 million people - had no means of finding out what was going, what to do or how to get help.

## THE INFORMATION GAP

To gauge the state of information access, the Pakistan office of the international media assistance organization, Internews, conducted a snapshot survey two weeks after the earthquake in Batagram, Balakot and Mansehra in NWFP, and Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawalakot in Kashmir. These were generally the worst-hit cities. According to the survey, before the earthquake about 81% of households had a radio and 52% had television sets. Of these, three - quarters of radio sets and virtually all TV sets were destroyed by the earthquake.



When asked about their sources of information, 68% of respondents said they were dependent on word of mouth, 28% on the radio, 21% on newspapers, 15% on TV and 11% on the local administration. At least 8% said they were not getting any information from anywhere. No one mentioned the mosque or religious leaders as a source of general information.

In the absence of conventional sources of information, rumours abounded: about when the next earthquake was due, or that daubing kerosene on your tent would get rid of mosquitoes, or that bottled water was medicinal and only fit for hand-washing, not drinking. Against this background, it was imperative that a cheap and practical means of information access was established.

## THE EMERGENCE OF EMERGENCY BROADCAST MEDIA

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Radio was the obvious answer: sets were cheap, information could be provided in local languages, and broadcasts could reach large numbers of people. Given the lack of local equipment and expertise, operators elsewhere in the country had to be called on. Acceding to lobbying by Internews and the Association of Independent Radio (AIR), within a month the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) had issued ten temporary non-commercial emergency licences to private FM stations outside of the affected area. The Authority bypassed the usually lengthy process of security vetting of would-be operators (to clear them of links with India or with jihadi/militant groups), and made available frequencies usually controlled by the military. The idea was that, since the licences were non-commercial, they would be taken up only by 'serious' volunteer broadcasters committed to helping people.

Within weeks of the earthquake, Internews, with funding from the UK and Swiss governments, launched the Pakistan Emergency Information Project<sup>30</sup> to rebuild media capacities affected by the disaster in Kashmir and NWFP. This work primarily included developing the emergency broadcast sector, building radio production facilities, providing small equipment grants to emergency FM stations, training journalists in humanitarian reporting and the production and distribution of a daily one-hour news and information programme on humanitarian issues, called 'Jazba - e - Tameer' ('The Desire to Rebuild'). The programme was produced by a group of ten journalism students. The young reporters traveled daily across the earthquake region to report on relief efforts, including feedback from affected populations, the international and local humanitarian community and government authorities. The radio programme itself was broadcast by the seven emergency FM broadcasters across the entire disaster zone.

Four months after the initial information access survey, Internews conducted a follow - up. This showed that the new community radio regime had rapidly become a major source of independent, reliable and useful information. In the initial survey, in late October 2005, 28% of respondents had cited radio as one of their primary sources of information. In the follow - up survey, this had gone up to 70%, and respondents mentioned at least one of the seven emergency radio stations on air at the time of the survey as their station of choice.

The follow-up survey also revealed that more people were consuming more media.

<sup>30</sup>For more information see <http://www.reliefmedia.org.pk>

*By the Spring of 2006 the daily broadcasts of Jazba - e - Tameer were providing clear evidence of a positive impact on the effectiveness and accountability of the relief operation. Examples included:*

- Balakot: a rumour about the potential evacuation of 60,000 people from Balakot city in the early weeks after the earthquake quickly spread throughout the disaster zone. Jazba-e-Tameer broadcast an interview with the local government relief coordinator that ended speculation about the evacuation by airing assurances that no such evacuation had been planned.
- Tariqabad, Muzaffarabad: a tent village with 10,000 people was without electricity for nearly two months. After Jazba-e-Tameer produced a feature about this issue, electricity was restored within a week.
- Jijjal, Kohistan: land telephone lines were still disconnected for nearly four months after the quake in Jijjal village, which has more than 10,000 inhabitants. Large groups made more than a dozen complaints to the local authorities. Jazba-e-Tameer gathered these complaints and presented them on air to telecom officials and all lines were repaired within ten days.
- Mansehra: illegal sale of relief goods, such as tents, medication, blankets and food items was discontinued after Jazba-e-Tameer interviewed shop keepers who admitted that their main suppliers were drivers and staff hired by relief agencies. Reporters raised this issue with the district police chief and checkpoints were established to ensure accountability of goods earmarked for distribution.

Furthermore, there were indications that the platform created by the Jazba-e-Tameer programme was playing an important role in mediating opinions within the affected communities, diluting, for example, many of the least tolerant religious views regarding the presence of international relief agencies - and of their female employees, in particular - in the earthquake zones.

## A TRANSFORMED PUBLIC SPHERE?

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Early in 2006 PEMRA extended the emergency licences for ten FM radio stations beyond an initial two months after the quake, in acknowledgement of their important contribution to the relief operation. Four months later the Authority issued a set of full permanent commercial radio licences and invited applications for local terrestrial television channels. These developments appeared to be laying the groundwork for a more pluralistic media regime in an information environment that had been tightly restricted by the state prior to the earthquake. There was talk of a transformed media landscape for Kashmir and NWFP.

## NEW CHALLENGES TO MEDIA GAINS

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In recent months, however, there have been signs that the unprecedented media space that has opened up in the earthquake zones is already under threat. The daily radio programme, Jazba - e - Tameer - the only region - wide platform for information and debate on the relief and reconstruction effort - went off the air at the end of June 2006, despite requests from communities across Kashmir and NWFP for the service to continue. The broadcasts were curtailed as donor grants limited solely to the emergency response period had expired.

In July 2006, emergency FM radio broadcasters in Abbotabad and Muzaffarabad received a series of threatening calls from religious groups to stop airing

"Western values being spread" by aid agencies. In at least two instances, their broadcasts were forcibly disrupted by cutting off cables.

In August 2006 an FM broadcaster in Balakot, that aired a diversity of views on official plans to relocate the city, many of them critical, was forced off the air. The government quietly ordered all emergency FM radio stations to cease operations by mid-October. In the same month, the religious leaders in Bagh gave a September deadline for NGOs to dismiss all local female staff from the city, failing which NGOs should close their operations.

The re-emergence of religious intolerance in Pakistan's disaster-affected areas to pressurise the broadcasters and aid community, along with the ill-timed government decision to encourage the emergency FM broadcasters to go quietly have had the combined effect of stalling progress in Kashmir and NWFP towards a healthier public sphere.

A large information gap at a crucial stage of the reconstruction and rehabilitation process has been created by the disappearance of the Jazba - e - Tameer programme, and by the closure of the emergency radio FM stations. The gap cannot yet be bridged by the fledgling commercial radio broadcasters that have been licensed to set up in the earthquakes zones.

## LESSONS FROM PAKISTAN

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A year after the earthquake several key lessons are becoming apparent:

- Information about relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation is critical for survival and recovery in disaster regions; and, if the local media is disabled by a crisis or lacks the capacity to provide the kind of specialised information that is needed, outside help must be provided, and swiftly;
- Government authorities and the international development community lack a policy framework for the role of local media in disaster zones, and need to embed strategies for local media support into the main stream mechanisms of their relief efforts;
- Media support measures in disaster zones need to go well beyond the immediate emergency response phase and continue well into the reconstruction period ;
- Allocating financial support to local media generates concrete improvements in aid effectiveness and in the accountability of governments and relief organizations to affected populations;
- Crises in controlled information environments often present opportunities for the opening up of the public arena that allow a diversity of voices to debate key issues central to the recovery of communities. These openings may prove to be short-lived, however. They are more likely to take hold if external support through local and international media assistance organizations is provided on a continuous basis in the opening fragile phases.

*Our most vivid lesson of recent months, however, is that the abrupt phase-out of emergency stations in the absence of a parallel emergence of a commercial broadcast sector is limiting the proliferation of moderate messages. A vacuum has been created inside the region's public sphere. The platforms that were balancing out the voices of religious intolerance are no longer functioning. It remains to be seen whether this vacuum will be captured by extremist voices.*

# Media, Development and Governance: Facilitating Local Analysis of International Issues

By **Teresa Hanley, Jon Barnes and Murali Shanmugavelan**,  
*Panos Institute, London*

## ENABLING ENGAGEMENT – THE PANOS EXPERIENCE

*“I learned it is important to question every statement and pronouncement by world leaders or politicians and to read beyond the face value as the confusion over the deal at Gleneagles exemplified.”*

John Kamau,

*“World Trade Organization decisions affect trade in textiles between China and Zambia giving wider choice for consumers but presenting Zambian producers with more competition. The result - closure of Zambian textile factories reducing numbers from over 250 two decades ago to just 20 today’..... “Climate change contributes to greater impact of hurricanes in the Caribbean affecting homes, livelihoods and local tourism in islands across the region”.*

These two examples, both reported on in 2005 by journalists with support from Panos illustrate the connection between local stories and events and their international dimension. Distinctions made between ‘local’ media and ‘international media’ are increasingly blurred as local events are affected by international processes and vice versa.

Development is a dynamic experienced at the most personal level - affecting the quality, security, wealth and life choices open to an individual. These are influenced by the stage of a state’s development and choices made at both the individual but also national level. Both national and local development is further affected by international events and processes. The relationship between national and international spheres in development is complex and increasingly intertwined as people, finance, information and ideas are said to flow between countries more easily thanks to technological change and the uneven, contested process of ‘globalisation’.

Climate change, for instance, affects the environment within which a state must try to manage its development - a phenomenon beyond its control but affecting crucial issues such as agricultural choices, water availability and land use patterns. Other international institutions and processes of course can play important roles as drivers of change including the media: for example, in the 1990s India’s broadcasting borders were forced to open by private broadcasters who beamed their programmes into the country, many from Singapore. Thus, the external dimension is always a crucial element in development and not always subject to a government’s control.

*“A pluralistic media is an essential component of good governance – one that is stable and strong enough to be challenged. Conversely a weak media will contribute to poor governance.”*

Governance is a theme very much in vogue in current donor development parlance. Poor governance, while a highly contested concept, is often cited as part of an explanation for why technological, social and economic solutions to development problems have not achieved their full potential. Building on the work of Hyden et al (2004), governance can be defined as the set of rules and norms, formal and informal, which regulate the public arena in which the state, as well as social, economic and other political actors interact to make decisions.<sup>31</sup> A definition of good governance is one that sees this public space or public sphere as one that is inclusive and enables informed dialogue and debate between a range of actors, be they individuals, groups or institutions, as part of the decision-making process.

This definition goes beyond the view of governance as being about good government as it includes concepts of inclusion and participation. It also takes it beyond state boundaries as the range of actors and influences interacting in the national public sphere are increasingly complex and linked in many ways to *the international* – i.e. actors, processes and international organisations which are located geographically outside state boundaries but which have an impact on the national public sphere. This includes international organisations, donors, civil society networks and businesses.

Two aspects which increasingly feature in discussions on governance are those of ‘voice’ and ‘accountability’. A March 2006 meeting organised by OECD/World Bank/DFID on poverty reduction strategies and communication, discussed the need for inclusion of the voice of the ‘unorganised poor’ in establishing realistic and sustainable strategies to address poverty.<sup>32</sup> With regard to accountability, DFID and others see accountability of government and public institutions to citizens of a country as an essential element of good governance. Others argue that there is a greater range of accountabilities that are needed for good governance<sup>33</sup> and this includes the accountability of international institutions.

The media’s potential to inform, question, enable and stimulate debate and include or exclude voices and perspectives makes it a key element in the public sphere at national and international levels. A pluralistic media is an essential component of good governance - one that is stable and strong enough to be challenged. Conversely, a weak media will contribute to poor governance.

Other observers have noted the potential of the media to contribute to good governance through a range of roles, most striking is the “*watchdog role*”. Stiglitz notes how the ‘light’ of the media can limit corruption<sup>34</sup>.

Whilst this is often discussed in relation to government, this scrutinising light can be shone on a range of institutions and processes to ensure ‘good governance’ at the local, national and international levels, from the use of health care fees, to the spending of national and international aid, to decision - making to address climate change at the international level and processes of deciding international trade rules. A Panos fellowship for journalists in Zambia in 2004 to develop environmental stories provided an example of this. One journalist’s work resulted in media interest in potentially harmful transmitter leakages and contributed to the Environmental Council of Zambia decision to take the Electricity Supply Corporation to court where they were fined for non-compliance with storage regulations.

<sup>31</sup> Hyden, G., Court, J., and Mease, K.s (2004), Making sense of governance: empirical evidence from sixteen developing countries, p16

<sup>32</sup> World Bank, DFID and OECD “Deepening voice and accountability to fight poverty: A dialogue of communication implementers” 30-31 March 2006, Paris France, Summary note

<sup>33</sup> DFID (2006) Eliminating world poverty making governance work for the poor, p.20

<sup>34</sup> Stiglitz, J., (2002), The Right to Tell – The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development, St Martin’s Press, New York



The media can play a major role in facilitating voice and participation. One Panos experience of this was when it supported the production of a radio programme on education in Ghana and its coverage in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The broadcast led to a vigorous radio debate with many young people becoming involved - young people who had never contributed before to the radio programme and had limited involvement in development decision - making in their country. The debate eventually led to questions being raised in parliament on education expenditure as part of the PRSP process.

However, the media in many developing countries face a number of constraints in playing this facilitating role to the full. Panos aims to respond to this, working with journalists across all sectors - state, private, community and mainstream. In 2005 - an exceptional year for international development - there were many opportunities for southern media to engage in policy processes, especially processes at the international level that would have an impact on local situations. This included major international summits and decision-making processes on the Information Society, trade and climate change as well as a key focus of G8 discussions being on Africa and aid. The question was - could the opportunities be seized? Panos launched a number of initiatives in response to these opportunities. One aspect was to review current media coverage and journalists' experience. Panos reviewed the contemporary media coverage on processes relating to trade, environment, the information society and broader aid agendas by analysing, for example, aid and trade coverage in Mozambique and Zambia, and in another review considered who had the opportunity to contribute to discussions around poverty reduction strategies in Pakistan and Zambia.

*“Time and time again the journalists have critiqued government sources, donors, development agencies and civil society for their use of jargon and technical language... which the journalists say has limited their deeper engagement in reporting issues highly relevant to development.”*

In these areas of trade, aid, poverty reduction and sustainable agriculture, the reviews found that even independent media tended to follow the official agenda and often reported press releases without scrutiny. Journalists had difficulty with the terminology of debates - for instance in coming to grips with the notoriously complex language used in trade negotiations. They did not feel confident with much of the technical language and in general felt they were often not able to scrutinise decisions, announcements and research presented in press conferences. The media reviews also found a dominance of 'experts' quoted along with government figures. For instance in relation to new technology of genetically modified crops, the reviews found donors were quoted more frequently than farmers and their associations, despite the fact that farmers would be amongst the most affected by decisions the government was taking. These findings indicate a lack of confidence amongst the journalists in dealing with these subjects and a lack of journalistic skills to pursue the story.

Similarly, in relation to climate change, Panos has heard from journalists that they feel challenged due to lack of information, training and support. In interviews with 47 journalists from Honduras, Jamaica, Sri Lanka and Zambia in 2005 journalists questioned said that the media had poor understanding of the climate change debate and little interest in it. An online discussion amongst journalists in the run up to the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS) in November 2005 highlighted that many of the journalists covering issues of new information and communication technology were often not specialists. Time and again the journalists have critiqued government sources, donors, development agencies and civil society for their use of jargon and technical language on a whole range of issues which the journalists say has limited their deeper engagement in reporting issues highly relevant to development.

*“ In my opinion the trade issue is of particular interest for Mozambique but unfortunately there is still little awareness about it amongst most local journalists - some do not see how it affects us and for some it's just a complicated issue to understand, also, I think there should be more coverage of global climate change issues but most editors do not think these issues concern Mozambique and a lot of readers are not interested in reading about it.”*

Maura Quatorze, journalist.

Furthermore, coverage of some of these issues, such as trade, when considered at the international level, was often found to examine fluctuating trends in top level discussions without analysing the underlying social, economic or political interests involved or the impact of policies on real people. The coverage was often confined to the business or foreign affairs pages, read by a limited readership and in which the links to national and local concerns were not necessarily made. A response to a Panos print feature illustrates this point where a civil society observer commented ‘I am glad to have read “Next steps for the WTO” in our local daily. It’s catching! This is the kind of information we desire to have in our country - Uganda - if we are to locate global trade negotiations and communicate to the grassroots.’

To support engagement in these and other areas and to encourage the linking of international issues with the effects at a local and national level, Panos has initiated a range of activities. These have included bringing people together at the national level, for multi-stakeholder meetings on PRSPs. These meetings drew together donors, government representatives, media, civil society and academics in Pakistan, Zambia and Ghana. ‘Media dialogues’ have facilitated conversations between media and government representatives on communication policies in Uganda (in 2004) and India (2005). Participants have reported immediate benefits. In Uganda, for example, senior representatives of civil society organisations, the media, the private sector and government (Uganda Telecoms, the Uganda Communication Commission and the Parliamentary Committee on Trade and Industry) came together to discuss communications policy. The links have led to increased and more informed and in-depth reporting on telephone policy development, particularly around access to telephones for rural populations.

Other initiatives have included production of accessible and politically balanced resources for journalists on complex international trade and information society issues, setting up online access to experts and discussion fora, and providing support for journalists to attend international summits such as WSIS and the Gleneagles G8 summit in July 2005.<sup>35</sup> At Gleneagles, a summit with a specific Africa focus, only 20 out of a total of 2,000 journalists were from Africa; Panos supported seven of them. At the WTO summit in Hong Kong in December 2005, some of the journalists attending with support from Panos were the sole representative from their country’s media.

## FACING UP TO THE CHALLENGES

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From this work and from other experiences Panos is able to identify some of the major challenges facing journalists in covering relevant stories in their countries and in particular in engaging in the international dimension of development.

First, journalists and their editors emphasise the resource challenges that they face. Many have no or limited access to the internet, little time allocated for domestic story finding and few funds to travel outside of the capital city. In such circumstances coverage of international processes and events outside the country becomes entirely dependent on external media sources.

Second, journalists report that access to information is a major issue. Again, time and money play a role in this. But in roundtable discussions on poverty reduction strategy processes, journalists reported the difficulties they face in trying to extract information from governments, at times even finding it easier to access information from donor agency offices in the country. In many countries there is no culture to share information. This is not always an unwillingness to do so, but can be due to a lack of conviction at government level of the benefit of sharing

<sup>35</sup> For further information on and access to these resources on a wide range of issues including trade, environment and the information society please see [www.panos.org.uk](http://www.panos.org.uk)

*"I am glad to have read  
'Next steps for the WTO'  
in our local daily.  
It's catching! This is the  
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country - Uganda  
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communicate to the  
grassroots."*

Civil society observer

information with the public on issues such as trade or at other times, due to resource constraints faced by government officials themselves. Weak journalism skills may hinder journalists' ability to pursue stories and at times, in difficult political environments, an element of self-censorship may constrain pursuit of the full story.

Third, analytical skills and the means to locate events in an international context are a key weakness identified by Panos and journalists. Time and again the journalists supported by Panos acknowledge that the development of a broader view is the most important benefit they have derived from fellowships, resources and briefing materials, training opportunities and international commissions. By this they mean the assistance they were given to make the link to the international context on the one hand and to link international decision-making to local events on the other. After attendance at WSIS one journalist said '*... For someone whose workday routine is largely about hardcore IT developments, the WSIS was invaluable to put a human face on technology ...indeed the briefings were critical to enable this.*' Another, having undertaken a Panos fellowship at the G8 summit said, '*I think I have improved my capacity of writing and of finding themes and ways of writing that are of interest....I learned to look at matters in a broader perspective and how to relate day-to-day issues that concern Africans with international politics.*'

The next challenge facing journalists is to understand and maintain critical independence from the various actors and lobbies attempting to influence media coverage. The WTO's Doha trade negotiations have reflected these pressures. On one side, for example, the WTO director-general, Pascal Lamy, has complained that the media has concentrated on the negative effects of trade liberalisation and not covered sufficiently its purported positive benefits.<sup>36</sup>

Meanwhile, some international NGOs warned developing country governments against being swayed by supposed '*media spin*' said to be part of political pressure orchestrated by major powers in the WTO to rush developing countries into acceptance of what they claim to be a bad deal for development. They provided their own press releases to provide an alternative view. When public relations battles are fought in the media, journalists need finely honed skills to work through the barrage of '*information*' they receive.

As many of the developing country journalists covering these issues will not necessarily be specialists in such subjects, the challenge is even greater to read between the lines. As Kenyan journalist, John Kamau, said of the G8 discussions, '*I learned it is important to question every statement and pronouncement by world leaders or politicians and to read beyond the face value as the confusion over the deal at Gleneagles exemplified.*'

From another perspective, however, some journalists have questioned whether the media's role, while positive for public transparency, is helpful to what they see as the need for effective global decision-making. Guy de Jonquieres, columnist in the UK's Financial Times, has argued that the world's media, while serving demands for public transparency, has itself been a barrier to progress in reaching agreement in the Doha trade negotiations. Referring to the negotiation statement reached at the 2005 Hong Kong world trade summit, and the rising demands on the WTO to accommodate a growing range of public expectations from its role, he wrote... '*Once upon a time, trade negotiations were conducted between a few consenting adults behind closed doors. Today they are everyone's business, plastered across television screens, newspapers and websites and fuelling activists' campaigns...Constant exposure to television cameras is unlikely*

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in Montreal, 5 June 2006, The international Economic Forum of the Americas on the topic of "Partnership and Global Prosperity"

*to make politicians readier to overrule recalcitrant constituencies at home.*<sup>37</sup> Such a view may increase policy-makers' reluctance to be transparent in their negotiations. Finally, but most importantly, a major challenge facing journalists in these contexts, as in any country, is identifying and crafting stories which will meet their own media's demands. Maura Quatorze, a Panos - sponsored journalist at the G8 talks said...*'In my opinion the trade issue is of particular interest for Mozambique but unfortunately there is still little awareness about it amongst most local journalists - some do not see how it affects us and for some it's just a complicated issue to understand. Also, I think there should be more coverage of global climate change issues but most editors do not think these issues concern Mozambique and a lot of readers are not interested in reading about it.'* This highlights the challenge any media development initiative faces that development needs to be carried out in the context of the realities of the media itself. Editors and owners will make decisions about what to cover and include according to their own constraints. As a priority these include commercial aspects and the interests of their readers, listeners and viewers. This suggests that the media's public service role should not be treated in a mechanistic way, but be nurtured in a way that takes into account and respects the media's own professional dynamics.

## WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN?

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There are a number of serious implications for governance and development and for policy makers if the media's engagement in development issues and their international dimension is as limited as described above.

Shashi Tharoor, United Nations Under-Secretary General for Communication and Public Information rightly points to the need for journalism to be locally driven.<sup>38</sup> He points to the fact that many countries are struggling to build a media with a local face, local voice and to reflect local understanding of the world. Without access to people, places and processes which are having a direct impact on that world but are primarily located outside of their country, developing countries are dependent on external reporting of these issues. This severely limits the ability of the media in a developing country to play its full role in good governance. Limited media engagement in turn limits public engagement and people's voices in development discussions. By definition, this is not good governance.

If it follows that limited media engagement in development debates leads to limited engagement by citizens in the public sphere, then governments will be in a situation at national level in which their public has limited information on the international context in which it is making decisions. This means that any pressures, opportunities or constraints that the government is under will not be known or understood by the people. Limited media engagement may contribute to reduced public support for policy decisions which at first sight do not seem to be widely beneficial in the short term - such as allocation of funds to enable adaptation to climate change - but are crucial in the long term, setting up a situation where development may be hindered.

Limited media engagement leads to a lack of scrutiny in government and others' decisions. Panos review of PRSP processes has shown that when the media does not engage in these issues, the pressure on a government to report on progress, commitments and plans is reduced. This increases the likelihood of non - implementation of agreements made at national and international levels.

<sup>37</sup> Guy de Jonquieres – Financial Times, 10 January 2006

<sup>38</sup> Tharoor, S., "Integrating approaches to good governance, press freedom and intercultural tolerance in nation-building"

The experience already mentioned of different interested parties coming together in Uganda to discuss communications policy shows that it is possible to involve the media in a positive and constructive way that does not compromise their need for objectivity. The experience of Panos has shown that it is possible to build journalism skills to engage with international aspects of local stories effectively. Greater support for this will build the media's positive impact on development and governance.

The media is a crucial partner in the development process. Donors must seek to enable the engagement of the media as a sector and partner in itself, not only as a tool for passing on a message. A pluralistic media presenting a range of views is an essential component of good governance in itself. The stronger the journalist skills and the greater the space to employ these, the more productive a role the media can play. Failure to take this on board will limit the success of media development and the potential for greater participation by citizens in the decision-making processes which affect them.



# Community Radio: Perspectives on Media Reach and Audience Access

By **Marcelo Solervicens**, *General Secretary,  
World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC)*

Traditionally the role of the media is perceived as one of informing, providing a public service and entertaining audiences. Some, with a somewhat wider perspective, consider that the two dominant forms of radio, public and commercial, also play an important role in rendering governments accountable, thus supporting democracy and good governance. In the last decades, community radio has evolved into a new radio sector worldwide, as a natural result, both of the evolution of civil societies and the breakthroughs in communications technologies.

Radio is the most widespread electronic communication device in the world and a unique mean of reaching the world's poorest communities. Community radio in particular puts the tools of communications into the hands of communities for cultural expression, news and information, dialogue and development.

The specificity of community radio is that it facilitates the empowerment of local communities, inclusiveness, and cultural diversity. In that sense, community radio is closer to what is called "new media", as it erases the boundary between those who receive and those who impart information.

## MEDIA LANDSCAPES, INFORMATION SOCIETY & COMMUNITY RADIO

In spite of recent technological developments, radio remains the most widespread and accessible communication technology. It is an oral medium; one that is low cost and that is already receivable by 90 per cent of the world's population. For just a few thousand dollars worth of equipment, a community radio station can serve a community of 100,000 people or more.

The ideal model for sharing the radio spectrum is one that reflects the diversity of society's communication needs. In the North as well as in the South, democratic societies need public (not state), commercial and community radios if they want to reflect the diversity and the needs of their societies. In Nepal for instance, the alliance between community and independent radios in the Save the Independent Radio Movement (SIRM) shows that both can effectively work together in the struggle for press freedom, freedom of expression and democracy. Also in conflict or post-conflict situations the media landscape needs to build a plurality of voices. This is even more important when it is a question of giving voice to the voiceless and addressing the development agenda.<sup>39</sup> Community radio has had to advocate strongly in the past for a place in the radio spectrum but there is increasing recognition of the importance to include community radio as a specific radio sector.

<sup>39</sup> See: International Mission  
on Press Freedom  
and Freedom of Expression in Nepal in  
[www.nepal.asiapacific.amarc.org](http://www.nepal.asiapacific.amarc.org)

*“Community radio is characterized by its social objective and by benefiting the community it serves; its aim should not encompass the creation of financial wealth and it should be owned by and be accountable to the community. Community radio should encourage participation in its programming and management, and support a strong democratic and dynamic civil society.”*

The existence and the practice of community broadcasting are an expression of a participatory attitude to democracy and the growth of strong and dynamic civil society organizations. It can be considered a form of public service broadcasting, but this is public service broadcasting not from the top - down, but rather from the grassroots - up.

The development of community radio is closely linked to the needs of local communities that were not being addressed by traditional media in terms of media outreach or audience access to the media. Community radio is characterized by its social objective and by benefiting the community it serves; its aim should not encompass the creation of financial wealth and it should be owned by and be accountable to the community. Community radio should encourage participation in its programming and management, and support a strong democratic and dynamic civil society.

The birth and expansion of community radio in the fifties, sixties and seventies in the Americas and Europe and in the last twenty years in Africa and Asia, are linked to technological breakthroughs and to the demands by audiences for access to the media.

There has been a legitimacy crisis of the traditional mass media since the 1970s as they abandoned the minority and local issues whilst global social trends showed an increased interest in them. This trend started with the first community radio, known as "people's radio", built in the 1950s by Bolivian coal miners angered by traditional media coverage.

## MASS MEDIA: A DECLINE IN CREDIBILITY AND DIVERSITY

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Media control by civil society and not only by the media industry is linked to the need for community empowerment in a non partisan manner. The shortcomings of traditional media outlets that consider themselves neutral or consider that "journalists are not social agents" are at the heart of old academic discussions that have recently been revived with the interactive capacity emerging from ICTs and "new citizen media". Community media has been reinforced by this trend, becoming the media of the poor and an ideal communication tool for development work.

In the eighties and nineties, there was also a process of liberalization of the airwaves and the end of state monopolies in Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia. In some places, these processes have increased media plurality. In most cases however, they have been absorbed by large foreign conglomerates.

In the context of dominant neo-liberal globalization, a small number of multimedia conglomerates have reshaped the global commercial mass media environment, leading to a small number of major groups owning most of the world's media.<sup>40</sup> In this context what has become "digital" information in radio, television, press or Internet, is just another piece of merchandise, which circulates in accordance with the rules governing the market of supply and demand. The establishment of a few dominating media conglomerates results in the paradox of having a greater number of media outlets with a reduced diversity of sources of information. The ensuing global imbalance in information flows, the lack of cultural diversity, and the absence of any regulatory role by the state, are all factors that have, ironically, fomented the development of community media.

<sup>40</sup> Vivendi Universal, AOL Time Warner, Disney, News Corporation, Viacom and Bertelsmann, General Electric, Microsoft, Telefonica, France Télécom.

The second aspect involved in the development of community radio as a global sector is the technological breakthroughs in the communications field, such as transistors, FM transmitters, satellite technology and finally the Internet.<sup>41</sup> All these developments have reduced costs and increased inter - activeness of the media facilitating proximity radio.

Community radio has emerged connected to people - centered social movements that use appropriate technologies to share knowledge, developing alternatives to the major means of communication. They inspired counter-information programmes and interactive social communication run by communities from community radio stations, for example in rural areas.<sup>42</sup> These new players multiplied media outlets and created national, regional, and finally international networks such as the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, AMARC.

The emergence of these new information and communication technologies have contributed to economic growth and have brought social, cultural and political benefits to a great many people. But it also threatens to amplify a gross asymmetry, the so-called "*digital divide*", in poor people's access to information and communication.<sup>43</sup> Therefore community radio is at the heart of the possibilities of an "Information Society" that is people-centred, inclusive and development oriented; where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and people to achieve their full potential in promoting and improving their quality of life.<sup>44</sup>

## COMMUNITY RADIO AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS<sup>45</sup> (MDGS)

The growth of community radio is a story of people and of communities striving to speak out and to be heard. Community radio has provided many with a means of empowerment and of self - reliance. It has enabled people to engage in dialogue about their conditions and their livelihoods. And it has contributed to the defence of cultural and linguistic diversity.<sup>46</sup> In that perspective, community radio is an important factor in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

First, community radio is gaining recognition as the new information technology of the poor and marginalized.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, the combination of community broadcasting with digital production and Internet access has brought new opportunities and approaches to community media that have contributed to sustainability and the enlargement of the services provided.

Second, community media is a key element needed for sustainable development: voicelessness and powerlessness are considered key dimensions of poverty. Democracy, equity and civil rights contribute directly to human security, well being and opportunity.<sup>48</sup> By reaching out to local communities facing poverty, exclusion and marginalisation; by encouraging them to access media in order to be heard even in vernacular languages, community radio contributes to achieving the MDGs. Community radio can also reinforce traditional forms of communication such as storytelling, group discussion and theatre and can enable grassroots participation in policy-making and democracy.

Radio also transcends the literacy barrier, which is a problem in many southern countries. Radio is also considered a "women's medium" because it doesn't require the full, undivided attention of its audience the way newspapers or television do; meaning, women who must work continuously at one given time like farmers and labourers, can perform their tasks even as they listen to the radio.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Bruce Girard, **The one to watch:** Radio, new ICTs and interactivity (2003) FAO, Roma.

<sup>42</sup> Manuel Castells, **La era de la información, economía, sociedad y cultura**, 1999, México, Siglo XXI.

<sup>43</sup> Alfonso Gumucio-Dragón, Right to Communicate. From the Summit to the People, 14d, in <http://www.i4donline.net/july05/right-comm.asp>

<sup>44</sup> **Declaration of Principles** (World Summit on the Information Society, 12 December 2003, Geneva.)

<sup>45</sup> See Millennium Development Goals <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>

<sup>46</sup> Steve Buckley, **Giving Voice to Local Communities. CR and related policies**, UNESCO. March, 2006

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, Declaration of the Ninth United Nations Round Table on Communications for Development (2004) **Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization**

<sup>48</sup> Chapter 6, World Development Report 2000/2001, Attacking Poverty, New York: Oxford University Press <http://www.worldbank.org/wdr>

<sup>49</sup> Women and Community Radio: **Opportunities, Challenges, and Responses\*** By Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, AMARC Women's International Vice President

Moreover as a proximity medium that addresses and is received by each individual listener, community radio can address particularly difficult themes such as gender violence and stigmatised health issues among others.

Fourth, community radio is the media sector that is better placed for development goals. Some public owned broadcasters have independent governance and editorial arrangements and a range of public interest programming. But they often fail to ensure audience access because of a top-down approach to information dissemination. Other state owned public media tend to remain the instrument of the government in power. Instead of dialogue with their audience they maintain a one-way mode of communication. Private commercial media can also contribute to the plurality of voices but they tend to pay little attention to the needs and concerns of the poorer sections of society and remain accountable only to their private owners and the marketplace.

## COMMUNITY RADIO: THE CHALLENGES

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Even as community broadcasting is gaining legitimacy it is also facing new challenges. How can its specific contribution to a pluralistic media landscape be further recognized in law and country regulations? How can its social and economic sustainability be assured? How can it interface with the new media platforms and technologies? How can its contribution to the public good be demonstrated? How can it provide a voice for critical and alternative perspectives and not be co-opted by government agendas or assimilated into the marketplace? There are barriers that distract community broadcasters from their social purpose hindering their ability to empower communities to speak for themselves, to give a voice to the voiceless and to be a force for social and economic good. As community broadcasting gains mainstream recognition, its greatest challenge will be to demonstrate its immediate social impact and significance - its contribution to culture, education, good governance and citizens' participation - its influence in facilitating development processes when the latter can only be measured over longer periods of time. In responding to this challenge, however, it must avoid being turned simply into an instrument of public service delivery. It must vigorously defend its independence, its right to challenge those in authority and to hold leaders to account.

There remains a need to raise awareness on the fact that communities have the right to own and operate their own community media. There is still much to be done in many countries to establish policies, laws and regulations that enable and encourage community broadcasting. There needs to be formal recognition of community broadcasting as a distinct sector. This should result in a transparent and straightforward process for the allocation of radio spectrum and licensing for community broadcasters without political interference.

Finally, alongside the laws and regulations that can help build community broadcasting, there is a need to build capacity among community-based organisations to develop sustainable models of community media that contribute to the social and economic well-being of communities. This should include capacity building for journalists in issues related to development goals. Furthermore, the regulatory framework should consider sustainability and resourcing of community radio, including a nominal level for licence fees, encouraging support from their communities with proper assistance.

# Global Health - Local News: The Need to Build Independent Journalism into the Public Health Agenda

**Ron MacInnis**, *Director,  
Health Journalism, Internews Network*

*"This event-driven reporting typically fails to make the national health policies or issues relevant to readers and viewers."*

*"In some cases, global health partnerships are beginning to seek out journalists who will critically analyze the transparency, governance and impact of country level health policies."*

*"Give a person a fish and you feed him for a day; but if you teach a man or woman to fish, they can feed themselves for a lifetime."*

That timeless adage holds as true for getting health information as it does for getting food. Journalists can be taught to haul in the health information that their society needs. They have been getting handouts. But to date, they have been getting little instruction on how to do the job.

It is commonly agreed among public health strategists globally that an essential component in reaching public health goals is to inform, educate and empower people about health issues. Moreover, when accurate information is combined with the free exchange of ideas on health issues, public health programs are supported and improved. Around the world, we have seen that public health policies, public attitudes on disease and disability, and health-related behavior are greatly influenced by local news media coverage.

In developing countries with acute health crises, however, the media's role is often a secondary consideration to mass media health campaigns that buy print space and airtime or issue statements to get quick, targeted health messages across. Little is done within the public health framework to develop indigenous capacity of the media professionals (journalists as well as their editors and owners) to report on health in an informed and appropriate manner.

## THE GROWTH OF THE HEALTH SECTOR GLOBALLY AND ITS IMPACT ON MEDIA

<sup>50</sup> Lele, Uma and Naveen Sarna, Ramesh Govindaraj, Yianni Konstantopoulos. "Addressing Challenges of Globalization: An Independent Evaluation of the World Bank's Approach to Global Programs." The World Bank: The World Bank Operations Evaluation Department (OED). 2004. URL: [http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/oed/oed-doelib.nsf/24cc3bb1f94ae11c85256808006a0046/7f80f1cf544bdf5185256f5e007992a6/\\$FILE/gppp\\_hnp\\_wp.pdf#page=17](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/oed/oed-doelib.nsf/24cc3bb1f94ae11c85256808006a0046/7f80f1cf544bdf5185256f5e007992a6/$FILE/gppp_hnp_wp.pdf#page=17)

In its 2004 report, the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group reported that the health sector has replaced the environment sector at the forefront of global partnerships in terms of resource mobilization.<sup>50</sup> These global partnerships totalling multiple billions of dollars focusing on HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other communicable diseases – range from the multilateral Global Fund to Fight TB, AIDS and Malaria, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations, to bilateral



programs like the US Government's \$15 billion President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

The report cites the ever advancing pace of the HIV/AIDS pandemic as one example of why this increase in health sector spending has taken on a "war footing" - with expansion of these global partnerships generally led by Western governments, donors and financing institutions, UN Agencies, and regional political institutions.

As these global health partnerships grow, thus do the numbers of health communication mass media campaigns and global program messaging strategies that aim to simplify complex public health issues to global and country - level audiences. Health communication strategists from this realm often talk about "*using the media*" or "*accessing the media*" to get these messages across. This may seem to be an oversimplification of the complex field of health communication. New generation health communication campaigns are quite sophisticated and comprehensive in approach - but the basic tenets of the messaging are born from global standards.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health communication as a key strategy to inform the public about health concerns and to maintain important health issues on the public agenda. Health communication is therefore directed at improving the health status of targeted individuals and populations. WHO defines communication as an instrument to convey information from a sender to a receiver. Thus health communication research is concentrated on finding out what kinds of health stories are published, if health facts are accurate and how health stories affect the audience.<sup>51</sup>

Mainstream studies on health journalism are limited and focus on content analysis - are the media portraying health issues accurately and frequently? Most studies have found that health journalists in developing countries tend to respond to press releases and announcements of how global health partnerships are reaching the national level, or report on the launch of a new national health program, or cover the events of the government's health leaders.

This event-driven reporting typically fails to make the national health policies or issues relevant to readers and viewers. It also does not stimulate dialogue or discussion around the impact these health issues has on the community, the economy and other sectors.

The journalist's role in public health is still being discovered by both the public health community and the media itself. Increased attention to health journalism worldwide may offer a new paradigm in how journalists can be seen as important allies to these growing global health partnerships. In recent years, there does seem to be a positive trend toward decentralizing health communications and a growing understanding of the need to provide training programs for journalists (news/feature reporters, editors, producers, managers, etc.).

In some cases, global health partnerships are beginning to seek out journalists who will critically analyze the transparency, governance and impact of country - level health policies. And donor organizations are beginning to look at how advocacy issues at the country level can keep health priorities on the forefront of national agendas. The news media if effectively supported and mobilized, could play a crucial role in country health policies.

<sup>451</sup> Torkkola, Sinikka and Anna-Maria Maki-Kuutti. "Health Journalism: An Introduction." Health Values, Media, Publicity and Citizens. URL: <http://www.uta.fi/laitokset/tsph/health/media/journalism.htm>

In 2006, the Health Journalism Partnership (HJP) - a consortium between Internews Network, Panos London and the International Center for Journalists - conducted a global survey on health journalism support. The global survey found 422 organizations around the world that self-identified as providing support to journalists to improve coverage of health issues in 2005.<sup>52</sup>

*The following was found out about organizations supporting health journalism:*

- 1. Who is supporting health journalists around the world?** The organizations responding to the survey included: media development/support NGOs, national/local NGOs, media houses/businesses, academic/research institutions, health information NGOs, international/regional NGOs, professional associations, commercial organization/private business, government department/organization, UN agencies and regional organizations. Most of these organizations have held briefings for journalists on health issues. Their work has been done primarily in a piecemeal approach with little follow up with journalists.
- 2. How much funding/experience do they have?** Most organizations had been working for only the past two to five years in supporting health journalism, perhaps following global trends in increased attention to global health partnerships, and most are small organizations. Sixty-one percent of these organizations reported their budgets for their journalism capacity building programs - on health and other themes - did not exceed \$20,000 in 2005.
- 3. Which journalists are being supported?** Print media journalists, followed by radio journalists were cited as the primary beneficiaries of these support programs. In developing countries, broadcast media are the main source of public health information for rural and illiterate populations.
- 4. Who's training who?** The majority of media support organizations report that they use journalism professionals as lead experts for training programs in health reporting. A significant number of organizations also tap into the expertise of public health and health communication professionals for these health journalism training programs. Other trainers have been public relations experts, medical doctors, nurses and caregivers.
- 5. Is there a measurement of the evaluation/impact?** The capacity building activities cited were primarily evaluated through workshop evaluation forms. Some organizations conducted follow-up interviews/questionnaire with journalists and/or their employers, fewer used local media content analysis of health issues to measure change/impact. A significant number of media support/development organizations - 71 organizations - had not engaged in any form of evaluation.

<sup>52</sup> "Health Journalism Partnership."  
Health Journalism Partnership  
(Internews Network, International Center for  
Journalists, and Panos London).  
2006. URL: <http://www.healthjournalism.net/index.aspx>

<sup>53</sup> "Country Profiles."  
Health Journalism Partnership (Internews  
Network, International Center for Journalists,  
and Panos London). 2006. URL:  
<http://www.healthjournalism.net/analysis/profiles.aspx>

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## GAPS AND NEEDS IN HEALTH JOURNALISM SUPPORT AT COUNTRY LEVEL

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The Health Journalism Partnership (HJP) analysis also profiled the state of health of journalism capacity building in a number of countries. The analysis took responses from organizations engaged in supporting health journalism in each country, interviews with key media and health professionals at the country-level and published reports.<sup>53</sup>

## UNDERSTANDING MEDICAL INFORMATION AND DATA

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The ability to break through complex scientific and medical terminology and data is a major challenge to journalists covering issues related to HIV/AIDS and other health issues. This is compounded by the fact that journalists in many developing countries have a considerably low level of professional skills in writing, research and the art of interviewing.

## TECHNOLOGICAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

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Lack of resources such as access to internet, telephone, recorders and studio are among the support needs of many journalists in developing countries. Media houses participating in the survey said there are not enough equipment such as recorders and cameras to conduct field reporting. Health stories tend to be more complicated and expensive than stories on other subjects such as politics, according to some interviewees. The lack of financial resources and time to pursue leads, engage in in-depth research and embark on needed travel for newsgathering hamper health reporting.

## WRITING AND RESEARCH SKILLS FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

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Fundamental journalism training was identified by all interviewed as central to meaningful health journalism. An interviewee noted that health journalism depends not only on "what is told by the news source" but also on the actual understanding and familiarity of the subject matter. The lack of a full grasp on the subject makes journalists vulnerable to possible misinformation of the public or simply "writing the wrong things." Getting the story, researching, finding information are the biggest challenges cited.

## STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN MEDIA AND HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS

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While institutions engaged in public health are gradually opening doors to journalists, in many countries getting information for health stories can still be a daunting exercise for journalists. A senior official with an international media support organization told HJP that health organizations hold back information by either blocking efforts to obtain them or highlighting only their successes. "They just want you to cover one or two things they do." This undeniably impacts the final news product and by implication, health journalism in general. At the same time, many health professionals have not been impressed with journalistic coverage of health issues, and therefore refuse to work with journalists.

## HEALTH JOURNALISM AND NETWORKING

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Building relationships between journalists and professionals in the health sector was identified as both mutually beneficial and crucial to good journalism. This can, in the opinion of many interviewees in the HJP survey, reduce the mutual mistrust that often sours the relationship between journalists and health and science experts, as well as other organizations involved in health.

## LONG TERM INVESTMENTS IN JOURNALISM EDUCATION/TRAINING

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Long term on - the - job training was identified as very important for nurturing journalistic skills and capacity building of journalists particularly young professionals. Special mention was also made by some interviewees of the need to develop and encourage curricula that offer specialization opportunities in health and science reporting in journalism schools. The opportunity to study health journalism while in school, according to interviewees, will help young journalists obtain a foundational grasp of medical and scientific jargons and terminology. An interviewee from a media support organization also noted that media establishments must encourage specialization at the workplace in lieu of covering health with general assignments as is often the case in the countries we analyzed.

## INCENTIVES TO REPORTING ON HEALTH

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There is the need to offer training support to editors and managers of media houses who have little or no interest in health reporting. A broadcast editor noted that relative to reporting in areas such as politics and sports, health "for a very long time has not been a priority for media houses." Some interviewees believe that once the culture of health prioritization has become a part of core newsroom policy, health programs which are accorded ample space and airtime will have the potential for self - sustenance and the same competitiveness that other areas enjoy in terms of income generation.

## THE STATUS OF HEALTH JOURNALISTS

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Most often health stories are relegated to an obscure place in both print and broadcast media. Sometimes too, health stories are simply not used at all because there are stories on politics or sports competing for the same slot or space. In - depth health reporting is not encouraged because as a norm, editors are mostly interested in straightforward hard news on "political accounts about AIDS rather than scientific ones." In such situations, the opportunity to explore the impact of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis on the socioeconomic psyche of infected and affected populations is lost.

## FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

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Before any wide-scale change can happen there needs to be a broader understanding and strengthened mutual respect - at all levels - between the health and news media sectors.

In countries facing the biggest public health challenges, the media landscape is rapidly changing. Privatization of former state - owned broadcasters, a changing regulatory environment, consolidation of large media holdings, the growth of community radio, and increasing access to internet and mobile communications have changed the media landscape in many countries.

This information revolution increasingly provides opportunities for multiple perspectives to be aired and creates space for public discussion, debate and analysis. There are a growing numbers of local radio stations, print publications, and wider internet connectivity. There is television in places where there was none before, with multiple, often commercial channels where once there was only one. New media businesses are increasingly privately owned in countries once dominated

*“To guarantee quality health journalism in much of the world will require considerable time and financial resources. But this is a revolutionary way to put public health discussions in the hands of those most affected.”*

<sup>54</sup> Scalway, T. **Missing the Message? 20 Years of Learning from HIV/AIDS.** Panos Institute, 2003, [www.panos.org.uk](http://www.panos.org.uk)

by the state media, and new technologies of the Internet and mobile cell phones are also changing how people communicate. Where there was once limited information coming from a few sources, many messages are now passed between growing numbers of individuals and organizations in increasingly networked societies. It has become far more difficult to target information and fewer sources are automatically accepted as authoritative.<sup>54</sup>

In this changing environment, journalists play a key role in stimulating public discussion and debate around public health and individual health. Journalists, with the right mix of skills, can make often complex health issues understandable, relevant and real for their audience. To do this they will require the skills, resources and information to develop their potential.

Local journalists need to be empowered to create their own health programs with relevant knowledge for their audiences, rather than global health partnerships prescribing to them what to write about/broadcast. Journalists themselves need to be able to recognize that prescriptive health messaging that works well in campaigns is only part of the equation.

Additional pressure comes as audiences become more sophisticated with access to new and more diverse information - they are going to want to have access to journalism and communication on health that bring global issues into their local vernacular. More importantly they are going to want to participate in dialogue and discussion on these evolving health issues.

To guarantee quality health journalism in much of the world will require considerable time and financial resources. But this is a revolutionary way to put public health discussions in the hands of those most affected. Promoting and supporting the abilities of journalist to produce local health-focused news, feature stories and talk show programs into the mainstream media should be a new global priority. This would serve to meet the goals of global health partnerships and media development partnerships.



# The Nexus between Independent Journalists' Unions, Press Freedom and Poverty Eradication

**Christopher Warren**, *President,*  
*International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)*

*"But bad pay and conditions are also a threat to freedom of the press because they encourage corruption among the media. Indeed, there is no doubt that in some countries, many employers have relied on the 'envelopes' their staff may receive from outsiders to balance the low salaries the employers pay."*

The argument that a free and independent media must be a central component of poverty eradication<sup>55</sup> efforts and improving good governance has been successfully put in fora such as the Global Forum on Media Development in Amman in October 2005 and during World Press Freedom Day in May 2006. This paper takes this argument a step further and suggests that journalists working together through independent journalists' unions are central to achieving press freedom.

There is an indelible nexus that exists between the creation and support for independent, strong, democratic and active unions of journalists, press freedom and poverty eradication. Donors interested in media development and poverty eradication have to recognise priorities that support collective organisations of journalists.

The Presentation Paper for the UNESCO 2006 World Press Freedom Day conference argued that a free and independent media is essential to poverty eradication in three ways: by empowering the poor and disadvantaged and giving them a voice; by ensuring the efforts to promote sustainable economic development are focused, reflect local needs and are widely understood; and by combating corruption and promoting good governance.

If we accept these thoroughly discussed arguments<sup>56</sup> then we need to ask ourselves: What are the essential ingredients for press freedom? The IFJ certainly knows what press freedom is not. We say: "There can be no press freedom if journalists exist in conditions of corruption, poverty or fear".

*This paper argues that strong and independent journalists' unions are central to press freedom (and therefore poverty eradication) in five ways:*

- 1. Collective Voice:** Independent journalists' unions are necessary for press freedom because it is only through an independent trade union of journalists that journalists have a collective voice that can speak for them, independent of both governments and employers.
- 2. Promoting professionalism, safety and ethics:** An independent collective of journalists is needed for press freedom to promote journalism ethics and self-regulation, safety, criminal defamation, confidentiality of sources, freedom of

<sup>55</sup> This is an edited version of a Background Paper originally published by UNESCO, "**Presentation Paper: Media, Development and Poverty Eradication. World Press Freedom Day Sri Lanka 1-3 May 2006**": Applying the Lessons Learnt: A Strategic Policy Discussion Between Donors and UNESCO)

<sup>56</sup> For more examples see: [http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-RL\\_ID=21468&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-RL_ID=21468&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

information, promoting public service broadcasting and public service values, promoting professionalism and ensuring that journalists' economic and social rights are respected.

**3.** Combating corruption and demanding fair wages: Independent journalists' unions are necessary for press freedom because it is only through fair wages and working conditions - achievable only through the collective - that journalists can practice ethical journalism and reject corruption.

**4.** Reaching journalists: An independent journalists' union is the only effective, fair and democratic means of reaching journalists in the field.

**5.** Labour rights are press freedom issues: Independent journalists' unions are necessary because labour rights for journalists are press freedom issues.

This approach is not new. Indeed, the IFJ and its affiliates have been saying this since we were founded in 1926.

This argument is understood by journalists' collectives made up of genuine independent local working journalists who are most often closest to, if not directly part of, the impoverished communities that aid agencies are seeking to assist. It is this that gives this argument its greatest power.

As the only true and independent voice of local journalists, these organisations are capable of reaching out and speaking on behalf of local journalists and defending their social and economic rights, together with promoting and self-regulating ethical journalism, defending press freedom, rejecting corruption. They demand transparency and accountability of government, the bureaucracy, the police, military and business, and practise true public service journalism.

Through supporting local journalists' trade unions, press freedom is strengthened. And through strengthened press freedom, poverty eradication becomes a more achievable goal.

## THE NEXUS BETWEEN JOURNALISTS' UNIONS AND PRESS FREEDOM

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*Five steps measure this nexus:*

The IFJ argues that a collective voice for journalists, manifested through independent journalists' trade unions, is essential for press freedom and therefore development and poverty eradication.

What are the features of a trade union of journalists? A trade union of journalists is independent of government or employers. It provides the only truly representative collective voice for journalists. It is democratic, representative and active.

Other organisations representing journalists' interests can speak for press freedom, including many of media employers and press freedom NGOs. These groups make a vital and important contribution to the push for press freedom, but only a democratic collective of journalists can be all of them.

A collective voice for journalists is essential in the defence of press freedom: journalism ethics and self-regulation, journalist safety, criminal defamation, confidentiality of sources, freedom of information, promoting public service broadcasting and public service values, promoting professionalism and ensuring that journalists' economic and social rights are respected.

It is widely agreed that journalists must self-regulate: that external regulation and external sanction for ethical breaches (ie by government) lead to a decline in press freedom. Self-regulation is only possible when there is a collective of journalists who agree on and promote an ethical code. Journalists' unions adopt codes of ethics and promote them to their members. For example, in Indonesia, the Aliansi Jurnalis Independen requires each journalist to sign on to the code as they join the organisation. It also reproduces its code of ethics on its membership cards, so that each journalist is aware of the code. This is standard practice for many journalists' unions.

## JOURNALIST SAFETY

*“Ultimately, it is only the collective organisation of journalists that can be absolutely relied upon to campaign for journalists' rights and safety.”*

Journalists' unions are essential to journalists' safety and therefore to press freedom. Journalists must ensure that they work safely and without threat. It is only an organisation of journalists that can be relied upon to demand that all necessary precautions are taken for journalists to do their work as safely as possible.

Many employers are supportive, but the sad history that too many cannot be relied upon to act without pressure from journalists' organisations. Additionally, other organisations can provide information and training about safe working practices, but it is only a collective organisation of journalists that is able to bring journalists together and demand that employers provide adequate policies, training, insurance and equipment for journalists to do their job without injury or death.

A recent dramatic example of this in action is the work of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) over the past 15 months. A plethora of international and local organisations have been involved in the condemnation of the Royal Coup in Nepal that occurred on February 1, 2005 and the consequent attacks on journalists and restrictions on press freedoms. This work from organisations such as Article 19, the International News Safety Institute, Reporters Sans Frontiers and many others has been invaluable.

But it was the key collective organisation of journalists in Nepal, the FNJ, that provided information on press freedom abuses to the international community, provided direct support to their members who were attacked and jailed, led the push for journalists' safety throughout the crisis and led the charge demanding the restoration of press freedom. Simply put, even with all international press freedom organisations involved in the campaign (as most actually were), without the FNJ the local journalists would not have been able to effectively respond to recent events in Nepal.<sup>57</sup>

Similarly, in the Philippines, the collective organisation of journalists led the charge (along with local NGOs) against the appalling attacks on journalists there since 1986, resulting in scores of journalists murdered. The response from international organisations on this issue has been less than enthusiastic and only limited financial support has been made available to deal with the crisis. The collective organisation of journalists in the Philippines, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (with the support of the IFJ and its member organisations), has been there for their colleagues and demanding action from the police, courts and the government, setting up a hotline for journalists under attack and supporting the victims' families.<sup>58</sup> There is no starker demonstration of our argument: that ultimately, it is only the collective organisation of journalists that can be absolutely relied upon to campaign for journalists' rights and safety.

<sup>57</sup> For further discussion on Nepal and the role of the FNJ, see Christopher Warren and Rosina Di Marzo *“Coups, Kings and Censorship”*, IFJ (2005)

<sup>58</sup> For further discussion on the Philippines and the work of the NUJP, see Gerard Noonan *“A Dangerous Profession: Press Freedom in the Philippines”*, IFJ (2005)

*“This is the case in the regional areas of the Philippines and has lead to a situation where journalists take massive risks with their lives if they speak out against their sponsors, usually local politicians and business people.”*

Journalists’ unions throughout the world are leading the charge against criminal defamation. There is unanimity among internationally recognised freedom of expression instruments and bodies which have declared criminal defamation an anathema to press freedom.<sup>59</sup> Again, while international organisations such as Article 19 and the World Press Freedom Committee have done much work on campaigning against criminal defamation, ultimately it is the collective organisations of journalists in-country that must take up the fight to strike these draconian laws from the penal code in their country.

*Two examples:* In Ghana, the Ghana Journalists’ Association led the fight in that country to have criminal defamation removed. And in Sri Lanka, a coalition of journalists’ organisations and press freedom advocates led the successful campaign to defeat criminal defamation.<sup>60</sup>

As with journalist safety, it is ultimately the journalists themselves who are the ones to be jailed under these retrograde laws, and it is the collective organisation of journalists that has a vested interest in defeating criminal defamation.

The IFJ firmly believes that press freedom cannot exist where journalists live in poverty. Ensuring people who work in the media are fairly paid and work under decent conditions is important in itself. Journalists - like everyone else - need to eat and to feed their families.

But bad pay and conditions are also a threat to freedom of the press because they encourage corruption among the media. Indeed, there is no doubt that in some countries, many employers have relied on the ‘envelopes’ their staff may receive from outsiders to balance the low salaries the employers pay.

Corruption in the media, through the practice of ‘the envelope tradition’ - where journalists receive envelopes containing cash from a news source in return for favorable, or indeed, any coverage - is rife in many countries throughout the world, particularly where poverty is endemic. In Indonesia, it is estimated that up to 85 per cent of Indonesian journalists have accepted ‘envelopes’. This practice is a major impediment to building the integrity of journalism, and is clearly related to the urgent need to raise the working standards of journalists.

Eliminating corruption requires decent pay from employers as much as it requires honesty from journalists and while some media employers pay fairly, in developing countries journalists’ wages are notoriously low. Sometimes, journalists are paid by the column cm, or only if the story is published. In some countries, they don’t get paid at all and instead work on commission or sub-contract basis. This is the case in the regional areas of the Philippines and has led to a situation where journalists take massive risks with their lives if they speak out against their sponsors, usually local politicians and business people.

This link between the social environment in which journalists work and press freedom has been recognised by UNESCO which at its last General Conference included the right to decent working conditions as part of the enabling environment for press freedom and allocated resources to support work in this area.

Another related area is the changing nature of work in the media - the trend toward contingent and atypical employment practices. The IFJ has recently conducted research that confirms long-held suspicions that the move towards these employment practices - putting journalists on contract, increasing use of freelancers, part-timers, ‘correspondents’ - is having a deleterious effect on press

<sup>59</sup> Emma Walters and Alex Johnson “Decriminalising Defamation: an IFJ campaign resource for defeating criminal defamation”, IFJ (2005)

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

*“After the training these journalists will hopefully have improved their HIV/Aids reporting. But what happens...? when they leave journalism, or change beats, or lose interest in HIV/Aids.”*

freedom. These employment practices divide individual journalists from their collectives, leaving them alone and vulnerable to increased editorial interference from employers and government. Journalists’ unions are the only organisations that can address these alarming trends by unionizing and campaigning for the economic and professional rights of these contingent workers.<sup>61</sup>

*The IFJ believes an independent journalists’ union is the most effective, fair and democratic means of reaching journalists in the field.*

There are other ways of reaching journalists for training and media development: hand picking journalists; recommendations from employers or government; working with single media organisations; and self-selection are some of the ways. None of these, however, are truly effective, fair or democratic.

However, a collective organisation of journalists ensures that all journalists have the opportunity to access development training and information. It ensures that media development work is not limited to individuals: that the development work becomes part of the media culture by creating organisational – not individual – memory and resources.

An example of this is the current HIV/AIDS reporting training project being conducted by the IFJ and supported by the LOTCO and SIDA: *“Strengthening Journalists’ Unions by Improving Reporting of HIV/AIDS in Africa and Asia”*.

Unlike some other HIV/AIDS reporting training projects being undertaken throughout the world, the IFJ is working with its representative collective organisations in Africa and Asia on providing this training. The member organisations are democratically selecting participants from across their organisations. When complete, the journalists’ unions will retain the materials and resources (translated into local languages) for use after the completion of the project.

Other international organisations are conducting similar training, but generally this training is limited to hand-picked journalists who may not be representative of the wider collective. After the training is complete, these journalists will hopefully have improved their HIV/AIDS reporting. But what happens when they leave journalism, or change beats, or lose interest in HIV/AIDS? Only a collective organisation of journalists is able to ensure that there is institutional retention of the materials and training.

The IFJ and its member unions believe that serious labour disputes in the media are almost always around the question of journalistic independence or autonomy. That’s why they involve freedom of expression issues.

Journalistic autonomy is attacked as much by poverty as by employers and government legislation. Pressure from employers can corrupt as much as money in envelopes. The fear of losing your job is more likely to come from your employer than from governments.

Journalists know this almost instinctively. It’s why journalism is one of the most highly unionised workforce in the world. If you go to any union meeting of journalists and you’ll find that the concerns are never about rates of pay or job security. They are always about freedom of expression and the impact of working conditions on journalistic integrity and autonomy. It follows from this that anything that undermines journalistic autonomy, undermines freedom of expression.

## UNION BUSTING TACTICS

Employers attempt to break a media union because they want to break the independence of the editorial staff. By breaking the union, employers break the collective voice of independent journalism within a company, undermining their ability to freely express themselves. This sort of union-busting tactic can range

<sup>61</sup> Emma Walters and Mike Dobbie  
**“The Changing Nature of Work:  
 A global survey of atypical work  
 in the media industry”** IFJ (in print)



from non-recognition, through cancelling collective agreements to refusal of entry to union organisers.

## CONTRACT OR CASUAL EMPLOYMENT ?

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In many countries around the world, employers are seeking to undermine journalistic integrity by denying job security. Staff, instead, are engaged on fixed – term contracts, casual employment or some other form of contingent employment. As a result of this loss of security, employers are able to exercise greater control over staff, undermining their staff’s autonomy and independence and, thus, their freedom of expression.

## DISCRIMINATION WITHIN THE WORKPLACE

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Journalist unions are often engaged in internal campaigns over employment practices that discriminate against particular groups, most commonly, against women journalists. These practices result in women being denied access to employment, particular assignments or higher pay levels. The direct result is that women are being denied the ability to practice their freedom of expression rights.

## ILLEGAL ACTIVITY BY EMPLOYERS

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An employer may seek to undermine a journalist union through illegal activity such as eavesdropping on union meetings or phone hook - ups. This prevents the ability of a journalists’ union to act independently and muzzles members from freely expressing themselves for fear of their employer finding out their industrial views.

These five demonstrations of the nexus between journalists’ unions, press freedom and poverty eradication also have five parallel implications for donors interested in supporting media development.

*They are:*

**1.** *Support is required for the formation and strengthening of collective organisations of journalists.*

Donors need to recognise that any effective media development work should be conducted through collective organisations of journalists. This means supporting the establishment of collective organisations of journalists where they do not already exist, and strengthening existing and fledgling independent, democratic, active, representative organisations of journalists.

**2.** *Support is required for capacity-building of journalists’ unions.*

As capacity-building demands activity, donors should support journalists’ unions in the work that they do. This includes support for establishing and promoting ethics and self-regulation; support for campaigning and training for journalist safety; support for campaigns against criminal defamation; support for campaigns for authors’ rights, protection of sources and freedom of information; support for campaigns for public service broadcasting.

**3.** *Trade union development support is required for journalists’ collectives.*

Across society, trade union development work is essential for all workers to eradicate poverty. Of course this is also the case for journalists. Donors therefore need to support journalists’ organisations in their trade union capacity-building efforts. But far more so than regular workers, trade union development

for journalists will further assist in poverty eradication across society in three major ways.

**First**, trade union work with journalists will lead to higher wages and reduced corruption in media, which in turn will lead to a professional public service media, capable of acting as a watchdog to government, business, the military/police and the bureaucracy. It will also practice public service journalism that reflects the interests and aspirations of all sectors of society, including giving voice to the poor and most disadvantaged groups, which is essential to poverty eradication.

**Second**, if we accept that empowerment of marginalised and disadvantaged groups is a key to poverty eradication, then we must also accept this in the case of journalists themselves. We should apply the same policy of supporting local efforts to reduce poverty as donors do by supporting local NGOs on health, reproductive rights, HIV/AIDS, education and so on, to the media professionals themselves.

**Thirdly**, by supporting collective organisations of journalists in their trade union aspirations, donors are directly improving professionalism and ethics, which flows on to all facets of reporting (including reporting on poverty, HIV/AIDS, child rights, gender equality, sanitation, health, education and so on). Effective trade unions of journalists should lead to professional journalism, which leads to poverty eradication across society.

**4. Donors should use genuine local collectives of journalists to reach journalists.**

This could be used for media development actions designed to improve reporting on child rights, HIV/AIDS, the millennium development goals, international human rights instruments and the work of human rights defenders, election reporting, gender in media and so on. Indeed, any issue that media development work focuses on should use local collective of journalists to reach journalists in - country.

**5. The international press freedom community should embrace labour rights in media as press freedom issues.**

While not necessarily a specific priority for most donors, the international press freedom community should recognise that labour rights issues for journalists directly impinge on press freedom. If an employer refuses to recognise the right of journalists to form a trade union, or government policies prohibit it, then journalists cannot effectively bargain for their social, economic and professional rights. Wages in media will continue to fall, corruption will increase, journalists can lose sight of their role in the public service media framework, standards may fall and press freedom will be at stake. Labour rights are press freedom issues.

*This paper has argued that there is a direct connection between poverty eradication, press freedom and collective organisations of journalists. It suggested that collective organisations of journalists are essential to press freedom and that supporting journalists' unions is an effective mean to reinforce global efforts to reduce poverty and meet the Millennium Development Goals. In short, press freedom is essential for poverty eradication.*





# Mapping the Sector: Literature, Surveys & Resources

# Participatory Diffusion or Semantic Confusion?

**Adam Rogers**, *Chief, Communications and Public Information Unit, United Nations Capital Development Fund*

*“Less understood is the role that the media have in facilitating the process of development.”*

The scholarship and practice of the role of communication in development has had an enormous impact on efforts to reduce poverty in developing countries. Extensive studies since the mid - 1960s have demonstrated the value of the strategic use of communication in international development, both at the theory and research levels, as well as in policy, planning and implementation. However, decision and policy makers in the development community at large may not understand the role of communication and appreciate it to the point that they routinely include it in their development budgets and/or planning processes. Less understood is the role that the media have in facilitating the process of development, both by providing an opportunity for vulnerable populations to influence policy makers, and by disseminating and diffusing knowledge of best practices.

Many development professionals distinguish between those efforts that seek to persuade target audiences to adopt certain practices or changes in attitude and those that seek to engage the populations more fully in decision-making processes that affect their livelihoods. For purposes of simplification, this paper refers to the first approach as "diffusion devcom," and the second approach as "participatory devcom." A synchronic approach that combines the two is referred to simply as "participatory diffusion." This paper also attempts to clarify and compare the differences, and draws some conclusions in terms of their relevance in efforts to support the development of efficient, effective and sustainable media in developing countries.

## THE ENDLESS DEBATE ON THE 'WHAT' AND 'HOW' OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

The role of communication in development processes has attracted the attention of many scholars and development professionals since it was first defined in the early 1960s. Though it has been studied and practiced for more than 40 years, there remains a lack of consensus over what to call it, and how it should be interpreted and applied. Both at the theory and research levels, as well as at the levels of policy and planning/implementation, there are many divergent perspectives.

The terminologies and methodologies used to describe the concept are many and varied: development communication, development support communication, participatory development communication, communication and development,



information-education-communication (IEC), communication for empowerment, project support communication, social marketing, and what currently is the preferred term at the United Nations: communication for development. Many academic and development professionals would argue that there are distinct differences between the various terms. Of course there are, but the term "development communication", or simply devcom, should refer to all of the above - to the planned use of communication in any effort to improve the lives of the poor, be it through engaging them more fully in decision-making processes that affect their lives, giving them a "voice" to influence policy, or persuading them to adopt new practices that will enhance their livelihood, increase their security, advance their education and improve their health.

## TWO DOMINANT THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

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Though there are a myriad of terms in use today, each describing a different approach or application of communication in support of development, most discussions on the concept fit into one of two theoretical frameworks: those influenced by the diffusion theory of the American scholar Everett Rogers (1962); and those that argue that the diffusion model is too vertical or one-way and that the active involvement of the population in the process of communication itself will accelerate more effective and sustainable development (Servaes, 1999). These two theoretical approaches could be summarized as the Diffusion/Mechanistic model and the Participatory/Organic model. The two "schools of thought" are not mutually exclusive, though some academics and practitioners have presented them as such.

The early paradigm of development communication advocated for the transfer (diffusion) of technological and behavioural innovations from development agencies to their clients as a panacea for addressing the inequities in developing countries. Articulated by Learner (1958) and others, this approach was later heavily criticized by Freire (1970, 1973), Servaes (1997, 2002) and Melkote & Steeves (2001), among others, who advocated for a more participatory approach that involves development beneficiaries as partners in the communication and decision-making processes.

## IN THE BEGINNING

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The concept of development communication (or the link between development and communication) first emerged with the publication of Daniel Lerner's classic book, *The Passing of the Traditional Society* (1958). Lerner conducted research in the Middle East and North Africa, and was able to trace correlations between expanded economic activity and other modernization variables such as urbanization, high literacy levels, media consumption and political development. Lerner argued that the media could serve as a great multiplier of development by communicating development messages to the undeveloped.

Drawing on Lerner's research, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) commissioned Wilbur Schramm to determine the precise role that the mass media played in development. Schramm believed in the concept of an all-powerful media that could be used by development agents to communicate messages about technological innovations. The result of Schramm's work was published as *Mass Media and National Development* (1964), and provided the theoretical foundation for development communication for the next 10 to 15 years.



Lasswell (1964) further defined this contextual framework for development communication with his 5-point question of "Who says what in what channel to whom and with what effect?" Around the same time, Everett Rogers put forth his landmark theoretical framework, which he called Diffusion of Innovations (1962). Rogers identified a pattern in the way innovations were adopted and accepted in societies. Grounding much of his research in agricultural development, Rogers asserted that, using his theoretical model, development communication scholars could introduce innovations such as high yield seeds, fertilizers and new farming methods to developing societies.

The diffusion model assumes that a proper combination of mass-mediated and interpersonal communication strategies can move individuals from poor to not – poor via a process starting with awareness (of a new technology or practice) through interest, evaluation, trial and finally to adoption of the technology or practice that is assumed to lead to improved livelihoods.

In support of this hypothesis, diffusion studies proliferated in Latin America, Asia and Africa in the 1960s and 1970s. The World Bank and UNDP embraced the theory wholeheartedly and funded thousands of projects in rural areas of developing countries, where trained agricultural officers would use media such as radio to expose farmers to new innovations – most of which were imported from developed countries (Mwangi, 2002).

#### OPPOSING THE DIFFUSION OF THE DIFFUSION THEORY

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*"These scholars argued that development efforts to date were ideologically and materially linked to 'neo-colonialism' ...that uses of mass media in development imposed the interests of dominant classes on the majority of marginalised people."*

In the early 1970s an intellectual shift occurred in the basic concept of development communication. Critics of the diffusion model were unsettled by its "pro-innovation," "pro-persuasion," and "top-down" nature - that is, its concentration on adoption and lack of emphasis on recipient input into development decisions and processes (Colle, 1989). These scholars argued that development efforts to date were ideologically and materially linked to "neo-colonialism" and a "form of domination and manipulation by the elite" (Freire, 1973). A group of scholars coalesced around this theme at the First Latin American Seminar on Participatory Communication, sponsored in 1978 by CIESPAL (Centro Internacional de Estudios Superiores de Comunicación para América Latina), concluding that uses of mass media in development imposed the interests of dominant classes on the majority of marginalized people. This thinking was in tune with dependency theory, popular at the time in Latin America, which sought to explain underdevelopment as the result, or by-product, of capitalist expansion (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979). It also resonated with many researchers who called for an abandonment of the "vertical" approach in favour of more "horizontal" methodologies emphasizing access, dialogue and participation (Beltran, 1980).

Jan Servaes, professor and head of the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Queensland defines the participatory model as that which views ordinary people as the key agents of change, or participants for development. He has said the lack of attention to the horizontal dimension has led to failure in many development programmes (Servaes, 1997 & 1999).

Srinivas Melkote is another critical theorist who views Rogers' diffusion approaches as a tool to expand the hegemony of the western world. He considers the diffusion approach to be a "message delivery system" that "facilitates the process of modernization via the delivery and insertion of new technologies, and/or inculcating certain values, attitudes, and behaviours in the population" (Melkote & Steeves, 2002 p. 38). According to Melkote, such "persuasive

campaigns" are "manipulative and potentially harmful" and are somehow tied up with expatriate extravagance and political corruption.

## IN DEFENCE OF DIFFUSION

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*"A good idea is a good idea...How it is introduced, however, should be through participatory channels, or it will never be accepted, modified or embraced."*

Much of the early criticism of diffusion may have been well placed, considering the fact that the theory was a product of a time when development professionals believed that what worked for the industrialized countries would work in developing countries. However, the relevance of Rogers' theoretical framework may have gotten caught up in the backlash against the "modernization paradigm of development," which promoted economic growth through industrialization, urbanization, specialization, adoption of a capitalist economic system, formation of formal infrastructure and the acquisition of technologies (Servaes, 2002, p. 4).

Unlike some theoretical approaches to devcom that have been presented as *faits accomplis*, Rogers continuously revised and updated his framework up until the days before his death in October 2004. While earlier editions of his work emphasized the top-down diffusion of technology (1962, 1971), in later editions (1983, 1995, 2003), he began advocating for the principles of "bottom - up" participatory planning and the role of communications therein.

As far back as 1976, Rogers suggested that the passing of the "dominant paradigm" of top-down planning would signal a shift toward a form of support that engaged the local population in the planning, implementation and execution of development (Rogers, 1976).

In the fifth edition of *Diffusion of Innovations*, Rogers (2003, p. 376) acknowledged that a development project's degree of sustainability is determined in large measure by the extent of buy-in by the local population, and that buy - in is determined for the most part by the extent of participation involved. "Unless an innovation is highly compatible with clients' needs and resources," he writes, "and unless clients feel so involved with the innovation that they regard it as 'theirs,' it will not be continued over the long term."

In further clarifying the role of diffusion in participatory planning, Rogers differentiates between "centralized" and "decentralized" diffusion systems. Decentralized diffusion systems are those in which innovations originate from local sources and then evolve as they diffuse via horizontal networks. "Instead of coming out of formal R&D networks," he writes, "innovations often bubble up from the operational levels of a system, with the inventing done by certain lead users" (2003, p. 375). In other words, the concepts communicated to a public in a persuasion exercise do not always originate externally - they often come from the people themselves. However, a good idea is a good idea, whether it surfaces through a participatory process in an underdeveloped society, or emerges from an academic project at a European university. How it is introduced, however, should be through participatory channels, or it will never be accepted, modified and embraced.

## THE MIDDLE ROAD TO THE TIPPING POINT

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The thinking advanced by the Latin American critics and those that followed defined development as a widely participatory process of social change that is intended to bring about both social and material advancement for the majority of people through their gaining greater control over their environment (Singhal & Rogers, 2001). In the decades that followed this call for more popular participation

*“Rogers maintains that mass media diffusion and ready access to information are needed to raise awareness of an issue, while participatory communication is needed to mobilise action towards a development objective.”*

in development communication, a wide range of theoretical responses emerged, at one end of the spectrum, scholars from the "modernistic", diffusion school began to incorporate participatory dimensions into their research. At the other end, scholars critical of traditional development communication embraced participatory development as a utopian panacea. In other words, participation was conceptualized either as a means to an end, or as an end in and of itself (Huesca, 2002). Some scholars from the "participation as an end" group saw any attempt to merge the two approaches as passive collaboration, or manipulative consultation done only to help advance a predetermined objective (Dudley, 1993). White (1994) argued that any use of participation by those espousing diffusion will evolve into an "insidious domination tactic" if incorporated into the dominant development discourse, due to its historical association with "Western political hegemony."

Not everyone agreed with this resistance to the harmonization of approaches. Einsiedel (2000) notes that the participatory approach is particularly important when questions on development issues are much more complex and with greater historical specificities than that addressed by Lasswell's (1964) linear questioning of who says what to whom with what effects. "We might ask whose voices are heard, what values are articulated, what representations are foregrounded, or what discursive practices are framed," she says. However, Einsiedel speculates there may sometimes be a need for both approaches. The most viable solutions to the world's development challenges may indeed come from "viewing boundaries not as impermeable walls, but as sites for exchange and developing the vigour that can arise from hybridism."<sup>47</sup> This approach to research, she says, pursues multiple approaches to development, using each approach to both inform and critique the others, questioning what they derive from each other, and respecting the differences between perspectives.

An example of this syncretic approach to development communication is found in more recent editions of Rogers' classic, *Diffusion of Innovations*. Rogers argues that both approaches are necessary. He maintains that mass media diffusion and ready access to information are needed to raise awareness of an issue, while participatory communication is needed to mobilize action towards a development objective, be it HIV prevention or community participation in local government. A combination of the two can lead to what Rogers calls the "critical mass" in the diffusion of an innovation or to what Malcolm Galdwell (2000) refers to as the "tipping point": when a small change, such as a few more individuals practicing safe sex to avoid HIV transmission, triggers a big change in the rate of adoption.

Cecilia Cabañero-Verzosa, a senior communications officer at the World Bank and author of *Strategic Communication for Development Projects* (2003) believes that all development projects are essentially about behavioural change. She also believes in an approach that incorporates both dominant development communication paradigms. She says that in order for a communication strategy to take an empowering approach, one should look not only at employing top-down methods such as mass media through newspaper or television, but also bottom-up or interactive methods such as town hall meetings. Both media plans and interpersonal communications should play a complementary role in the process. Cabañero-Verzosa refers to this as a "dialogical process" which implies integrating upstream and downstream communications.

## IF EVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET

<sup>47</sup> A term Rogers (2003) uses to refer to as an "informal network of researchers who form around an intellectual paradigm to study a common topic."

Many development practitioners are avoiding the semantic debates outlined above in order to harness the benefits of both approaches. For them, what is most important is not what an approach is called, the origins of an idea or

how it is communicated. What is critical is that we find the most effective and efficient tools to achieve the noble objectives outlined in the Millennium Declaration.

## THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

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The media play a central role in promoting and supporting devcom efforts. As such, media support is increasingly becoming an important part of development programming, especially in the area of governance, where issues of transparency and accountability are paramount. Development agencies could do much more, however, to strengthen and support the growth of independent media in developing countries and to enhance their abilities to contribute effectively to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. These areas of support could be centered on any or all of the conceptual approaches outlined above: participation, diffusion, or participatory diffusion.

## THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN DIFFUSION

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As discussed above, diffusion involves the practice of disseminating messages in order to inform and persuade a target audience to adopt or abandon a practice or attitude (such as adopting safe sex practices, or abandoning risky behaviour that could lead to the transmission of HIV/AIDS). Though there are many channels through which to diffuse messages, such as billboards, street theatre and music, the media often play a central and catalytic role because of their coverage, availability and the public's perception of their legitimacy.

## THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN PARTICIPATION

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Though the media primarily engage in the diffusion of information, they provide a valuable channel through which vulnerable populations can share experiences, communicate needs, and influence policy makers. In order for this to happen, access is needed, such as through talk shows, discussion programmes and phone-ins that encourage people to participate and contribute their perspectives. This role of the media is considered a necessary dimension of "communication for empowerment" (Deane, 2005), and is critical in providing a "voice to the voiceless" (Huddock, 2003).

Though not everyone in poor societies will have direct access to the media because of issues of literacy and access to telephony, the media and their representatives can directly contact vulnerable populations and ensure that their views are represented accurately in their reportage. However, while most journalists feel a need to report on news wherever it be found, there is mounting evidence that, as competition amongst various media outlets intensifies, content is being increasingly shaped by the demands of advertisers and sponsors (UNDP, 2005; Deane, 2003), often leaving out any coverage of issues affecting the rural and urban poor.

## THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN PARTICIPATORY DIFFUSION

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The logical extension of the first two areas involves the diffusion of best practices that are either discovered within the community itself, or imported from outside and then validated or improved locally to make them more relevant. In addition, in regards to democratic governance, citizens and their representatives need timely, relevant, and clear information as well as an analysis of political and

economic issues (diffusion) in order to participate effectively in policy formation (participation) (Huddock, 2003).

## LOOKING AHEAD: DEVCOM EFFORTS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

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Though the United Nations was active in devcom in the 1960s and 1970s, it dropped the ball in the 1980s. In 1994, the UN commissioned a study on the role of communication in the successful implementation of development programmes in the UN system (Mezzalama, 1994; United Nations 2004b, 1995 & 1996), which concluded that the level of inter-agency coordination was not keeping up with the evolution of the discipline, and that most UN organizations attach insufficient importance to communication in operational activities. Mezzalama's report made a number of recommendations. Foremost was a call for devcom to be a critical part of any development programme, with budgets that contain a specific provision for communication activities.

In August 2004, Mezzalama's report provided the foundation for UN resolution A/59/207 (United Nations, 2004b) which requested a report on development communications to be presented every two years, and set out a list of four conclusions and recommendations:

- Communication for development is instrumental in the success of any endeavour to achieve human development and, consequently, greater integration in the economic and social planning process is called for;
- This, in turn, calls for increased resources redirected towards more effective communication programmes, including increased investment in capacity-building, training and research at the country level;
- The United Nations system, working through a number of mechanisms, such as communication for development round tables, has achieved a certain degree of cohesion in its approach and action in this field. This success calls for enhanced synergy among all partners, at both the international and country levels, including governments, NGOs, donors, the private sector and community leaders;
- Information and communication technologies have become an integral part of the development process. Developing countries and their partners should intensify efforts to address the current digital divide in a more innovative and effective way, based on the enhancement of national ownership and the effectiveness and sustainability of the related initiatives and strategies.

In response to UN resolution A/59/207 a number of initiatives are being organized within the UN system to promote and support devcom efforts, be they diffusion, participatory, or participatory diffusion. The annual Inter-Agency Roundtables on Communication for Development and the upcoming World Congress on Communication for Development are two notable examples, as are efforts to support media development, such as through the Global Forum for Media Development, held in Amman in October 2005.

As yet, however, most development programmes have not allocated sufficient funds for development communication, and have often considered it as an after-thought, or an add-on to the work of external relations. This, however, may change as the organization and its extended family search for new and innovative ways to become more efficient in addressing the Millennium Development Goals, and as it prepares to report on its devcom activities on a biennial basis.



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# Media Development: The Case for Research

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Despite the relentless rise in the significance of the media and communications sector in economic and cultural terms, the media development field lacks a clear evidence base that illustrates the impact and significance of its activities, training programs, and advocacy work. This paper argues why it is important to document the media development field and to reveal the impact it has had on other areas of development. It also highlights the potential role of emerging and long-standing international research networks in this process.

## SOME BASIC CONSIDERATIONS OF MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

In the context of international democratization assistance, media development primarily seeks to promote and enable sustainable independent and free media. Media development has been a part of democracy and state building since at least the end of the Second World War, with the re-building of Germany and Japan as the two classic examples (Mughan and Gunther, 6). In terms of offering a more concrete definition, a 2002 report entitled *Mapping Media Assistance*, says media assistance primarily takes the form of journalism training, direct support to news organizations, efforts to aid media law reform, support for professional journalism, and broadcast associations, support for developing financial sustainability of media outlets, and initiatives designed to transcend national, religious or ethnic barriers in the media (Price, Noll and De Luce 2, 2002).

As aid to civil society and democracy development programs increased at the beginning of the 1990s, this paved the way for funding media development related initiatives which were regarded as being essential to the overall democratization process. As Thomas Carothers points out in *Aiding Democracy Abroad*, the 1990s ushered in a new way of thinking about international development and the role of support for democratization efforts as part of overall assistance and outreach programs<sup>2</sup> This stemmed in part from a shift in political thinking about international relations and foreign policy that occurred after 1989, in the wake of the post-communist transitions. The end of the Cold War sparked a new era in foreign assistance, of which democratization assistance is part. Media assistance is part

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999.

*“Development efforts don’t exist in a vacuum and without the proper enabling environment, a free and independent media will find it hard to survive.”*

of a catalogue of democracy support that also includes support for reforming elections and the political process, aid to assist rule of law development, programs to strengthen democratic government, and general civil society assistance that can take on a variety of forms and institutional arrangements, including assistance for local non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Going beyond basic definitions of what media development consists of, Mapping Media Assistance differentiates between media development in terms of participants (the media outlets or those receiving assistance) and the structure and level of participation (the international organizations and the donors). The latter describes international aid flows from donors, to implementers, to intermediary agencies, contractors and to local partners (Price, et al., 5, 2002)

Highlighting the relevance of donor agencies and where the aid flows from is significant to the extent that it offers a clue to understanding how and why media in a transition or post – conflict society develops in the way that it does. Certainly, a case can be made that, given funding constraints and the cash strapped environments in which most media assistance takes place, funding to a large degree can actually define or constitute what media development will consist of and what form it will take. This has significant bearing, for instance, on whether print or broadcast media will be targeted, whether there will be support to a broad range of activities or just a few select items.

## MEDIA DEVELOPMENT IN A WIDER CONTEX

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In addition to the above kinds of considerations that help to define what media assistance is and where funding comes from, it may also be useful to offer a descriptive and contextualized understanding of just what media development entails. In an influential policy declaration USAID stated in 1999 that:

*“Within the context of supporting democratic transitions, the goal of media development generally should be to move the media from one that is directed or even overtly controlled by government or private interests to one that is more open and has a degree of editorial independence that serves the public interest. If the media is to have any meaningful role in democracy, then the ultimate goal of media assistance should be to develop a range of diverse mediums and voices that are credible, and to create and strengthen a sector that promotes such outlets”.<sup>3</sup>*

In order to help develop democratic media, the environment in which media exists must help support it. Development efforts don’t exist in a vacuum and without the proper enabling environment, a free and independent media will find it hard to survive. As with other aspects of democratization, there are many inter-working and interrelated forces involved in the process. This is for the simple (or not so simple) reason that a democracy is an intricate working of many levels, institutions and strands of society.

As most of international assistance in the media sector takes place in transition societies going from socialism to capitalism or from an authoritarian style of rule to democracy, there is a dual need to address political and economic concerns of the transition process, not to mention the cultural and social dimensions, which are very much related to media. Consequently, media developers must think about a multitude of factors in putting together their strategies of assistance in order for reform efforts to have any chance of success.

To begin with, in a transitional or post-conflict environment, attention must be paid to the drafting of new media laws that will influence the shape and policy

<sup>3</sup> **“The Role of Media in a Democracy: A Strategic Approach,”** Center for Democracy and Governance, USAID, June 1999, PN-ACE-630, pg.5.

*“Media has been described as the lynchpin or connective tissue of democracy.”*

of the state on public broadcasting, public information, access to information, telecommunications, advertising, basic constitutional provisions related to freedom of expression, privacy laws, Internet and new media to name but a few of the more substantial sectors.

In addition to the legal and regulatory framework of media policy of a new state, part of the process of media development must also factor in local economic concerns. Such areas of work that require attention include privatization, re-structuring of the state broadcaster into a viable public service broadcaster that is adequately financed and administered, and helping media outlets adapt to the new market-driven forces of a liberal economy. Economic constraints of a transition society cannot be underestimated. They affect the commercial viability of media, begging questions such as how to pay for the public service broadcaster and whether to impose license fees or not, i.e. whether to follow the model of the Holy Grail of Public Service Broadcasters, the BBC, or how to develop marketing strategies to help newly formed commercial stations survive. Questions of financial survival are, it seems, the most important to consider, after basic legal and regulatory concerns related to the establishment of free and independent media.

## AN EMERGING RESEARCH AGENDA

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<sup>4</sup> See Silvio Waisbord, **“Communication and the MDGs: No Magic Information Bullets,”** in Media Development, in WACC’s Media Development, 2006/3 [http://www.wacc.org.uk/wacc/publications/media\\_development/2006\\_3/communication\\_and\\_the\\_mdgs\\_no\\_magic\\_information\\_bullets](http://www.wacc.org.uk/wacc/publications/media_development/2006_3/communication_and_the_mdgs_no_magic_information_bullets)

<sup>5</sup> Asante cites the work of Wilbur Schramm (1964), wherein he cites that mass media are agents of social change, which affects behavior. **Schramm’s** contention is that media can change behavior, changes attitudes, beliefs, skills and social norms. Also noteworthy is Asante’s larger discussion related to mass media development and how it has factored into the modernization literature, and is revered as a positive dimension of democracy building and societal transformation. In **Gunther and Mughan’s** study (2000), media facilitated democratization by eroding the credibility and legitimacy of the non-democratic regime; developed pluralism in political attitudes, preferences, and partisan alternatives; and re-socialized both the masses and elites to the new democratic regimes.

That media matter is not such a hard case to support, but exactly how it matters and what it actually does, in the context of development, whether by contributing to the health of the economy, polity, or society, has been the focus of considerable debate.<sup>47</sup> This debate is nothing new, and arguably, modernization theory advanced by social scientists of the 1950s and 1960s, for better or worse, provides both the precursor and foundation for much of development communication and media development programs that are administered today as well as many of the debates that have been waged about the value and importance of media in development as well as democratic terms.

In stating the case for why media matters, it has been described as the lynchpin or connective tissue of democracy (Gunther and Mughan 2000), as the ‘health’ of the state depends in large part of information flows, communication systems, and the ability for people to impart and receive information in an unhindered and unobstructed way. Moreover, access to information, freedom of expression, access to technology, high rates of literacy, access to a wide range and diversity of views, and the ability to consume media with a public interest agenda are regarded as a pre-condition for a modern democratic state.<sup>5</sup>

The reasons for this abound. First, media cuts across several sectors of society - economic, social and political. It is important to a country’s culture and identity. It can have a public service function, imparts knowledge, news and information, as well as offering a source for entertainment and other kinds of programming. Moreover, many would argue that without a free and independent media sector, the process of facilitating democracy and trying to get better governance systems to take root in societies without a real history of any sort of democratic governance would not be possible. In this light, media is often regarded as an agent of change or a facilitator of democratization (Asante 1997 and Gunther and Mughan 2000). As the so-called watchdog of the government, media serves a check and balance function by monitoring governments and political processes, i.e. elections and legislative actions. Media has the additional function of serving as an intermediary between the government and the people.



*"If media development and communication for development are different apples from the same tree, why is there any discussion of their differences?"*

It is, therefore, somewhat surprising how little research has been done on media development per se. In contrast to its closely related sister, development communication, the process and activities sponsored as media development, are ripe for researchers seeking to have a better understanding of the relationship that a media environment has on the state of government and overall development (economic, social and political).

A brief scan of the development literature will reveal many titles devoted to development communication.<sup>6</sup> While there is room for adding to the literature in this field, it has considerable more data and analysis available to researchers and policymakers than does media development.

There are some policy studies and some loosely knit commentaries about the effects of media assistance, but to date there has yet to be a formal undertaking that comparatively examines media assistance against the backdrop of social science disciplines that inform and instruct those who engage in media development. Part of the problem stems from the difficulty of setting up a research framework that would qualitatively or quantitatively look at these issues from a traditional social science perspective. This is an issue that is commonly brought up in the context of monitoring and evaluation and how to best measure the impact of media assistance. This difficulty should not, however, undermine the importance of conducting research on this topic, and groups like Freedom House, the International Research & Exchanges Board, and Reporters Sans Frontières, offer useful tools and snapshots that aid researchers and those undertaking comparative studies. Moreover, there is increasing interest in mainstreaming media and communications development in the overall development agenda, which will be a major theme of the October 2006 World Congress for Development Communication. Efforts like this will be bolstered by increased research, which will also aid policymakers and advocates engaged with media and communications related law and policy matters.

*A question researchers and implementers alike could lend their expertise to, is to analyze more closely the relationship between these closely linked fields.*

If you consider the histories of the two fields, their starting points, the intentions of their programs, the types of NGOs or groups that direct the programs, and the reforms and results that they intend to bring about, some differences between the two start to emerge. Whether they should continue to be viewed two separate fields is another matter. As a matter for future research and inquiry, it would be interesting and instructive to chart the history of media assistance channeled as part of aid intended to transform media space (systems, institutions and the laws and policies that govern a media environment). Mapping Media Assistance and the Media Missionaries (Hume, 2002) reports are good starts to this effort, but a much larger undertaking could be undertaken, with an added focus on charting or mapping where the funding has gone and which projects have survived over the long run.

To date, the two fields have often been viewed quite differently, and often times have not overlapped. They have very different starting points - one seeks to reform institutions, policy and systems that comprise media, while the other seeks to use media to reform specific aspects of society or the behavior of individuals to bring about positive lifestyle choices. They both, however, make use of media as a means of change.

If media development and communication for development are different apples from the same tree, why is there any discussion of the differences? Both seek to

<sup>6</sup> See for instance the recently released **Communication For Social Change Anthology: Historical and Contemporary Readings**, Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron and Thomas Tufte (eds.), **Communication For Social Change Consortium**. Also noteworthy is Jan Servaes's **Communication for Development: One World, Multiple Cultures**, Hampton Press, 1999.

reform through application or means of communication. Perhaps the discussion stems in part from two of the similarities: the funding and the implementing NGOs often compete for resources: financial and staff being only two of them. Additionally, some communication for development scholars and practitioners criticize media development for being too Western, too Northern, too imposing, and not appropriate for all local audiences.

The two fields do have considerable overlap, however. The first is shared donors. The agencies and governments funding media development often implement communication for development strategies in various development projects. Secondly, the NGOs implementing media development programs may also conduct programs, which utilize communications for development techniques. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, both media development and communications for development are based on development communication theories, all of which apply insights from standard communication theory to deal with problems of development.

Whether for purposes of transparency, reducing corruption, improving channels of communication to improve the environment, aiding in the understanding of health and medical issues, decreasing problems associated with ethnic and national interests, or a myriad of other socio-political issues, the two fields share a vision of the importance that communication plays within society.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUILDING BRIDGES AND ADVANCING NETWORKS

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*“Efforts to internationalise media and communications studies and to offer focused educational opportunities in communications and media development are essential.”*

An international academic advisory board that could contribute its expertise should serve as a leadership council for developing the kind of dialogue that would aid in the efforts to mainstream the media and communications development dialogue.

Global research networks are emerging. Initiatives such as the GFMD and the WCCD will add to the existing networks and platforms for advocacy and research that seek to understand the media's relationship to democratization, governance and development. Two of these networks, the International Communication Association and the International Association of Media and Communication Researchers, already provide opportunities for scholars and practitioners to put forward original research as well as for networking and developing partnerships and new research agendas. UNESCO's ORBICOM international network of academics, high-level corporate decision makers, policy consultants, and media specialists also provides an important opportunity for advance and promoting the communications and media development field. Furthermore, efforts to internationalize media and communication studies and to offer focused educational opportunities in communications and media development are essential. University programs that look at comparative and global communications policy and offer mechanisms for developing collaborative and international networks are essential. Having access to knowledge that is out there is also important, and in this regard, efforts undertaken by the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) to establish a data-consortium of media and communications policy - as well as the work of one of SSRC's partner organizations, the Center for International Media Action - have a lot of potential.

What is needed are more effective ways of using of these networks, helping researchers leverage funding support in order to take part in the networks and to fund research projects. Of equal significance is the necessity to bridge the gap between researchers, practitioners and policymakers, so that there is improved dialogue and exchange of information.

There now exists an opportunity to engage more fully in academic study or research on media assistance field, especially from a comparative angle. Not only do we have the rich experience of the post - communist European countries to draw upon, but we also have important examples of media assistance to survey and assess in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as other parts of the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Africa, with important regional differences and country-specific research that could be undertaken; Latin America, with its ongoing reforms; and related to this, somehow, is the political reform and change that continues in China.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> While not outright a recipient of funds designated for democracy development and promotion, it seems that the **Chinese experience** is very relevant to many of the same kinds of questions that are part of the overall debate about media development and democratization.

With the world's attention increasingly directed at understanding and directing aid towards poverty relief, democratization, disaster assistance, and large-scale health programs, the role of media and communication will undoubtedly play a prominent role. In making the case for why media matters, the growing interest of the research community and its international networks should be harnessed to advance the field for scholars, practitioners and policy-makers alike.

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# Media Development: Mapping the Media Assistance Sector

**Ellen Hume**, *Director, Center on Media and Society,  
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*“The focused effort to build an independent media in every region, with journalism that serves the public interest, has finally come into its own as a subject worthy of academic study and systematic assessment.”*

When the Knight Foundation began in 2001 its effort to survey the international media development landscape, there was scant literature to draw on.

The U.S. government, George Soros’ Open Society Institute, German foundations, Danish and Swedish agencies, the World Bank, the Ford Foundation and others had engaged for years in helping countries develop an independent media sector, but neither they nor the academic community had identified this work yet as a distinct category of development. The major donors generally included such funding within “democracy - building” budgets. In some cases, efforts to build the capacity of local journalists were incidental to a developer’s drive to gain publicity for specific projects.

The failure to line - item media development continues to hobble any effort to assess progress in the field. With the Global Forum on Media Development in Amman in October 2005 the funding and development community acknowledged that the media sector has emerged as a distinct area of development. The focused effort to build an independent media in every region, with journalism that serves the public interest, has finally come into its own as a subject worthy of academic study and systematic assessment. It is time for the budget gnomes at each media developer and funder to catch up with this and keep more delineated records.

Many informed evaluations of media development are reports that are not available on any publisher’s database, and some have circulated only to the interested parties. For example, The Knight Foundation assessed its Knight Fellows program with the International Center for Journalists in a 2002 report, “Assessing the impact of press freedom seminars in 2002,” (Washington, D.C.: Philliber Research Associates). But more published books, reports and articles now are starting to emerge as helpful resources for anyone wishing to understand best practice standards, lessons learned, and progress to date in this field.

## OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENTS

The Knight Foundation in 2001 commissioned a report, *Media Missionaries* (Ellen Hume, 2004) which was the first attempt to create a narrative history and current overview of the entire field, from an American perspective, with some analysis of Western efforts to promote independent media around the world. Divided into regional sections, the report became essentially a first draft of an encyclopedia of media development practice.

Due to the enormous complexity of recreating a history and map of media development around the world, when such data was not kept methodically,

*“As a general rule, U.S. media development efforts, particularly by the U.S. government, continue to shadow U.S. foreign policy.”*

Media Missionaries was limited in scope. It focused largely on efforts by American governmental agencies, newspaper and broadcast groups, foundations and other nonprofits from the early 1980s to 2001. The report analyzed how they supported and developed independent journalism first in Latin America, and then in the former Communist countries after 1989, moving geographically to the same regions that attracted U.S. foreign policy interest. The Africa section of the report was written by Joan Mower, formerly of the Freedom Forum and currently with the International Board of Broadcasters. The report also contained summaries of media development in Asia and the Middle East.

Media Missionaries included advice for would-be media developers. The "Fifteen Commandments of Media Development" best practice section was based on the experience of practitioners from USAID, Internews, IREX, the Knight Fellowships, SEAPA, the International Center for Journalists, OSI, and others. USAID also contributed a related report in 2003, Media Assistance: Best Practices and Priorities (PN-ACR-754) (Washington, DC: Hume, E.) reflecting a meeting convened at USAID of key U.S. government and NGO media developers.

The American NGOs and US government contributions were estimated in Media Missionaries to have been about \$600 million cumulatively since 1989, but that estimate was conservative due to the lack of specific data from the development organizations and funders. The U.S. developers' contributions to date may actually be significantly higher. As a general rule, U.S. media development efforts, particularly by the U.S. government, continue to shadow U.S. foreign policy priorities. Thus there is more U.S. government and non-governmental funding for media development now in the post-9/11 Middle East and Asia, for example, than there was when Media Missionaries was written.

Media Missionaries is available as a PDF on the author's website ([www.ellenhume.com](http://www.ellenhume.com)) and includes an appendix of selected media development organizations and individuals, with contact information.

Fortunately, the Knight Foundation followed with a complementary survey of Non-U.S. Funders of Media Assistance Projects by Lee B. Becker and Tudor Vlad at the James M. Cox Jr. Center for International Mass Communication Training and Research at the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia (December, 2005). The report is available at <http://www.grady.uga.edu/coxcenter/knight.htm>.

This valuable roadmap found that at least 70 organizations in 25 donor countries outside the United States were involved in media assistance projects totaling an estimated \$1 billion annually.

The Non-U.S. Funders report included an updatable database that should prove invaluable to those assessing the field. Media Missionaries should also be revised and converted into an updatable online database of current development projects and contacts.

Another resource that continually provides new information is a website produced by the International Center for Journalists, featuring breaking news about media training events and other aspects of international journalism development. It is IJNet.org at [http://www.ijnet.org/FE\\_Article/home.asp](http://www.ijnet.org/FE_Article/home.asp).

Both Knight Foundation reports relied heavily on work by Monroe Price, together with various colleagues at Yeshiva University and the Oxford Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy. Price's report, Mapping Media Assistance, analyzed how international media development work was structured.

It is available as a PDF at

<http://pcmlp.socleg.ox.ac.uk/archive/MappingMediaAssistance.pdf>

Krishna Kumar, a USAID official who has personally evaluated many of USAID's media development projects, recently published Promoting Independent Media: Strategies for Democracy Promotion. (Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006), which is an important scholarly contribution to the field. In addition to discussing the evolution of the media development sector, the



nature and significance of media assistance, and the possible impact of various intervention strategies, Kumar's book includes case studies of media development in Latin America, the former USSR, Serbia, Bosnia (including lessons learned from the failed Open Broadcasting Network created after the Dayton peace accords), assistance to Afghanistan after the ouster of the Taliban in 2001, and Sierra Leone.

The book includes Kumar's field research and his useful theoretical overview. Kumar makes the vital distinction between the development of media capacity and the work of public diplomacy, which usually is more focused on persuading media to publish favorable articles about one's policies. Confusion about whether one is helping create capacity - or seeking publicity - is rampant in discussions of media development. Kumar correctly notes that this confusion can cripple true media development by refusing to recognize good journalism's necessary independence from even the governments and others who may have nurtured and funded it.

While Kumar's book has summarized many of the findings, USAID issued a series of reports at the turn of the century which were useful because they illuminated the best and worst experiences of media development by the American government. Those reports, available through USAID in Washington, D.C., include:

**The Role of Media in Democracy: A Strategic Approach** (June, 1999, USAID Center for Democracy and Governance, Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support and Research),

**USAID's Media Assistance: Policy and Programmatic Lessons**, (January, 2004, Kumar, K. PN-ACU-777),

**Assessment of USAID Media Assistance in Bosnia-Herzegovina 1996-2002** (September, 2003, PN-ACR-756),

**Journalism Training and Institution Building in Central American Countries** (Rockwell, R. & Kumar, K, August, 2003, PN-ACR-755),

**Promoting Independent Media in Russia: An Assessment of USAID's Media Assistance** (Kumar, K. & Cooper, L.R., November 2003, PN-ACR-757), and **U.S. Media Assistance in Serbia: July 1997-June 2002** (McClear, R. McLearn, S. & Graves, P., November 2003, PN ACT-553).

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, D.C. also has published useful assessments of democracy assistance, which hold some lessons for the more specific field of media assistance. The reports include:

**Assessing Democracy Assistance: The Case of Romania** (Carothers, T. 1996), **Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve** (Carothers, T., 1999),

**Funding Virtue: Civil Society Aid and Democracy Promotion** (Ottaway, M. and Carothers, T. eds, 2000),

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<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/50/17/5037721.htm>

**Media Development by OSCE Field Missions**, by Y. Manro, P. Palmer and M. Thompson was published in Amsterdam by Press Now in 2004. It surveys media development by the OSCE's member countries.

Bill Siemering, a key figure in radio development globally and in U.S. public radio, is currently with Jean Fairborn writing up case studies about radio development in Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique and South Africa for the Open Society institute Network Media Program website. An update of his radio development work can be seen on [www.developingradiopartners.org](http://www.developingradiopartners.org). His effort to develop community

*"Confusion about whether one is helping create capacity - or seeking publicity is rampant in discussions on media development."*

radio in Mongolia for the World Bank is mentioned on the World Bank website if you type in "community radio initiative."

The Committee to Protect Journalists' Dangerous Assignments magazine and annual assessment of the world media are must read for media developers. Other helpful essays by American journalists serving as Knight Fellows around the world also appear in the Knight Foundation's periodicals. The websites of Internews, IREX, the International Center for Journalists, IFEX, government agencies, and individual media development organizations also are an invaluable resource

## MAKING THE CASE FOR MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

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David Hoffman, the founder and president of Internews, wrote an influential article in Foreign Affairs magazine (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, March/April 2002) entitled "Beyond Public Diplomacy," which also makes the case for a distinction between independent media development and public relations. "Freedom of the Press" by Ellen Hume in the State Department's e-journal Issues of Democracy (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/journals.htm>, vol. 10 no. 2, December 2005) outlines four essential roles that a free press serves in a democracy: holding government leaders accountable to the people, publicizing issues that need attention, educating citizens so they can make informed decisions, and connecting people with each other in civil society. The article draws on examples including China's SARS epidemic, a bank failure in Uruguay, Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, and elsewhere.

## ECONOMICS AND MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

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The World Bank studied 97 countries and concluded that those with privately owned, local independent media had better education and health, less corruption, and more transparent economies. A full analysis of this phenomenon is captured in *The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development*, edited by Roumeen Islam, Simeon Djankov and Caralee McLeish, which was published by the World Bank Institute in 2002. This book outlines the importance of independent media development to the economic and political advancement in any democracy. Chapters include analyses of how the media support markets by Joseph Stiglitz, the importance of economic support for media in transition, by Tim Carrington and Mark Nelson; case studies of media development in Thailand, Bangladesh, Cairo Zimbabwe, and Poland, and other topics.

The World Bank also published "Building Institutions for Markets" in 2001, which illustrates the importance of financial viability for news organizations.

As World Bank official Tim Carrington observed recently, "Increasingly in Africa, journalism is compromised less by state control and low skills (though both are real problems) than by the cash-strapped condition of the news organizations which has fed a pandemic of for-pay journalism."

## THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

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Monroe Price is one of the most prolific writers in the field of reforming international media policy and law. He has published studies of broadcast reform and policy in the former Communist countries, in India, Bosnia, and elsewhere.

Monroe Price and Peter Krug's *The Enabling Environment for a Free and Independent Media* (USAID, 2001) is an influential book which illuminates the conditions necessary for independent media to succeed in any country.

Price also edited the valuable "Restructuring the Media in Post-Conflict Societies: Four Perspectives: The Experience of Intergovernmental and Non-governmental Organizations," published by UNESCO in May 2000.

Other Price resources include:

**A Communications Cornucopia** ( edited with R. Noll, Brookings Institution Press, 1998);

**Democratizing Media, Democratizing the State**, (edited with Beata Rozumilowicz and Stefan G. Verhulst, London; Routledge, 2001);

**Media and Sovereignty: Global Information Revolution and Its Challenge to State Power** (MIT Press, 2002);

**"Seizing Transmitters: National identity in Bosnia,"** chapter in J. Muller (ed), *Memory and Power*, Cambridge University Press (2002),

**"Ownership in Russia,"**(with P. Krug,) in *IIC Media Ownership and Control in the Age of Convergence*, 1996.

**"The Market for Loyalties and a Global Communications Commission,"** *Intermedia* (1994); and numerous other scholarly articles about broadcasting and regulation in transitional societies.

Ellen Mickiewicz of Duke University is another expert whose writing about broadcasting policy reform and other aspects of media development in post-Communist societies is worth examining. Mickiewicz, who has served on the board of IREX, currently is writing a chapter on **"Transition and Democratization: The Many Dimensions of the Impact and Roles of Journalists,"** in a forthcoming new edition of the 1998 book, **The Politics of News, the News of Politics** (Graber, D., Norris, P., and McQuail, D., eds, Congressional Quarterly press). Her original chapter in their 1998 edition was **"Transition and Democracy: The Role of Journalists in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union."** She also wrote **"Media, Transition and Democracy: Television and the Transformation of Russia,"** in *A Communications Cornucopia*, (Noll, R. and Price, M., 1998.)

## MEDIA AND CONFLICT

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A useful resource is Monroe Price's *Forging Peace:*

**International Conflict: Peacekeeping, Human Rights and the Management of Media Space** (edited with Mark Thompson), Edinburgh University Press, 1992.

Internews Network and the Search for Common Ground, two U.S.-based NGOs, have extensive information on their websites about efforts to train media to handle conflict resolution. Kumar's 1999 USAID report, **The Role of Media in Democracy: A Strategic Approach** (June, 1999, USAID Center for Democracy and Governance, Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support and Research), discusses how this subset of media development differs from other capacity-building.

Becker and Vlad also wrote a report to the U.S. Institute of Peace, *Developing and Evaluating Alternative Approaches to Media Coverage of Conflict*, (Washington, D.C., 2005).

## REGIONAL ANALYSES

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There are some strong regional specialists now covering the key regions of the developing world. They are increasingly contributing to regional knowledge – sharing processes such the Africa Media Development Initiative, a partnership of the BBC World Service Trust with the Ahmadu Bello University (Nigeria), the School of Journalism at Rhodes University (South Africa) and a network of 17 leading African media and communications researchers.<sup>8</sup> In addition to this, an unprecedented number of media practitioners, media assistance organizations, owners and academics took part in 2006 in a major assessment of the Africa media development landscape as part of the Strengthening Africa's Media (STREAM) process facilitated by the UN Economic Commission for Africa supported by DFID and the Open Society Foundation.<sup>9</sup>

Thai journalist Kavi Chongkittavorn is a founder of the Southeast Asian Press Association (SEAPA) who has monitored media development in the region with numerous articles in foreign affairs journals. He recently assessed the present

<sup>8</sup> [http://www0.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/specials/1552\\_trust\\_amdi/index.shtml](http://www0.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/specials/1552_trust_amdi/index.shtml)

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.dgroups.org/groups/AMDP/index.cfm>

state of Asian media in: "Degree of Freedom: the Southeast Asian Media," a chapter in *Media and Media Power*, edited by Kurt Almquist and Alexander Linklater, (Axel and Margaret Axson Johnson Foundation, Sweden, 2005.)

Lin A. Neumann is another astute observer of Asian media development. Working on behalf of the Committee to Protect Journalists in the 1990s, he documented the threats and violence against journalists and news organizations across Asia. He recently became editor of *The Standard* newspaper in Hong Kong. His valuable monographs and articles include:

- A section of Price's UNESCO volume (see above);
- **"Press, Power and Politics in Indonesia"** (Arlington, Va.: Freedom Forum booklet, 2000);
- **"Media and Political Change in Thailand"** (Arlington, Va.: Freedom Forum booklet, 2001);
- **"The Survival of Burmese Journalism,"** *Harvard Asia Quarterly*, Winter 2002;
- Numerous reports for the Committee to Protect Journalists about press freedom challenges in Hong Kong, China, Cambodia, the Philippines, and elsewhere.

In Pakistan, Owais Aslam Ali, head of the Pakistan Press Foundation, has published reports on the state of the media in his country available through their website [www.pakistanpressfoundation.org](http://www.pakistanpressfoundation.org).

British writer Mark Thompson evaluated efforts by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the former Yugoslavia, in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia (FYROM) and Kosovo International Assistance to Media, (Vienna: OSCE, 2000.)

Harvard University's Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy has published a number of helpful reports which are available through their website. Most recently, David Anable, former U.S. newspaper editor and head of the International Center for Journalists, wrote **"The Role of Georgia's Media – and Western Aid – in the Rose Revolution"** (December 2005). Other reports include: David Rhode, **"All Successful Democracies Need Freedom of Speech: American Efforts to Create a Vibrant Free Press in Iraq and Afghanistan,"** (2005); Tomas P. Lvana, **"New Europe's Civil Society, Democracy and the Media Thirteen Years After: The Story of the Czech Republic,"** (2004); Ziguang Li, **"Great Sound Makes No Noise – Creeping Freedoms in Chinese Press,"** (2000); Alina Mungui-Pippidi, **"State into Public: The Failed Reform of State TV in East Central Europe,"** (2000); Stephen J. Hutcheon, **"Pressing Concerns: Hong Kong's Media in an Era of Transition,"** (1998); Jeff Trimble, **"Spreading the Word: The KGB's Image-Building Under Gorbachev,"** (1997); Bernard Margueritte, **"Post-Communist Eastern Europe: The Difficult Birth of a Free Press,"** (1995); Alexander Merkushev, **"The Russian and Soviet Press, A Long Journey from Suppression to Freedom via Suppression and Glasnost,"** (1991); Dieter Buhl, **"Window to the West: How Television from the Federal Republic Influenced Events in East Germany,"** (1990); Sean Jacobs, **"Tensions of a Free Press: South Africa After Apartheid,"** (1999); and Gadi Wolfsfeld, **"The Role of the News Media in Unequal Political Conflicts: From the Intifada to the Gulf War and Back Again."** (1993).

Before it cancelled most of its foreign media development, the Freedom Forum in Arlington, Va. published the *Media Studies Journal* magazine which offered many articles about ongoing media development. One, for example, is **"Lessons for the Media from Foreign Aid,"** by John Maxwell Hamilton, in the fall, 1999 issue. And **"Until Old Cats Learn How to Bark,"** by Czech journalist Jan Urban in the same edition. Urban's article recounts the missteps made by some well – intentioned American journalists shortly after the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia when they tried to impose Western "objectivity" standards on a freshly post-Communist society.

*"There are some strong regional specialists now covering the key regions of the developing world."*

## CONCLUSION

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The field is now starting to get the literature it deserves. But consistent data and assessment of media development efforts are lacking. As Becker and Vlad concluded in their 2005 Knight Foundation report, "Getting detailed records from funding organizations is not easy. Lengthy visits with a variety of parties within organizations is going to be needed. In fact, UNESCO estimated it 'would need one person working full time for 12 months to put together detailed information about all our media projects in the last 10 years.'"

Becker and Vlad propose linking the investments made to measures of media performance established by such organizations as Freedom House, Reporters Sans Frontières, and IREX. A first step would be to establish a "best practice" criterion that funders will line-item their specific efforts to develop journalism capacity. Further, the measures of media performance need to be examined to determine a consistent index that would become the standard for the field. This should be included, as Becker and Vlad suggest, in an online database created for each country for which media assistance spending is available. The Cox report's database has been designed to accommodate this goal, the earlier Media Missionaries database should be moved to an editable online format as well. As Becker and Vlad warned, the history of media development, and evaluation of its merits, is based on data that is not being preserved. Organizations engaged in this work continue to fold media development in with other democracy-building activities. It is important that a systematic method of evaluation be established so that lessons can be learned and funding can be targeted most effectively.



# Selected Resources:

## Laura Stein, Katy Pearce and Myriam Horngren

SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LITERATURE OF MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

**Siebert, Peterson et al., 1956, *Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do*, University of Illinois, Illini Books.**

Presented here are four major theories behind the functioning of the world's presses: (1) the Authoritarian theory, which developed in the late Renaissance and was based on the idea that truth is the product of a few wise men; (2) the Libertarian theory, which arose from the works of men like Milton, Locke, Mill, and Jefferson and avowed that the search for truth is one of man's natural rights; (3) the Social Responsibility theory of the modern day: equal radio and television time for political candidates, the obligations of the newspaper in a one-paper town, etc.; (4) the Soviet Communist theory, an expanded and more positive version of the old Authoritarian theory.

**Lerner, David. 1958, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*, New York: Free Press.**

The concept of development communication first emerged with the publication of this classic book. Lerner conducted research in the Middle East and North Africa, and was able to trace correlations between expanded economic activity and other modernization variables such as urbanization, high literacy levels, media consumption and political development. Lerner argued that the media could serve as a great multiplier of development by communicating development messages to the undeveloped.

**Pye, Lucian. 1963, *Communication and Political Development*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.**

Pye linked modernization with Westernization and "the diffusion of a world culture," what we might today call globalization. He identified political development with: a world culture based on technology and the spirit of science, on a rational view of life, a secular approach to social relations, a feeling for justice in public affairs, and, above all else, on the acceptance in the political realm that the prime unit of the polity should be the nation-state.

**Schramm, Wilbur. 1964, *Mass Media and National Development: The Role of Information in the Developing Countries*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.**

UNESCO commissioned Schramm to determine the precise role that the mass media played in development. Schramm believed in the concept of an all-powerful media that could be used by development agents to communicate messages

about technological innovations. The result of Schramm's work was published as *Mass Media and National Development*, and provided the theoretical foundation for development communication for the next 10 to 15 years.

**Golding. "Media professionalism in the third world: the transfer of ideology," in Curran, J., Gurevitch M. and Woolacott J. (Eds.) 1977, *Mass Communication and Society*, London: The Open University/Edward Arnold.**

Golding, who regards the transfer of a media ideology as an aspect of the professionalization process has pointed out three mechanisms of transfer: institutional transfer, education and training, and occupational ideologies.

**Casmir F.L. (Ed.) 1991, *Communication in Development*, Norwood: Ablex Publishing.**

The book illustrates the wide variety of thinking and practice that focuses on culture and human beings in culture. It documents development communication experiences around the world. The contributions are organised in five parts: conceptual bases for the use of communication in development; communication in the development of contemporary states; Central and South America: Regional Development and Communication Policies; Dealing with the need of Cultural Minorities: Communication and Development within States; The Role of Communication in the Development of Nations and States. Included in Part One is a contribution by Jan Servaes on new perspectives for communication and development. The tables provided in this chapter serve to clearly outline the important component parts and implications of various new paradigms on development and communication.

**Nwoso, Peter, Onwumehili, Chucka and M'Bayo, Ritchard (Eds.) 1995, *Communication and the Transformation of Society A Developing Region's Perspectives*, Lanham, University Press of America.**

A text-reference on development communication in general, and in particular on the African experience in communication and development over the last 50 years. The 23 essays, by African and Africanist scholars and practitioners, are organized in nine individually introduced sections: theoretical issues and critical considerations; development and communication policies; history and development role of media in Africa; audience uses of communication channels; communication technologies for development; critical areas of development; planning, evaluation, training, and development; methodological considerations; and new directions for communication and development in Africa.

**The Center for Democracy and Governance. Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support, and Research. 1999, *The Role of Media in Democracy: A Strategic Approach*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Agency for International Development.**

This paper develops the rationales USAID uses to determine support for media freedom around the world. USAID works from the principle that access to information is essential to democracy because it ensures that citizens make informed choices and serves as a check on elected representatives. USAID defines five types of media support activities that address weaknesses in media sectors: reforming media law, strengthening constituencies for reform, removing barriers to access, training, and supporting the capitalization of media. The goal of media development, according to USAID, "generally should be to move the media from one that is directed or even overtly controlled by government or private interests to one that is more open and has a degree of editorial independence that serves the

public interest" (5). The ultimate goal of media assistance should be "to develop a range of diverse mediums and voices that are credible, and to create and strengthen a sector that promotes such outlets" (5).

**Besley, Timothy and Burgess, Robin. 2000, *The Political Economy of Government Responsiveness: Theory and Evidence from India*, The Suntory Centre, London School of Economics.**

The authors conclude that information flows about policy actions are particularly important to increasing government responsiveness, and that the mass media in particular can create incentives for governments to respond to citizens' needs. Government responsiveness is particularly relevant in low-income countries, where vulnerable populations, in absence of market opportunities, rely heavily on the state.

**Stapenhurst, Frederick. 2000, *The Media's Role in Curbing Corruption*, World Bank Institute Departmental Working Paper. World Bank, Washington D.C.**

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/WBI/Resources/wbi37158.pdf>

Stapenhurst illustrates the connection between the media and reduction in corruption, both tangibly (heads of state or other public officials brought down due to revelations in the press of corruption) and intangibly (by reporting on the work of anti-corruption bodies, the media maintains public interest and scrutiny of their work). Case studies from developed and developing countries are included. Stapenhurst quotes the World Bank in stating that "civil society and the media are crucial to creating and maintaining an atmosphere in public life that discourages fraud and corruption. Indeed, they are arguably the two most important factors in eliminating systemic corruption in public institutions."

**Price, Monroe E, Rozumilowicz, Beata, and Verhulst, Stefaan (Eds.) 2001, *Media Reform: Democratizing Media, Democratizing the State*, London: Routledge.**

Changes in the political and institutional structures in countries undergoing a transition toward democracy deeply affect the relationships between the domestic media and the public, the state, and their counterparts abroad. This volume focuses on several countries that are emerging from extended periods under authoritarian governments and examines the pursuit and the impact of democratization in regard to the media.

**Gallagher, Margaret, 2001, *Gender Setting: New Agendas for Media Monitoring and Advocacy*, London, Zed Books**

What is the scope for independent citizen action in media and cultural policy formation? How can audiences effectively voice critiques of media content? In a market-centred and consumer-oriented media world, what is the potential for monitoring, lobbying and advocacy? This book argues that there is a role for local action to defend and promote diversity in the content, images, symbols and values that people use in making sense of their lives. It focuses on media portrayals of gender - whose critique has been fundamental to the modern international women's movement. Now, research and activism have been brought together in the form of gender media monitoring - systematic data collection aimed at policy critique and practical change. The book brings together research findings and monitoring experiences from both North and South to demonstrate how women's groups have developed effective media monitoring models.

### **Gender Links, 2001, Whose News? Whose Views? South Africa**

Sexist attitudes and stereotypes remain one of the major impediments to the achievement of gender equality. Mass media plays a key role in shaping public attitudes. Studies show that the overwhelming majority of news sources are men. Women invariably feature either as sex objects or as victims of violence in the media. Ironically, although women constitute the majority of media consumers, little attention is paid to what they would be interested in knowing. Assumptions have been made about the closed-mindedness of men to progressive coverage on gender issues. Indeed, the burden of masculinity is one that is increasingly coming in for discussion and scrutiny. It needs to feature more in media debates.

Several manuals and guidelines have been developed for mainstreaming gender in government policies and programmes. Few such materials exist for the media. The development of a simple handbook for media practitioners on how to mainstream gender within their institutions and in their editorial products is an essential beginning.

### **World Bank, 2002. World Development Report 2002: Building Institutions for Markets, The Media (Chapter 10).**

This chapter of the World Bank's 2002 World Development Report establishes the variety of roles the media serves: carrying information and encouraging commerce in geographically isolated markets; providing information on political markets; informing and giving voice to poor and marginalized people; supplementing traditional education; making public services more responsive to the poor; improving public health efforts; providing civic education; and supporting institutional change and market development. The crucial factors that make media effective in these roles are independence, quality and reach.

### **Owen, Bruce M. "Media as Industry: Economic Foundations of Mass Communications," in Djankov, Simeon, Islam, Roumeen, and McLiesh, Caralee (Eds.) 2002, The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank Institute.**

Owen states that in market economies, none of the political, cultural or economic benefits of mass media can exist if the media are not successful businesses. Economic models of competing advertiser-supported media indicate that such media will tend to cater to mass interests, duplicating programming and neglecting minority tastes. According to Owen, in developing countries, there are fewer audience niches that can command advertiser attention and thus attention from the media. In developing countries, profit-oriented, advertising-supported mass media may have little incentive to produce content that reflects specific or minority local interests, needs and culture.

### **Stiglitz, Joseph, "Transparency in Government," in Djankov, Simeon, Islam, Roumeen, and McLiesh, Caralee (Eds.) 2002, The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank Institute.**

Stiglitz argues that a free, investigative press reduces asymmetrical information between the government and the public. State-controlled media are assumed to have a bias towards the incumbent leadership, limiting the leadership's willingness to offer information that could be damaging to those in power. Stiglitz argues that secrets and asymmetries of information between the state and its people are costly for the economic growth of a nation. If information about government action is not fully available to citizens, voters may make choices in electing leaders that are not aligned with their own - or the country's - best economic interests

**Djankov, Simeon, McLiesh, Caralee, Nenova, Tatiana and Shleifer, Andrei, "Media Ownership and Prosperity," in Djankov, Simeon, Islam, Roumeen, and McLiesh, Caralee (Eds.) 2002, *The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development*, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank Institute.**

This chapter examines the correlation between state ownership of the media and economic, political and social development factors. The authors constructed measures of state ownership of newspapers and terrestrial television stations in 97 countries and found that state ownership of the media was consistently correlated with 'bad' outcomes in political and economic rights, and social factors such as press freedoms, education attainment, and life expectancy.

The explanation for this correlation is two-fold. First, the state is assumed to have a vested interest in controlling the information available to the public, thus limiting the public's ability to make rational political and economic choices in their own self-interest. Second, state-owned systems are considered to typically face little competition, making them less responsive to consumer demands for information. State ownership of newspapers was most highly correlated with negative indicators of political and economic rights, media freedom and social outcomes, much more so than television ownership. State ownership of television results in very few statistically significant correlations with negative indicators of political and economic rights and media freedom, and only slightly more correlation with social indicators. The study indicates that there may be powerful correlations between the way ownership of the media is structured and the political and economic development of a nation.

**Carrington, Tim and Nelson, Mark. "Media in Transition: The Hegemony of Economics," in Djankov, Simeon, Islam, Roumeen, and McLiesh, Caralee (Eds.) 2002, *The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development*, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank Institute.**

The media's ability to contribute to improved government accountability, more efficient markets and more information-rich societies depends on the ability of the media to operate as financially self-sufficient entities. In turn, this ability is closely linked to the local economy and the ability of individual media outlets to survive and prosper financially.

**Strömberg, David. "Distributing News and Political Influence," in Djankov, Simeon, Islam, Roumeen, and McLiesh, Caralee (Eds.) 2002, *The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development*, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank Institute.**

Stromberg's research considers the impact of the media on public opinion, and the resulting impact of public opinion on actions by politicians. He argues that in democracies, politicians are more responsive to the opinions of well-informed segments of the population. Who will be well-informed depends largely on the advertiser-supported economic model of the media. Stromberg argues that those segments of the population that are most attractive to advertisers will receive the most comprehensive coverage from the media.

**Islam, Roumeen. "Into the Looking Glass: What the Media Tell and Why – An Overview," in Djankov, Simeon, Islam, Roumeen, and McLiesh, Caralee (Eds.) 2002, *The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development*, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank Institute.**

Islam argues that the independence, quality and reach of a nation's media can have significant influence on the country's economic development. Independence



and quality are coupled, and according to Islam are affected by the ownership, financing, and legal structures that determine how and how freely the media operate. Reach refers to the level of audience penetration of the media, and includes the influence and availability of foreign media in some cases. Islam notes the positive relationship between levels of democracy and levels of press freedom, but questions the direction of the relationship and notes that press freedom usually, though not always, is positively correlated with the economic prosperity of a country. The degree to which laws and policy have an actual effect on the practical operation of the media varies from country to country - i.e., some countries may have laws on the books that guarantee press freedoms, but very different policies in practice.

**Ahrend, Rudiger. 2002, Press Freedom, Human Capital, and Corruption. Delta Working Paper 2002-11.**

[http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=620102](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=620102)

Ahrend argues that exposure of corruption is a key function of a watchdog press. Corruption matters for development - there is a high inverse correlation between corruption levels and variables that indicate a country's development level. At the same time, studies have shown strong empirical evidence that a high levels of press freedom lead to lower levels of corruption in government.

**World Bank Development Report 2002: Building Institutions for Markets: Section 4: Society: Chapter 10: The Media Rogers, Everett. 2003, The Diffusion of Innovations (5th ed.), New York: Free Press.**

Diffusion of Innovations is a theory that analyzes, as well as helps explain, the adaptation of a new innovation, helping to explain the process of social change. An innovation is an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. The perceived newness of the idea for the individual determines his/her reaction to it. In addition, diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. The four main elements of the theory are the innovation, communication channels, time, and the social system.

**Peters, Bettina. 2003, The media's role: covering or covering up corruption? Global Corruption Report 2003. Transparency International.**

To support the public's right to scrutinize and hold informed debate on government activity, the role of journalists is to provide the public with timely and accurate information on the affairs of government, business and special interests, and to shape the climate of democratic debate. In order to fulfill that role, the media must have access to public information. However, journalists around the world continue to face obstacles in reporting on public information, including censorship, blocked access to official information, defamation laws, abuse of media services such as printing presses, lack of training, and lack of investment in investigative reporting.

The tendency of political manipulation of news and public debate exists in all societies, yet restrictions on media are more profound and pronounced in countries where democratic culture is not well established. Ownership concentration, the role of advertising and corrupt journalistic practices can also undermine the media's ability to achieve international standards of quality and effectiveness.

**Pope, Jeremy. 2003, Access to Information: whose right and whose information? Global Corruption Report 2003. Transparency International.**

Pope establishes that countries transitioning from colonial, communist, dictatorship or feudalist governments will be especially challenged in efforts to open information access. Information access here refers to transparency in operations and release of government information. He cites obsessions with secrecy and lack of trust between the government and the people. Perceived secrecy and lack of trust are also issues with multinational corporations, aid donors and international financial institutions. Pope says the media, whose role should be to protect citizens from abuses of secrecy and the power it provides, often fail in this mission. Competition in media is one way of ensuring that more information reaches the public – large monopolistic media networks are more likely to go along with government or corporate concealment if it benefits their financial bottom line. Bribery of individual journalists, and the close relationships between media tycoons and powerful political leaders also weaken the media's ability and willingness to report on corruption. Trust has eroded in all societies, and people require access to information in order to have confidence in public institutions. Yet information overload is also a problem. The media should serve as a filter for the public - finding the needle in the haystack - yet the media often falls short in this task. The author believes citizens must ultimately be the holders of information.

**Frohardt, Mark and Temin, Jonathan. October 2003, Use and Abuse of Media in Vulnerable Societies: Special Report 110. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.**

This article documents the ways in which media can be manipulated to instigate violent conflict. There are both structural and content indicators which can be used to evaluate whether the media is particularly susceptible to this kind of manipulation. Structural indicators include media variety and plurality, degree of journalist isolation, and the legal environment for media. Content indicators concern content designed to create fear or resignation. The article recommends monitoring of media for these indicators, and reviews potential methods for intervention, preferably early intervention, to avoid manipulation of the media.

**Coyne, Christopher and Leeson, Peter. 2004, Read All About It! Understanding the Role of Media in Economic Development, *Kyklos*, Vol. 57, pp. 21-44**

Coyne and Leeson argue that media is integral to economic reform, because it can build consensus and understanding of economic reforms. They employ models of Game Theory to show that "economic development is achieved when potential games of conflict are turned into games of coordination, and a free media is one such means for achieving this." They state "...free media, operating in a favorable legal environment and providing quality information, is one mechanism for coordinating the activities of politicians with the demands of the populace." The authors present historical examples to illustrate successful coordination (Poland, Hungary), continued prevalence of conflict (Ukraine) and coordination around bad beliefs and norms (Bulgaria).

**Carolyn M. Byerly & Karen Ross, 2005, Women and Media: A Critical Introduction, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing**

Women and Media is a thoughtful cross-cultural examination of the ways in which women have worked inside and outside mainstream media organizations since the 1970s. The book provides an overview of the key issues and

developments in feminist media critiques and interventions over the last 30 years, beginning with the extant literature in this growing field and ending with a new study of women's media activism in 20 nations. The authors recount and analyze the first-hand narratives of nearly 100 women media activists whose work has contributed to the making of a feminist public sphere that has moved women leaders and agendas more forcefully into their societies.

**Francis B. Nyamnjoh, 2005, *Africa's Media: Democracy and the Politics of Belonging*, Zed Books**

This major study explores the role of the mass media in promoting democracy and empowering civil society in Africa. The author contextualizes Africa within the rapidly changing global media and shows how patterns of media ownership and state control have evolved and the huge difficulties under which most African media workers labor. The author also explores the whole question of media ethics and professionalism in Africa. The general analysis is supported by a detailed case study of Cameroon.

**Ammu Joseph, Kalpana Sharma, 2006, *Whose News? The Media and Women's Issues*, Second Edition, London, Sage Publications**

This is the Second Edition of the highly successful and pioneering first edition (SAGE 1994), which analysed the coverage of issues of particular concern to women in the mainstream media in India over the eventful decade of 1978-1987.

Since then, dramatic developments have taken place in both the national and the global media environment which have resulted in technological and market driven transformations. This has raised a new set of questions concerning women's access to the media and information in general, as users, participators in media and communication structures and their portrayal and perspectives in media content.

This Second Edition retains the unique gender analysis of media content and situates, views and evaluates the coverage of gender issues in the media against the background of globalization in general and media globalization in particular, offering updates on the media coverage of women-related issues: dowry-related violence; rape; sex selection; Muslim women's legal rights; and the practice of sati.

**World Bank: *Global Monitoring Report 2006: Strengthening Mutual Accountability – Aid, Trade and Governance***

The third annual global monitoring report (GMR) report highlights economic growth, better quality aid, and trade reforms, as well as governance as essential elements to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The elements of global monitoring examined in detail in the report include poverty and malnutrition; human development outcomes; meeting commitments on aid, trade, and debt relief; performance of international financial institutions; governance in developing countries; and global checks and balances to strengthen governance, including transparency through citizens participation and the relevance of a free press. It proposes to use the media freedom indicators contained in the Global Integrity Index as part of country-level governance monitoring.

# List of Organisations that attended the Inaugural Global Forum on Media Development, Amman Jordan, October 2005

## **Afghanistan**

Institute for Media Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS)  
NAI  
Pajiwok Afghan News Agency  
Sayara Media & Communication  
Albanian Media Institute Albania

## **Algeria**

Daily Sawtalahrar  
IFJ (Syndicat National des journalistes Algériens)

## **Argentina**

Foro del Periodismo Argentino (FOPEA) Argentina

## **Angola**

Media Institute of Southern Africa  
Daily Jugantor

## **Armenia**

Internews Armenia  
Yerevan Press Club  
International Press Institute

## **Azerbaijan**

Internews Azerbaijan Public Association  
Union of Journalists Yeni Nesil

## **Bangladesh**

Bangladesh Centre for Development Journalism, and Communication (BCDJC)  
Media Watch, Bangladesh  
Information Development Promotion Foundation

## **Belarus**

The Belarusian Association of Journalists

## **Belgium**

International Federation of Journalists

## **Benin**

Radio for Peace Building Africa (RJCE BENIN)

## **Bosnia**

The Journalism Development Group

## **Botswana**

Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA)  
Samdef

## **Bulgaria**

Media Development Center

## **Canada**

Association Mondiale des Radiodiffuseurs Communautaires (AMARC)  
GlobeCastNews  
Institute for Media Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS)  
International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX)  
Journalists for Human Rights (JHR)  
The Communication Initiative

## **Cameroon**

United Media Incorporated Common Initiative Group  
Oku Rural Radio Association

## **China**

CHINA CENTRAL TELEVISION  
Environmental Education Media Project (EEMP)

## **Colombia**

Corporación CIDCCE  
FNPI-Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano  
Foundation for the Freedom of the Press

## **Costa Rica**

Instituto de Prensa y Libertad de Expresión (IPLEX)  
Voces Nuestras

## **Denmark**

Danish School of Journalism  
IMS

## **Ecuador**

Asociación Latinoamericana de Educación Radiofónica ALER  
Radio La Luna Ecuador

## **Egypt**

Al-Ahram Newspaper  
Adham Center for Electronic Journalism, American Univ in Cairo  
Arab Press Freedom Watch (APFW)  
Radio & Television Union- Egypt  
The Arab Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession

## **Estonia**

Estonian Media Centre  
AIDS Resource Center/Internews

## **Ethiopia**

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa  
Institute for War & Peace Reporting  
Ethiopian Free press Journalists' Association-EFJA

## **France**

Crosslines  
Institut Panos Paris  
Internews Europe  
Internews International  
World Association of Newspapers  
World Press Freedom Committee



### **Georgia**

Georgian Association of Regional TV Broadcasters  
Internews Georgia

### **Germany**

Catholic Media Council (CAMECO)  
InterPress Service (IPS)  
Transparency International  
Transparency International  
Media in Cooperation  
MIC (Media in Cooperation)

### **Ghana**

Media Foundation for West Africa  
Ghana Journalists Association  
Panos Institute Caribbean

### **Guatemala**

Association of Guatemalan Journalists

### **Haiti**

Panos Institute Caribbean

### **Honduras**

Comité por la Libre Expression

### **Hungary**

Center for Independent Journalism  
Centre for Advocacy and Research

### **India**

Centre for Advocacy and Research  
Drishti Media Collective  
Madhyam Communications/VOICES  
Net Radiophony India Pvt Ltd  
Panos South Asia  
Indonesia Press & Broadcasting Society  
OneWorld International Foundation  
The Concerned for Working Children

### **Indonesia**

The Press Council, Indonesia  
International centre for journalism "MediaNet"  
Institute for the Studies on Free Flow of Information (ISAI)  
ProMedia Indonesia

### **Iraq**

Al Mibad Television and Radio  
Association of Iraqi journalists  
Aswat al-Iraq news agency (Voices of Iraq news agency)  
Iraqi National Communication & Media Commission  
Iraqi National Journalists Advisory Panel IFJ  
Norwegian People's Aid  
Press and Communication Directorate- Iraqi Presidency

### **Israel**

Cinema Factory  
Women Mediterranean Press Network

## Jordan

The Jordan Press Association  
Abdali Investment & Development  
Ad-Dustour Daily  
Agence France Presse  
Aghad newspaper/amman/jordan  
Al Anbat Daily Newspaper  
Al Deyar Newspaper  
Al Ghad Newspaper  
Al Rai Daily Newspaper  
Al Rai newspaper  
Al-Ghad Jordan  
Al-Quds Center for Political Studies  
AmmanNetn  
Aqaba Development Corporation  
Arab Telemedia Services  
ASEZA- Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority  
BRIDGE, Institute of Development Studies (IDS)  
Bukra " creativity Network "  
Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists  
Director General Jordan  
First Holdings Limited  
Freedom House Jordan  
Gandhi Center for Strategic studies  
Higher Media Council  
Housing Bank  
Information and Communication Expertise  
International Distribution Agency  
Jordan Information Center  
Jordan News Agency  
Jordan Press Association  
Jordan Radio & Television Corporation  
Jordan Television Jordan  
Jordan-United States Business Partnership Jordan  
Media In Cooperation  
Ministry of Labor  
National Bank Jordan  
National Council for Culture and Arts  
Philadelphia University  
Royal Cultural Center  
The National Centre for Human Rights  
The Times of London  
UNESCO  
UNESCO Iraq  
Yarmouk University  
Zadina Communications  
Center of Legal Assistance for Mass Media

## Kazakhstan

Internews Kazakhstan  
Journalist Union of Kazakhstan  
National Association of Television and Radio Broadcasters

## Kenya

African Woman and Child Feature Service  
Africa Free Media Foundation  
The Media Institute  
African Woman and Child Features  
CJA Kenya  
Center for Media Studies & Peace Building



### **Kuwait**

Kuwait Asian Journalists Association  
Association of Regional Broadcasting

### **Kyrgyzstan**

Internews - Kyrgyzstan

### **Lebanon**

Lebanese University  
United Nations Development Program

### **Liberia**

International Center for Media Studies and Development in West Africa  
Liberia Women Media Action Committee (LIWOMAC)  
Press Union of Liberia

### **Macedonia**

Macedonian Institute for Media

### **Lithuania**

Lithuanian Journalism Centre

### **Malawi**

The National Media Institute of Southern Africa Malawi

### **Malaysia**

Southeast Asian Centre for e-Media

### **Mexico**

Center for Journalism and Public Ethics  
CIDEM  
Fundación Prensa y Democracia México (PRENDE)

### **Mauritius**

Mauritius Times and Mauritius Union of Journalists (MUJ)

### **Moldova**

Independent Journalism Center  
Association of Independent Press of Moldova

### **Mongolia**

Mongolia Today.com online magazine

### **Morocco**

Centre for Media Freedom MENA Region (CMF MENA)

### **Mozambique**

NSJ-Southern African Media Training Trust

### **Nepal**

Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA)  
Antenna Foundation Nepal  
Himal Media Pvt.Ltd.

### **Netherlands**

Free Voice

### **New Zealand**

Press Now  
New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO

### **Nicaragua**

Foundation Violeta Chamorro

## **Nigeria**

Development Communications Network  
African Newspapers of Nigerian PLC  
Institute for Media and Society (IMS)  
IMC GEO TV  
International Press Center (IPC)  
Media Rights Agenda

## **Oman**

Globe International Oman

## **Pakistan**

Internews Pakistan  
Pakistan Press Foundation  
South Asian News Agency[SANA]  
AMIN Media Network- Internews  
Press for Peace  
The Researchers

## **Palestine**

Al-Ayyam Newspaper  
Voice of Palestine  
Live Media  
Palestine News Network

## **Panama**

Centro Latinoamericano de Periodismo (CELAP)

## **Paraguay**

Instituto Prensa y Libertad  
Sindicato de Periodistas del Paraguay

## **Philippines**

Mindanao News and Information Cooperative Center (MindaNews)

## **Qatar**

Al-Jazeera

## **Romania**

Center for Independent Journalism  
Romanian Press Club

## **Russia**

Association of Independent Regional Publishers  
Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations  
Independent Institute for Communicology  
Internews Russia  
Media Law and Policy Institute

## **Rwanda**

New Eurasia Foundation / Media  
Panos Institute West Africa  
Rwanda Journalists Association

## **Senegal**

International federation of Journalists-Africa Office  
Panos West Africa Institute

## **Serbia**

Institute for the Advancement of Journalism

## **Sierra Leone**

Center for Media and Technology, C-Met  
Sierra Leone Association of Journalists

## Singapore

Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC)

## South Africa

Association of Independent Publishers  
 Institute for Democracy in South Africa  
 Internews  
 National Community Radio Forum (NCRF)  
 Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa  
 Zambezi FoX  
 Free Media Movement & Centre for Policy Alternatives  
 Soul Beat Africa  
 The Zimbabwean

## Sri Lanka

Press Complaints Commission of Sri Lanka

## Sudan

SUDIA

## Swaziland

Media Institute Southern Africa - Swaziland

## Sweden

Fojo Institute for Further Education of Journalists  
 Skarners Media

## Switzerland

Institute of Applied Media Studies, Zurich University of Applied Sciences  
 Winterthur  
 Media Development Loan Fund  
 Medienhilfe

## Syria

International Development Associates  
 Al Hayat/LBC

## Tajikistan

Khoma

## Tanzania

Carpe Diem Inc

## Thailand

Asia Media Forum  
 Internationale Afrique Aidons Nous  
 Campaign for Popular Media Reform  
 Internews Network  
 Press Development Institute of Thailand  
 Southeast Asian Press Alliance

## Timor-Leste

Timor Media Development Centre  
 Community Radio Arabia

## Togo

International Afrique

## Trinidad & Tobago

Association of Caribbean MediaWorkers

## Tunisia

Drassaba  
 ERTT  
 S.R.T.T.





## Uganda

Panos Eastern Africa  
ICTV

## Ukraine

Independent Association of Broadcasters  
Internews Ukraine  
IREX U-Media  
Kyiv Media Law Institute  
NGO Telekritika  
Ukrainian Association of Press Publishers

## United Arab Emirates

Abu Dhabi Television  
SP Productions  
Zayed University  
Elkhabar Daily Newspaper  
Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
MEDIA

## United Kingdom

Albany Associates  
Article 19  
BBC Monitoring  
BBC World Service Trust  
Communication for Social Change Consortium  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
Delta Pearl Ltd  
Index on Censorship  
Newhouse News Services  
Globewise Communications  
Healthlink Worldwide  
Internews Europe  
Financial Times  
IREX Europe  
Institute for War and Peace (IWPR)  
Lisa Richards Management  
Media Diversity Institute  
OSI, Network Media Programs  
Panos Institute United Kingdom  
Reuters Foundation  
Rory Peck Trust  
The MediaWise Trust  
The Panos Institute  
The Thompson Foundation

## United States

Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania  
Center For Strategic and International Studies  
Columbia University, School of Journalism  
Creative Associates International, Inc.  
Global Media Forum  
Humboldt State University  
InterMedia Survey Institute  
International Center for Journalists  
International Republican Institute  
International Women's Tribune Centre /AMARC  
Internews

Internews Network  
 IREX  
 John S. and James L. Knight Foundation  
 Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at the University of Texas  
 Link TV  
 Lodestar Foundation  
 Media Development Loan Fund, Inc.  
 Media Support  
 Pacific News Service  
 Project for Global Communication Studies, Annenberg School for Communication  
 Prometheus Radio Project  
 Scriabine Foundation  
 St. John's University  
 The Ford Foundation  
 The World Bank  
 U.S. Agency for International Development  
 U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Democracy & Governance DCHA/DG  
 U.S. Department of State  
 U.S. State Department, Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL)  
 United Nations  
 United Nations Development Programme  
 University of Massachusetts  
 St. John's University  
 Corporación 555, C.A  
 Voice of America

#### **Uzbekistan**

NGO Internyus

#### **Venezuela**

Instituto Prensa y Sociedad - Venezuela  
 Lod del Medio / NGO & Universidad Central de Venezuela

#### **Vietnam**

Vietnam Forum for Environmental Journalist (VFEJ)

#### **Western Samoa**

Pacific Islands News Association - PINA

#### **Yemen**

APM Print

#### **Yugoslavia**

Journalistes en danger (JED)

#### **Zaire**

Search For Common Ground

#### **Zambia**

Breeze FM  
 Panos Institute Southern Africa  
 Media Institute of Southern Africa - Zimbabwe  
 Media Institute of southern Africa/ Southern African Editors' Forum

#### **Zimbabwe**

City Courier, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe  
 Radio Voice of the People (VOP)

*notes*





Global forum for media dev

GFMD

notes





# GMFD : Regional Fora for Media Development, Management & Coordination

## REGIONAL FORA FOR MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

**Africa Region:** Edetaen Ojo, Media Rights Agenda, Jeanette Minnie, Zambesi FoX

**Eurasia:** Manana Aslamazyan, Internews Russia

**Latin America:** Jaime Abello Banfi, Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano

**South East Asia:** Kavi Chongkittavorn, South East Asian Press Alliance

## GFMD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (2006- 2008)

Chair, David Hoffman, Internews

Vice Chair, Aidan White, International Federation of Journalists

Secretary, Jeanette Minnie, Zambezi FoX, South Africa

Treasurer, John Liu, EEMPC, China

## GFMD COORDINATION

Kathleen Reen, Mark Harvey, Eric Johnson

<http://www.gfmd.info> , <mailto:contact@gfmd.info>

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# Media Support Organisations Represented on GFMD Steering Committee 2006 – 2008

- BBC World Service Trust, UK :  
**<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/>**
- Environmental Education Media Project, China :  
**<http://www.eempc.org/index.php>**
- Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano (FNPI), Colombia :  
**<http://www.fnpi.org/>**
- Institute for War & Peace Reporting (IWPR), USA/UK :  
**<http://www.iwpr.net/>**
- International Center for Journalists (ICFJ), USA :  
**<http://www.icfj.org/>**
- International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), Belgium :  
**<http://www.ifj.org/>**
- Internews International, France :  
**<http://www.internews.tv/home/index.php>**
- Internews Russia,  
**<http://www.internews.ru/en/>**
- IREX, USA :  
**<http://www.irex.org/>**
- Media Development Loan Fund (MDLF), USA :  
**<http://www.mdlf.org/>**
- Media Rights Agenda, Nigeria :  
**<http://mediarightsagenda.org/index.html>**
- Panos, London, UK :  
**<http://www.panos.org.uk/>**
- South East Asian Press Alliance, Thailand :  
**<http://www.seapabkk.org/>**
- World Association of Newspapers (WAN), France :  
**<http://www.wan-press.org/>**

## **The Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD)**

GFMD aims to bring greater linkages and sustainable impact to the work of the media assistance sector as a whole. It seeks to do this through:

### **Collaboration**

Creating a practitioner-led platform for the media support sector to advocate with donors, governments, opinion leaders and the wider public.

### **Substantiation**

Promoting and disseminating research and analysis on the effects of media assistance on governance, poverty alleviation, emergent crises, and markets worldwide; making the case for media development as a primary pillar for advancing social, economic, and political development.

### **Professionalization**

Establishing agreed-upon standards and ethics for media development work that encourage cross-sector cooperation.

### **Shared Learning**

Evaluating the media development sector to identify and advance good practice in media support.

[www.gfmd.info](http://www.gfmd.info)

