RHODES 26 JOURNALISM

Review

PLUS THE AFRICA MEDIA BAROMETER: SOUTH AFRICA

RHODES JOURNALISM
Review

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Cover picture by Chris Kirchhoff of a mural in Mozambique warning of the scourge of Aids. See pages 8 and 9.

Chris Kirchhoff

THINKING ABOUT FEAR AND FREEDOM

Some convictions have chrystalised for me in the process of putting together this new edition of *Rhodes Journalism Review*:

Aids

The first is that, in the commissioning process I set out with a commitment to source stories on journalists reporting HIV/Aids because I continue to believe that ongoing thinking about how we report this epidemic is very important. But what I started to find this time, is that with the shift in the disease from life-threatening to life-managing, the journalism has shifted too. We are – those of us affected by HIV and those reporting it – *living with* Aids. We are not only living with it in a fact-of-life kind of way, we are also learning from those who have it and enriching our journalism by our learnings. The three stories we bring you about Aids in this edition show this creativity and sensitivity so very clearly.

Gender

I also continue to have a firm commitment to discussing gender equality in these pages. In the process of editing I attended an International Women's Media Forum discussion in Johannesburg hosted by Paula Fray (one of SA's first female editors). It was a fairly informal gathering of women media workers who mostly know each other, so discussion flowed and was frank. While there are newsrooms that are exemplary in the way they provide opportunities for women (notably the *Mail&Guardian)* there are some that are medieval in their treatment of women as labour. The point for me is that with the loss of the unions protecting their rights as workers, women journalists have lost twice over. The group called for a body to represent women journalists' interests and I sincerely hope it finds support more broadly.

Intellectual property

When I go to a movie and find myself confronted with that loud, aggressive advert always flighted before the film which tells me that stealing a film is like stealing a car, or a handbag, I am always highly irritated. No, I don't agree. The territory of creative production and ownership of ideas is just so much more complex than that short message wants us to believe. The debate about what is common to us all and should be shared as inheritance and heritage is not captured via legalism and assertions of copyright. I hope you find the stories on this issue in this edition provocative and unsettling!

Freedom

I participated as a panellist in the South Africa leg of the African Media Barometer (see the report brought to you by the Media Institute of Southern Africa and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in this edition). I started out like most others on the panel with high confidence in our good ratings given our amazing

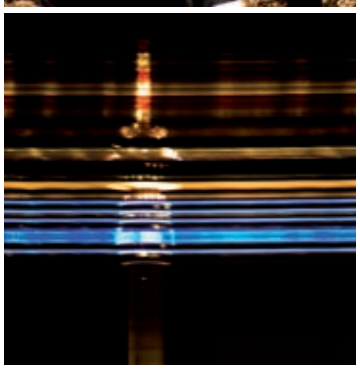
Constitutional protections. But the discussions were sobering. At every level of society, from the intimate and familial to the broad-range political, people judge carefully what they say to whom and how. And it's not extreme to say silence is often about protecting one's very livelihood and often, life. So it's important to air contention and argument about Zimbabwe, the Zuma rape trial and the ongoing debate in South Africa over public broadcasting. Rolling back fear of expression is about creating places to do it safely. We hope *Review* is one of those places for journalists.

Language

Finally a word about language. For the first time we bring you stories in French in this Review. This was provoked by a desire to carry stories on the DRC and its media. Two of the contributors wrote for us in French, so we decided to carry them in French. We also have the pictures of grafitti in Mozambique which are mostly in Portuguese and in two articles we consider the importance of indigenous language media. It's a gesture but I hope it makes the Francophone and Lusophone among our readers feel just a little bit more at home.

Anthea Garman, Editor

RHODES JOURNALISM Review



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Living with Aids

Intellectual Property

Gender Equality

Journalism Issues

African Media Barometer

African Issues

Focus on the DRC

Focus on the SABC

Testing testing, 1-2, 1-2, test, test, test, OK.

Hi, this is Thembi. It's time for my prayer. Every morning when I wake up I run off to my drawer, take out the mirror, and look at myself. Then I start to do my prayer. I say it every day. Every time when I'm feeling angry, like when you are angry at someone you always have that thing in you that you need to tell that someone what you feel. I say, Hello HIV. You trespasser. You are in my body. You have to obey the rules. You have to respect me, and if you don't hurt me, I won't hurt you. You mind your business, I'll mind mine. Then I'll give you a ticket when your time comes...

I never thought I would worry about HIV and Aids. It was the last thing on my mind...

I'm going to tell you how I was infected. I had this boyfriend and then we broke up. I went my own way and he went his way. A year later I heard that he died. When I went to his house his family was gathered there. I said, What happened? Was he shot? Or was he stabbed? His sister told me, No, he was sick. I said, What? She said, He was very thin and he couldn't talk and then all of a sudden he just lost a lot of weight. Then I asked her, What if he had Aids? She said, I don't know. That's when I started to get really worried. So I decided OK, I'm going to go for a test. I went to the clinic. They bring all of the equipment in front of me and just prick all of my fingers. Then 10 minutes passed by. The counsellor came back and said, We need to have another one. He started to do another one and another one. They did all my five fingers. And I started to worry. I was like, why is he testing me five times? Then he said, OK, now it's time for your report. He said, When your blood looks like this, it means you have the virus. You are HIV-positive and you've been positive for many years. I just stared at him, and said, OK.

Thembi Ngubane was 19 when I first met her in 2004. She was one of a few dozen teenagers with HIV/Aids I had interviewed in Khayelitsha, outside of Cape Town. At the time, I had mixed feelings about doing a radio documentary about Aids. I wasn't sure I wanted to spend a year or more of my life on such a heart-breaking topic. Also I knew it would not be easy to get past the mountains of mind-numbing statistics to make the story real, and human.

Then I met Thembi. She told me how she starts every morning by looking into the mirror and talking to her virus; she called it her "HIV prayer". Everything she said echoed in my mind. I realised this would not be a documentary about Aids, it would be a story about Thembi.

I've been producing audio diaries for public radio in the US for more than a decade. I gave Thembi a tape recorder to keep an audio diary of her life with Aids. For more than a year, Thembi recorded her innermost thoughts and captured the small scenes that helped tell a larger story: a visit to the township clinic to apply for antiretroviral drugs; facing neighbours and friends as they slowly learn her status; the conversation when she finally tells her father she has Aids; a moment of quiet, late-night dancing at home with her boyfriend.

Thembi recorded more than 50 hours of tape, which I edited into a half-hour documentary for broadcast on National Public Radio in the United States. ("Thembi's Aids Diary" was also recently broadcast on BBC, and will be broadcast in South Africa in February/March 2007).

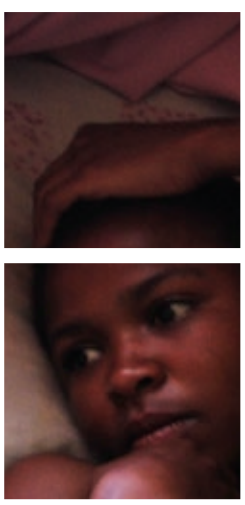
When I do a radio diary, the diarist is more than the subject of the story. He or she is the reporter and I am their producer. The diarist is reporting on the subject they know the best: their own life. As a reporter, I pay the diarist a stipend and split all proceeds from the broadcast. I give the diarist final editorial control over their story. This arrangement may raise eyebrows among some journalists. But, of course, this is not traditional journalism. Sometimes I feel it's more like being a midwife.

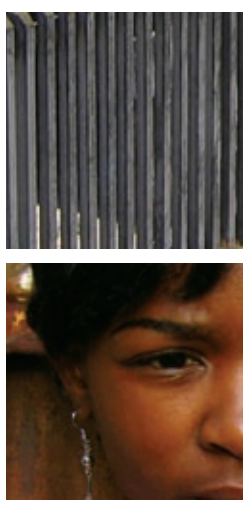
Thembi is one of the best diarists I've ever worked with. She's one of those people that draws you closer with her voice. Her recordings are intimate, honest, funny, and poetic. Still, Thembi's story was one of the hardest I've ever done. Language (Thembi's mother tongue is isiXhosa), distance (during the year Thembi recorded her diary I was living part-time in South Africa and part-time in the US), her lack of income, constant worries about her health, and the stigma of Aids in her community, all raised complicated journalistic and moral issues.

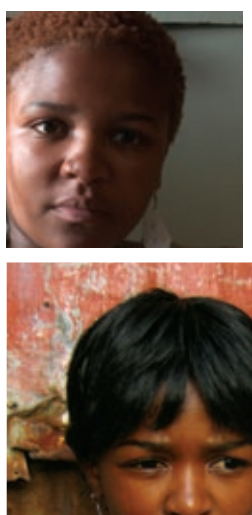
Thembi jokes that she decided to do the story because the day I first met her I came with biscuits. Neither Thembi nor I fully understood the scope of this project when we began. But as we worked together each week – in person in South Africa and later on the phone from the US – many of those theoretical journalistic issues melted away; it became simply a matter of responding to everyday life.

I have helped pay for Thembi's doctor bills and groceries. After the story was first broadcast we started a fund to raise money to build a house for Thembi and her family. I still call Thembi every week from the US (thank you Skype). It's a question many journalists ask themselves: where does my responsibility and obligation to a subject end? Thembi's story has taken on a life of its own, in part, because of our ongoing relationship. I don't know exactly where it's going, or how it will end. These are questions I have not finished answering.

When we first started working together, Thembi asked that I protect her anonymity. She wanted her story broadcast in the United States, but not in South Africa. We would not use her last name or identify the neighbourhood where she lived. But Thembi rewrote those rules when she went on antiretroviral drugs. She noticed that more people were going public with their status as the drugs – and hope – became more widely available. She decided she didn't want to hide







radio Diaries

Stories by Joe Richman
Photographs by Melikhaya Mpumelo and Sue Johnson

her disease. For Thembi, her story was starting to become her cause. She told me she wanted the diary broadcast in South Africa where it could do the most good. That is also when we first hatched the idea to do a tour of the US.

I went back to the US and raised enough money to bring Thembi and her boyfriend Melikhaya Mpumelo (who was the project's official photographer) to America for a five-city tour in April and May 2006. She presented her story to high school and college students, congressional staff in DC, Aids doctors in Boston, celebrities in Los Angeles and HIV-positive teens in Chicago. The premise of the tour was partly to reach people who were not normally public radio listeners. At a memorable presentation for high school students, one of the teenagers, upon entering the room looked at Thembi and said to his friend, "She's too pretty to have Aids." After the event, the very same boy came up to Thembi and told her, "I'm a different person than I was when I came in here."

Thembi appeared on CNN as part of a panel of Aids experts that included former President Bill Clinton and actor Richard Gere. The special aired globally on CNN, reaching a potential audience of 186 million households in 200 countries. Thembi even got to spend the day driving around New York City in a CNN limo (her personal highlight of the tour).

For me and for millions of listeners, Thembi has been a window into an incomprehensible epidemic. Hundreds of these listeners emailed to tell us that Thembi's story, for the first time, made the issue of Aids real and personal for them. It's a testament to the power of a lone voice coming through the radio, speaking directly and intimately to the listener.

"The last thing I thought I wanted to hear was another story about Aids, but Thembi's voice and speaking style captured my mind, my heart, and touched my soul. I had to get off of I-495 and stop because I couldn't see through my tears. How can a 60-year-old healthy, white man fall in love with a black South African woman with HIV/Aids over the radio in 15 minutes. It's a good question with a good answer." – Listener in Essex, Massachusetts.

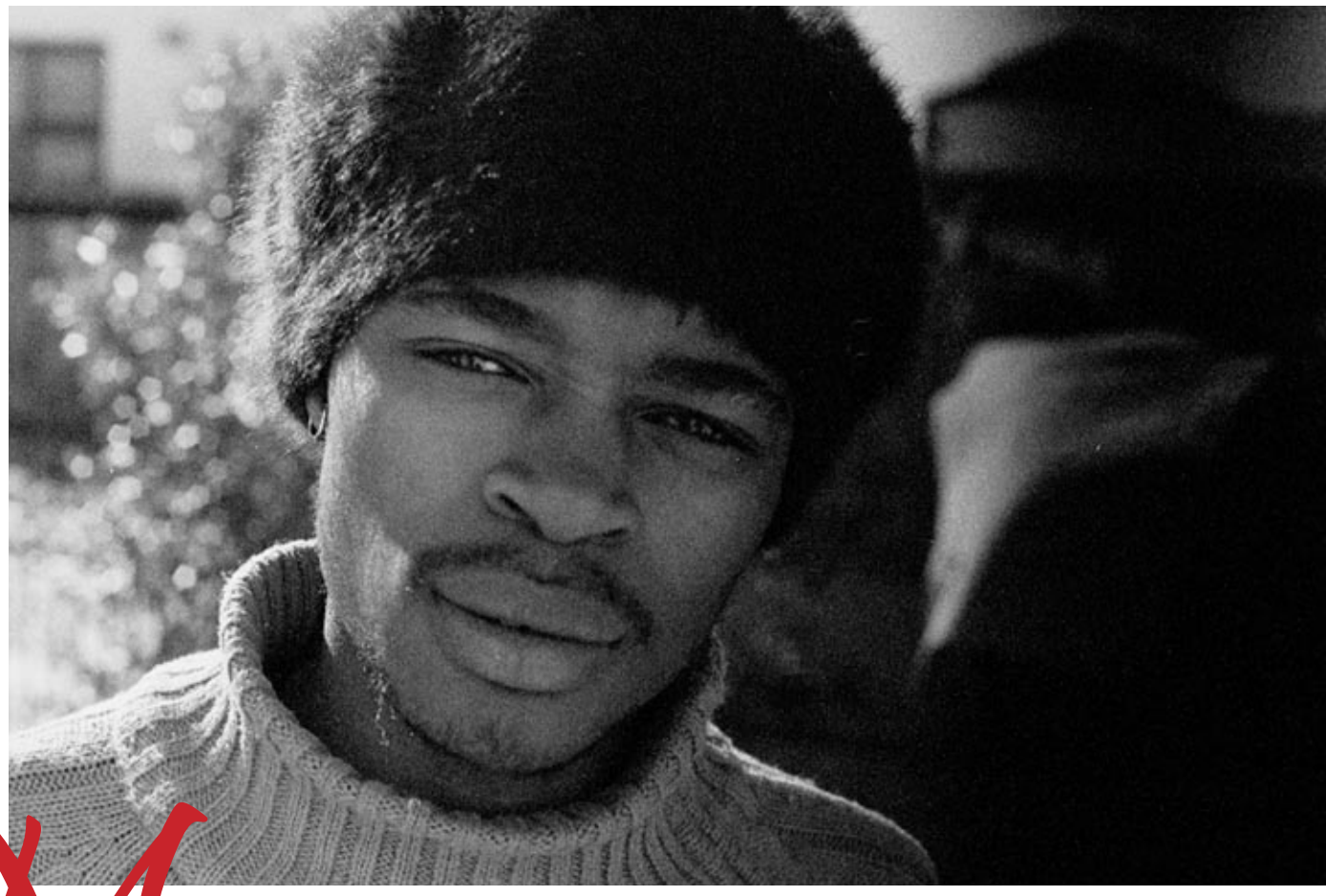
In February and March 2007 we will be doing a similar Aids education tour with Thembi in South Africa. We'll also be distributing CDs of "Thembi's Aids Diary" to schools in South Africa and translating the story into isiXhosa and isiZulu for broadcast on community radio stations throughout South Africa. And we'll be continuing to raise money to build Thembi and her family a house of their own.

When I first gave Thembi a tape recorder more than two years ago, I could not have anticipated that any of this would happen. It's a tribute to her talent as a storyteller and reporter. It's also a reminder that there is no way to predict the story when the story is real life. ■

To hear "Thembi's Aids Diary" and learn more about Thembi's upcoming South Africa tour, visit: www.radiodiaries.org

When I do a radio diary, the diarist is more than the subject of the story. He or she is the reporter and I am their producer. The diarist is reporting on the subject they know the best: their own life. As a reporter, I pay the diarist a stipend and split all proceeds from the broadcast. I give the diarist final editorial control over their story. This arrangement may raise eyebrows among some journalists. But, of course, this is not traditional journalism. Sometimes I feel it's more like being a midwife.

Thembi: [dogs bark] Now I'm at home. Oh, hi. This is Melikhaya my boyfriend. Say hi.
Melikhaya Mpumelo: Hi.
Thembi: I was just telling them about how cute you look. My boyfriend's name is Melikhaya, we live together. We've been together for two years. And Melikhaya is obsessed with music. [Music begins] Come Melikhaya let's dance. [Singing] We are very close. Everyone knows we are very close. If they see Melikhaya they see me. We are always together. He met me and I met him and that was it. [Singing] I remember when I found out about my HIV status it was very painful to tell him. I thought, what if I've also infected him? Now I've ruined my life and I've ruined everybody's life. [Music fades] Melikhaya, do you ever wish that maybe you would have never met me?
Melikhaya: No, [laughs] just because the only thing is that I love you. You know that?
Thembi: Yes, but I am the one who has infected you.
Melikhaya: I don't want to blame you. You didn't chase after Aids. You didn't go to the top of the mountain and say you want to have Aids, you know? And I don't want you to blame yourself. Just be strong.
Thembi: OK. For me what scares me most is I think we are not going to die at the same time if we die.
Melikhaya: I know that you think that if you die first I'm going to have another girlfriend [laughs].
Thembi: No! [laughs] No! Really I'm thinking if one of us dies, how would it be. At least if we were going to [Thembi and Melikhaya speak simultaneously] die at the same time [laughs].
Melikhaya: Give me a kiss for that. [Kiss]



Melikhaya Mpumelo and Thembi were living together while she was recording her story in 2005. We gave Melikhaya an old Pentax 35mm camera to document Thembi as she recorded her daily routines. It turned out that the camera didn't work properly and the film we gave him had been compromised by the airport security scanners, so only a few frames on each roll were good. And they were very, very good. Melikhaya was a natural.

So, we got him a new camera. This time a digital point and shoot – so he could feel safe as he wandered down the streets of Khayelitsha making images of Thembi and their life together.

My wife and frequent collaborator, Sue Johnson, had been photographing in a nearby neighbourhood in Khayelitsha for the past few years. She began selling her work online in the United States and, with the proceeds, helped to establish the Cape Town Photo Workshop, a group of 15 photographers from various townships who meet weekly to share work and learn about digital photography. The group also began doing "flash photo weekends" where they fan out across a particular neighbourhood on Friday morning, shoot with digital cameras until Saturday evening, print their digital images and on Sunday morning hang their images in a street exhibition. The work from these weekends will eventually be published as a book.

The Cape Town Photo Workshop has been placing photographs for sale in stores and museums throughout the city with the profits going back to the individual photographers and the group. The goal is to create a sustainable livelihood for the photographers. At the age of 21, Melikhaya is one of the youngest members of the group yet his images are among the top-selling photographs of the workshop. He hopes to be able to support himself and his family through photography someday. ■

You can see Melikhaya's photographs at www.radiodiaries.org/aidsdiary and you can visit the Cape Town Photo Workshop at www.capephoto.org

The Strong Recorders ask the questions

Pictures by Helen Meintjes, Gabriel Urgoiti and Prettygirl

by Sue Valentine

My name is Prettygirl, do you want to know me? I live at Ingwavuma. In my family I live with my grandfather and grandmother, Philasande (her cousin) and Nomvula (her sister). I am 11 years old. The name of my school is Okhayeni Primary School…

These were the first English words, spoken into the microphone by a round-faced, chubby, young girl with an infectious giggle who was always in the thick of the ball games that interspersed our first radio training with a group of nine children in Ingwavuma, in the far north-east of South Africa in January 2005.

As her matter-of-fact introduction suggests, Prettygirl has no parents. Her father is a distant memory, but her mother died of an Aids-related illness a few years ago. Unlike many other parents she told her daughter about her illness, charging Prettygirl with the responsibility for taking care of her younger sister, Nomvula – a commitment that Prettygirl honours diligently as her recording makes clear. What is equally clear and equally matter-of-fact is the adult role she also shoulders:

In the morning I get up at 4 o'clock and I sweep the yard. And then I go to the tap and I fetch water and I come back to home and I clean in dining room…. In afternoon when I come back from school I go to the tap and then I come back to home and I take the pots to cook. I cook everyday for my grandmother and grandfather… The food that I like is rice and beans…

Nomvula is very special to me because when my mother was sick and she say to me, 'Please looking after Nomvula because Nomvula is the small one'. Now I am like mother to Nomvula because I looking after Nomvula and I wash her clothes and I cook food for Nomvula…

Things I like to do. I like to read and play ball. The message I want to tell to you, is take care of yourself. Goodbye.

Prettygirl is one of nine children from the Ingwavuma district who have since named themselves "Abaqophi basOkhayeni Abaqinile" (the Okhayeni Strong Recorders) following a week-long radio training course that taught them basic interviewing skills and the principles of sound recording.

The project, initiated by the Helen Meintjes of the Children's Institute at the University of Cape Town and consultants Gabriel Urgoiti and Sue Valentine was born from a desire to allow children to speak for themselves about what it is like growing up in the context of HIV/Aids. From there the partnership developed with the Ingwavuma-based Zisize Educational Trust and Okhayeni Primary School.

In summer Ingwavuma is humid and hot. Malaria is rife. Winters can be bitterly cold. Nguni cattle rule the pot-holed roads, with taxis and bakkies accounting for most of the remaining traffic. Small towers dot the flat landscape like low-rise sentry posts marking the community's erratically-effective water pumps. In the mornings and afternoons a daily chore for most children is to queue with wheelbarrows and plastic containers which spill their load as they stagger home.

Poverty in Ingwavuma is acute. Most households are poor, regardless of whether they are directly affected by HIV or not. But the reality is that Aids is no stranger to households in KwaZulu-Natal, the epicentre of South Africa's HIV/Aids pandemic. In northern KZN, where there is little work and men, in particular, leave to find work in the province's towns and cities, the risk of HIV becomes that much higher.

The statistics are all too familiar, as are the weekly funerals. The Actuarial Society of South Africa estimates that 1.54 million people in KZN are HIV-positive and that 111 000 people will die in the province in 2006. Besides the trauma this causes for families, the loss of adult individuals in what should be their prime years has significant consequences for households' economies – how food, transport, clothing, school fees, textbooks, uniforms are paid for – and what kind of future families can look forward to.

Reports on the Aids pandemic often highlight the "problem" of "orphans and vulnerable children". But as with most shorthand, this phrase blurs the details that distinguish individual lives. It lumps children together, defined by headlines as "innocent victims", essentially helpless and without a sense of agency.

The reality is, as always, more complex and the children's radio project seeks to capture how children perceive their lives and what are *their*

While the absence of parents who have died is keenly felt, the children who took part in the radio project are much more than passive victims. They are eager to acquire skills and seize opportunities.

concerns. Inspired by the work of US independent radio producer David Isay, who created the award-winning documentary "Ghetto Life 101" in collaboration with two Chicago youngsters in 1993, the Ingwavuma radio project gives children access to mini-disc recorders to describe their lives in their own way. This, in turn, gives listeners an inside glimpse into what it's like to be them.

An essential foundation for the work was to build a relationship of trust with the children who were chosen by staff at Okhayeni Primary School – a remarkable school that until four years ago held its classes under the trees. In her radio diary, 11-year-old Zama chose to interview the school principal Nokhukhanya Ndlovu – an interaction that provides insight into the teacher-learner relationship as well as some of challenges facing the school:

Good morning. I'm Zamadlomo. I'm on the way to school… We are nearby Mam' Ndlovu's office... I see the office is full. I think she's busy there... Good day Mam'.

MAM' NDLOVU: Good day Zama…

ZAMA: What makes you like to be a manager of this school?

MAM' NDLOVU: I like to be a manager here because first of all, I love this place. Secondly, I love the learners. Thirdly, I am a teacher by profession. Right now I have got about 319 learners who are enrolled here this year, 2005. There are nine teachers.

ZAMA: How is it to be a manager?

MAM' NDLOVU: Ah, it's challenging… Here are learners from Grade R up to Grade 7, some of them have a number of problems. There are those that are staying with their grannies; those staying with their single parents; staying with both parents but unemployed. The majority of the learners are from homes where there is just [a] mother or father, some of them have died because of HIV and Aids, some of them have died because of malaria… others of car accidents. So… the learners have problems. Problems of hunger; they come without food in their stomachs… it is difficult for them to concentrate in class because of the number of problems that they come to class with.

ZAMA: What [has] this school done about the children that come to school without food?

MAM' NDLOVU: The Department [of Education] is providing them with food from Monday to Friday. All learners are getting food… here at school on a Saturday and Sunday and during holidays… My dream about the school is that I would love to see Okhayeni being the big school in a sense that it has more learners, and in a sense that it has some other subjects that are offered here at school… I'm looking forward to seeing Okhayeni having an administration block… a computer room, home economics room, a kitchen, a sewing room... I would love to see them happening here…

ZAMA: And your school entered the NS [Natural Science] competition?

MAM' NDLOVU: Oh yes, Zama. Last year for instance we entered the Natural Science competition and learners performed very well. We've got one learner who is doing Grade 8 this year who got a bursary from that competition. That was wonderful.

ZAMA: How do you feel when you see your school entered into the NS competition and win?

MAM' NDLOVU: I feel good, wonderful! [Laughs]

Months before the radio workshop, a vitally important foundation phase was facilitated by Okhayeni teacher Bongekile Mngomezulu and Zisize Trust co-ordinator Bridget Walters, under the supervision of Helen Meintjes at the Children's Institute. Through a combination of games and exercises held after school, the children wrote and painted aspects of their worlds, describing their happiest and saddest moments or important people in their lives. This existing relationship created the platform on which, in the space of seven short days, we could launch the radio project and begin working with the children to create audio diaries.

To say that the children were eager to get their hands on the microphone and recorder is to understate their enthusiasm. They absorbed the essence of radio – of "seeing with your ears" – and in no time learned how to hold a microphone, which buttons on the mini-disc recorders to press and which to leave alone! After an initial shyness mixed with delight at hearing their own voices, we were hard-pressed to get them to relinquish their turn with the mini-disc recorder. Limited resources meant there was one mini-disc recorder for every three children.

The next stage of the training was to help the children identify the different people they might want to talk to in order to illustrate their stories, and what sounds to record to enrich the audio picture.

Almost invariably, those children who had lost a parent wanted to find out more about that parent, or about themselves when they were small. Within the group, one child had lost both parents and three others had lost one parent. Of the remaining five, although both parents were alive, fathers were often absent working in Durban, Pietermaritzburg or Johannesburg.

Many media reports ignore the fact that more than 90% of children who have lost parents to Aids live with relatives. Prettygirl is one example, 10-year-old Lindokuhle is another. An important presence in Lindokuhle's life is his grandmother. The "licence" to ask questions given by being part of the radio project, and the distance and "protection" offered from the microphone in his hands, gave him the chance to interview his granny about his mum's death a year earlier.

Again, the interaction between the two speaks volumes about their relationship as well as the vital role the grandmother plays in supporting the household. Lindo spoke in isiZulu, this is a translation:

LINDO: Hello, my name is Lindokuhle… At home I live with father and granny and my three brothers and one sister… My mother left [died] when I was nine years old. We live well at home because granny gets a pension and my father has found work. [Thumping sound] We are now in the yard at home. Granny is here crushing mealies. Sawubona Gogo.

GOGO: Yebo.

LINDO: How are you Granny?

GOGO: I am fine.

LINDO: Granny, can you tell me how I got my name and also what it means?

GOGO: The name of this child is Khethani. His mother became pregnant and gave birth to him during [South Africa's first democratic] election time… We said he is Khethani [chosen], because he came out during the time of the elections.

LINDO: Gogo, did my mother not tell you what she was suffering from before she died?

GOGO: She was sick and coughing, her chest was sore, she had diarrhoea and vomiting and then she died, MaGumede, my daughter-in-law.

LINDO: How did you take the death of my mother?

GOGO: I took it very badly, and it is still painful in my spirit. It was very painful for me, the death of my daughter-in-law, who left orphans. I now look after these orphans because they have no mother.

LINDO: Gogo, how are you managing to raise us here at home?

GOGO: I struggle, I only get a little. I am raising them with the little that I have from the grant money.

LINDO: The death of my mother affected me badly, because perhaps at night when we were going to sleep, we would sleep without eating. I thought that if we still had our mother we would have eaten and that made me cry. Then when I heard people saying, like perhaps when we were playing, they would say, the dead one is watching her children, and then I would cry. When they talked about her it was as if I was seeing her right next to me. I was afraid to ask father about what mum had suffered from, and about her death.

The number of orphans (children under 18 who have lost one or both parents) is expected to rise from 3.4 million in 2005 to 4.6 million in 2013 (Actuarial Society of South Africa). But it is not enough to quote the numbers only, nor should reporting focus exclusively on doomsday scenaria.

Through allowing children to describe themselves and their lives in the course of making the radio programmes, a clear message emerged. Children *want* to be told what is happening around them and to be included in the grieving process. When parents and caregivers were given the chance to listen to the children's work, this was an important realisation that struck many of them.

While the absence of parents who have died is keenly felt, the children who took part in the radio project are much more than passive victims. They are eager to acquire skills and seize opportunities. As part of the Okhayeni Strong Recorders they are learning how to ask questions, to organise information and to assemble it in a logical and engaging way. An emerging partnership with the local community radio station (Maputaland Community Radio) offers an important outlet for children's voices to continue to be heard – be it on HIV/Aids or any other issues they choose to explore. ■

The radio training was conducted by Khopotso Bodibe, Gabriel Urgoiti and Sue Valentine. A CD of the project and the children's stories – in English and Zulu – is available from the Children's Institute. Contact Helen Meintjes: helenm@rmh.uct.ac.za

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Child's play

*Children feature so seldom in journalism as sources telling of their own experiences. And when it comes to the reporting of their voices are mostly absent. Journalist **Christina Stucky** shares the insights she gained on how to interview and quote researcher **Glynis Clacherty** and a group of HIV-positive children.*

Actors are commonly warned never to work with children. They are reputed to upstage the adults and they have minds of their own. Once children have decided on a course of action (or inaction) they are not easily swayed.

The reluctance – fear, even – of working with children applies to many professions, not just acting. Journalists, too, are reluctant to work with children. Children are regarded as difficult and time-consuming interviewees. They tend to reply in monosyllables and don't respond well to coaxing. There is also the fear of "getting it wrong" in the ethics department. This may partly account for the abysmally low representation of children in the media.

When Glynis Clacherty and I were awarded the HIV/Aids and the Media Fellowship for 2005/2006 through the University of the Witwatersrand's Journalism Programme, we were guided by our desire to put children – their experiences and their voices – at the centre of our research into the life realities of HIV-positive children. As Bray and Meintjes showed in "Reporting on Children in the Context of HIV/Aids" (2005), the misrepresentation of children in the media has important consequences for how vulnerable children are perceived. They highlight how children, and particularly "Aids orphans", are presented either as the quintessential innocent victims of the epidemic or as potential delinquents. Where children are directly engaged by the journalist, a much more realistic picture emerges – "the positive agency of the children is highlighted alongside their qualities as resilient, capable, responsible human beings", they found.

We ran four workshops with a group of 17 HIV-positive children, aged seven to 11 years, who were part of a support group in Johannesburg. When I say "we", it was Glynis who ran and designed the workshops and I shadowed her and took notes on the children's responses. Although the fellowship allowed for a longer period of interaction with the children and more time for research than journalists ordinarily have to work on an article, the process provided a number of useful – as well as ethical – strategies that can be adapted and applied in journalism involving children.

Breaking down power imbalances

The disparity in power and status between adults and children is perhaps the most critical ethical and practical challenge faced in this kind of research work. Researchers acknowledge that adults can inadvertently "manipulate" the child because of the greater degree of power held by the adult. Journalists either do not consider this power imbalance adequately or use their position of relative power to convince a child, who might believe the journalist can help them in some way, to agree to an interview.

Journalists are guided by ethical codes of practice, including guidelines specifically drawn up for journalists working with children (Unicef). These guidelines call on journalists to seek consent, usually from a caretaker, before interviewing a child. How "informed" this consent is depends largely on the journalist and on the situation. Generally, media practitioners will not explain at length and in detail what the research they are conducting will be used for, beyond saying it will be published or broadcast by a certain media organisation. In this process of working with a researcher, I became aware of the shortcomings of this form of "general" consent. If journalists want to try to equalise the relationship between journalist and interviewee, they must seek informed consent.

Informed consent requires that journalists explain the possible consequences of appearing in an article or broadcast (eg: "the article will appear in newspaper X and may be read by people you know"). Interviewees must understand that they have the choice not to be interviewed or to stop the interview at any time. If interview subjects were accessed via a non-governmental organisation, they should also be informed that neither doing or not doing the interview will have no bearing on their relationship with the NGO.

Given the pressures faced by journalists to meet deadlines and to return from the field with publishable interviews, they tend to seek only the most basic form of consent. However, particularly when working with vulnerable subjects, informed consent should be part of any ethical journalistic practice.

In our research with young, HIV-positive children the caregivers were informed and asked to give permission for the research. Once permission was obtained Glynis held an information session with the children. She used simple language to explain the purpose of the research and what the outcome would be. She also described how a journalist or researcher takes notes and what a tape recorder is. The children were given the opportunity to use the tape recorder so they could understand what it did.

As journalists and researchers know, a process involving children is not unproblematic because most children live in a social context where they are expected to agree with adults. They are likely to give consent because they feel they have to do so. Another danger is that children will agree to partici-

those who live with Aids,
children from working with

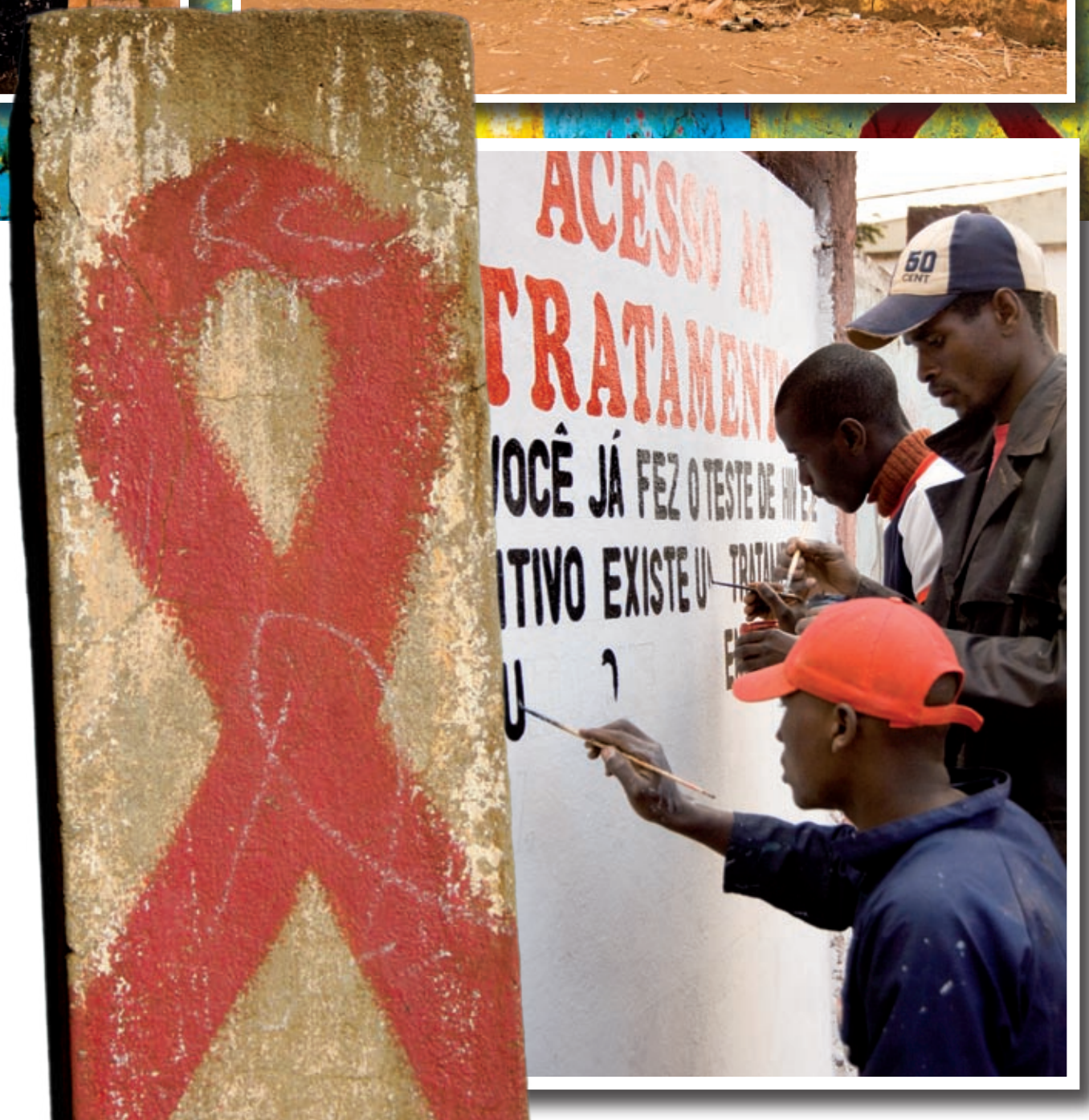
pation because they have expectations of some help even though the researcher or journalist explains that there will be none. In order to make sure that the consent was voluntary, Glynis and I applied the principle of "ongoing consent". An environment in which the children felt safe to remain silent or say "I don't want to talk about that" was created. At the beginning of the discussions children were informed of their right to withdraw or to stay silent at any time. We also worked hard – together with the children's support group facilitators – to create an environment of trust and openness.

Even in short, individual interviews, journalists can build trust. If time allows, visiting the child informally and in different settings (home, school, at play etc), is useful. Sometimes just taking the time to talk and not rushing straight to the point can help create an atmosphere of trust. What does not work is interviewing children as one would adults. Patience, time and different techniques are required.

By working with children who are part of an existing support group, as we did, journalists can tap into already existing support structures. If any of the children are somehow upset, the support group facilitators are there to help. In this way, journalists can ensure that harm is minimised for the child.

Reducing harm

Unicef guidelines call on journalists to "do no harm". In certain situations (for example, when highlighting the issue of child abuse or reporting on child soldiers) asking a child about a traumatic event is unavoidable, particularly if journalists wish to give voice to children rather than interviewing adults about children. ➠



Mozambique's Aids murals

On a recent visit to Mozambique photographer Chris Kirchhoff noticed a proliferation of hand painted visuals and graffiti dealing with messages about HIV and Aids. He says: "They are boldly direct, almost brusque in addressing the risky behaviour patterns that encourage the spread of the virus, yet they are drawn with care, with colour and often an artistic flair that humanises the pandemic. Their impromptu nature and often voluntary effort lead to an empathy between viewer and artist. They stand in strong contrast to the commercial billboards with routinised Aids messages done through advertising agencies which leave the viewer lost in the consumer battleground for brand consciousness!"

Child's play

One of the strategies we used was the introduction of rag dolls which allowed the children to relate their experiences and feelings through the dolls. Each child received a life-sized doll (made out of nylon pantihose) and was asked at different stages of the process to draw pictures about a theme (eg: visiting clinics or going to hospital) on a piece of canvas which was then pinned to the doll as "clothing". The caregivers (mostly mothers, some grannies and aunties) made the hair and painted the faces with input from the children. They also made bags for the dolls in which they put letters or cards addressed to the child.

Talking about the drawings created a measure of emotional distance. They were able to talk about their fears or traumatic experiences by referring to the drawing rather than to the experience itself. This strategy can be applied by journalists, even if they are operating within tight time constraints, and can create emotional distance so avoiding the kind of questions "that reactivate a child's pain and grief from traumatic events" (Unicef).

Using activities

Researchers working with young children are guided by the principle that the interaction between adult and child should consist of activities that are appropriate to the child's stage of development. Children under 10 are generally not able to extract a particular aspect of their experience from their overall reality. So when a journalist asks a child of six what it is like to be HIV-positive they are unlikely to get much information. But researchers know that if the issue of interest (in this case living with HIV) is embedded into a description of the child's social world the child will be able to articulate the experience.

Drawing pictures was a core activity in our research process. For example, Glynis asked the children to draw all the places they go to in a week. Most children drew their homes, school, a shop, a playground, a clinic, a church. The various drawings were glued on to a large piece of paper and Glynis (with translation done by the support group facilitators) recorded what the children said about the places and the people they had drawn. The drawings were then used to explore who knew about their HIV status and who did not and why.

Glynis: Do you walk to school?
Child: Yes.
G: So, should we make a road? (Glynis joins home and school with a road on the large map). Who do you go to school with?
Child: With Gugu.
G: What do you do on your way to school with your friend Gugu?
C: We chat about our friends.
G: Does Gugu know you are HIV-positive?
C: No.
G: How come Gugu does not know?
C: My mom told me not to tell anyone.
G: Would you like to tell Gugu?
C: No.
G: Why?
C: She is going to tell the other friends at school.
G: What would happen if your other friends at school knew?
C: They will laugh at me and stop playing with me.

As a journalist I found this use of a drawing very useful. I used the method for stories during the 16 Days of No Violence Against Woman and Children Campaign when a colleague and I interviewed three girls who had been abused. We reached the girls through a support group and the support group facilitators provided us with the basic information about their abuse, allowing us to focus on their coping strategies in the interview. Asking them directly about these strategies would not have yielded much information because the girls might not have identified what they do as a coping strategy. Instead the girls were asked to draw a picture of their average day, and questions about how they cope with sadness were embedded in the discussion.

Glynis also introduced drawings of a cartoon dinosaur depicting various emotions (sad, angry, pensive, relaxed, etc). Unlike adults, young children cannot easily describe how they feel about something or give ideas about why a situation is the way it is. The drawings were used to help the children articulate how they felt about the secrecy surrounding their HIV-positive status.

Glynis (referring to the rag doll who is called Zama): The secret is that she's HIV-positive. She mustn't tell anyone. I want to know, how does she feel about the secret?
A and **S** immediately choose 'crying'. M resolutely walks to 'angry'. **L** chooses 'scared'. **T** stands near 'thinking'. **K** eventually chooses 'angry'. **N** is the only one to choose 'happy'.

[One by one we asked why they chose that emotion.]

Why are you feeling happy about the secret?
N: (hesitates) I always feel happy.
S: Because [Zama] is going to die.
A: I'm angry [even though he chose 'sad'] because if I tell the next person, that person will tell others.
M: Zama is feeling angry because he doesn't want to tell his friends because his friends might tell and they won't play with Zama anymore.
L: Because if Zama tells her friends they will laugh at her as if they don't have the same problem she's having.
T: She's thinking about whether to tell her friends or not to tell her friends. They probably won't play with her anymore.

Asking questions

One of the most difficult aspects of work with young children is getting information through questions. Many journalists have experienced the frustration of asking a child "How did you feel?" and the child replies "I felt bad" and is unable to elaborate. In this project, I learned how researchers build up a picture of the child's reality through a series of linked questions. Following is an example of an interview I did with one of the children based on the principles I learned from Glynis:

Journalist: When did you see your father?
Child: In October.
J: What did you do with your father?
C: He gave me R20.
J: What for?
C: (Shrugs)
J: Would you like to see your father more often?
C: Yes. I miss him.
J: What would you like to do with him?
C: I would like to talk to him, to tell him to give me pocket money for school. I phoned him and told him that mother doesn't have money to buy clothes for the 16th [public holiday before Christmas].
J: How would you feel if he stayed here?
C: I would be happy if he stayed here.
J: Are you not happy now?
C: I'm happy but not fully.
J: What about Gogo? Tell me about her.
C: Gogo didn't treat me well.
J: How did you feel?
C: I get angry.
J: If we had a Gogo doll here, what would you like to say to it?
C: I would tell her that when I'm visiting her, she must not tell me I'm stealing her things because I don't steal anything. She insults me. I would tell her "all those things you said to me, that I've stolen your money, many things, that I didn't like what you say".

According to an analysis of children's coverage in the South African news media (Media Monitoring Project, 2004) children are generally under- and misrepresented. Of the over 22 000 items monitored across 36 different media during a three-month research period, only 6% contained children. In half of the stories that did contain children, their representation was in a negative context of crime or abuse. In about a quarter of the stories children were portrayed as victims. They featured even less as quoted sources (13% of monitored items).

Representing what children say

As Bray and Meintjes pointed out, journalists fall short in their representation of children and in the use of their voices. In most articles children feature as problems that need a solution or as accessories of adults. Rarely are children quoted directly. In our research project the children's voices were recorded and Glynis and I used the transcripts for our articles. In this way the children are given the opportunity to speak for themselves.

The Meintjes and Bray research found that of the 114 news articles reviewed, five directly sourced the children or young people to whom they referred. Employing some of the strategies suggested here could facilitate the collection of children's perspectives. But the challenge remains for the journalist of how to represent these voices in newspaper articles.

After the completion of the workshops with the 17 children, I chose two boys and one girl as the focus for the articles. I interviewed them and their caregivers (and in one case, siblings) at home and, with the consent of the mother, visited one boy at school, after discussing the purpose with the teacher who was aware of the child's HIV status.

The decision to write six articles divided into a three-part series (for Sunday papers of the Independent Newspaper group) was based on these factors: readability, creating a child-centred and evocative picture of the children and their lives, and highlighting key issues affecting HIV-positive children.

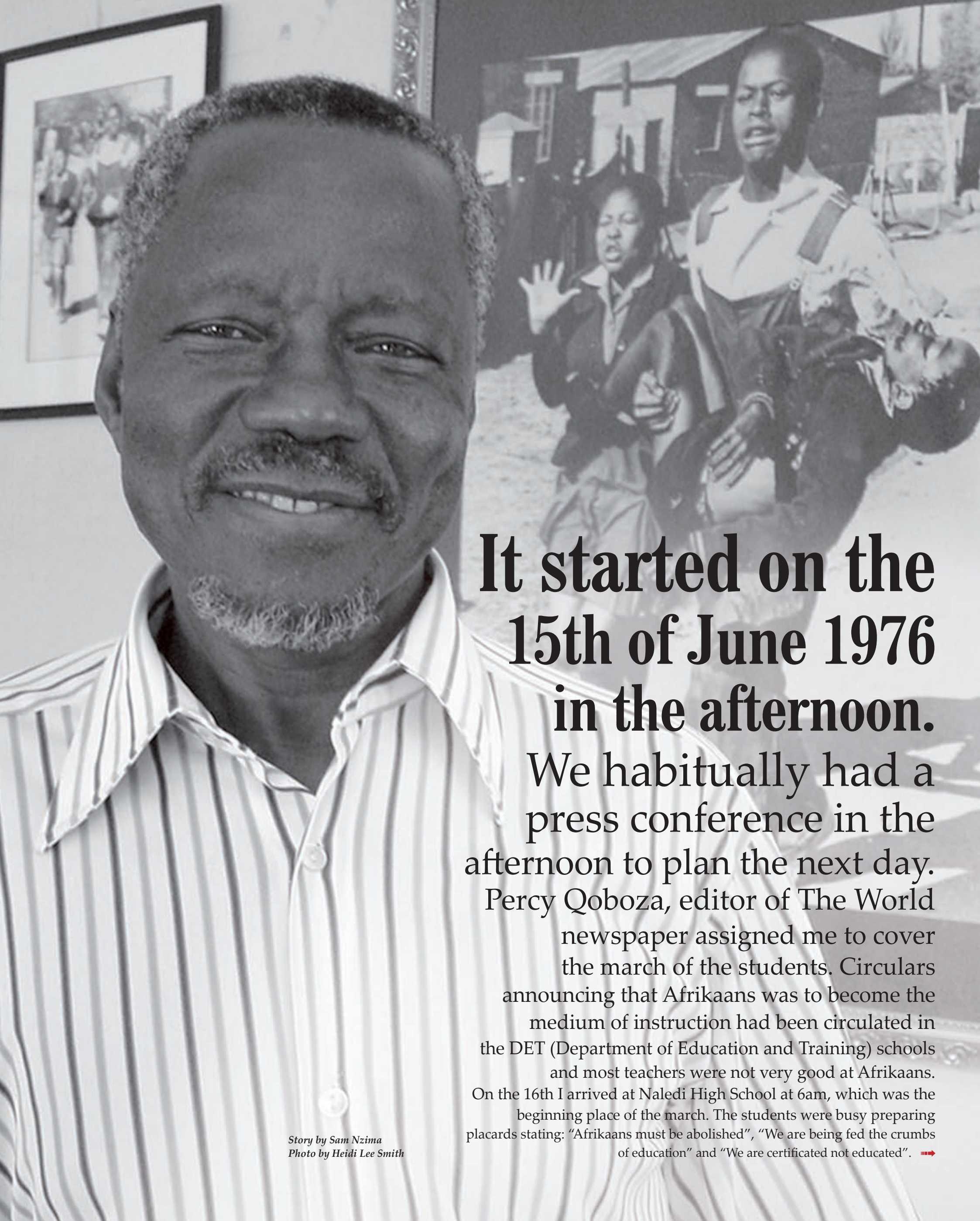
The aim was to convey a sense both of the child's personality and of the child's life reality. Accompanying the more descriptive piece on each child was a news feature focusing on a particular issue: disclosure, stigma and effect of HIV on family relations; experience of clinics, hospitalisation and illness; survival and dependence on grants. The news features included interviews with medical professionals, academics, government representatives and other official voices. Whenever possible, the children's voices and/or excerpts from the research were included:

Nhlanhla knows he will be swallowing tablets for the rest of his life. What would happen if he stopped taking them? Nhlanhla answers: "I would die." He admits that it scares him "a bit" that death is only a handful of pills away…

Before he started antiretroviral treatment, he was often sick. "I was so skinny that I would ask my brother to count my ribs. You could see my bones," he says, sticking a finger in his now fleshed-out rib cage. He was urinating blood and vomiting…

When he began treatment he felt nauseous, sores developed on his head and his hair fell out. His stomach grew round and hard. He holds out his hands to show how far his stomach protruded. "But after a while I became better and my stomach was normal." He speaks matter-of-factly while he bunches up the edge of the table cloth. "I'm now better. I can concentrate at school."

He lets go of the table cloth and says with just a hint of defiance, "I can do everything like other children." ■



It started on the 15th of June 1976 in the afternoon.

We habitually had a press conference in the afternoon to plan the next day. Percy Qoboza, editor of The World newspaper assigned me to cover the march of the students. Circulars announcing that Afrikaans was to become the medium of instruction had been circulated in the DET (Department of Education and Training) schools and most teachers were not very good at Afrikaans. On the 16th I arrived at Naledi High School at 6am, which was the beginning place of the march. The students were busy preparing placards stating: “Afrikaans must be abolished”, “We are being fed the crumbs of education” and “We are certificated not educated”.

Story by Sam Nzima
Photo by Heidi Lee Smith

Sam Nzima

Then the march started, and as they went, they collected more students from other high schools along the route. Although only the high schools had been targeted, the children from the primary schools joined in.

The purpose was to head for Orlando Stadium, where a memorandum was to be prepared that the students were to submit to the Department of Education.

Tsietsi Mashinini led the march past Morris Isaacson to Orlando West.

At Matsiki High School the head master had locked the gate because the students there were writing a test in Afrikaans. The marchers broke the gate, tore up the exam papers and forced them out of the school grounds.

Then a young man running from the direction of Orlando East shouted (in tsotsi taal): "Amagata se azwakele!" – "The police are here!" Everyone was aware that trouble was coming – there was going to be chaos. Then seven open vans and one big truck (a "gumbagumba" that carries prisoners) arrived.

I took out my press armband and put it on fast, I could see that all hell was going to be let loose. The policeman in charge got out asking, "Wat maak die kleintjies hierso?"

The students compacted together and looked at him. He gave them three minutes to disperse or "otherwise we'll shoot". There were other police behind him.

The students began to sing *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* (which was banned), he pulled out a gun and shot directly into crowd, while ordering "Skiet! skiet!". The police shot randomly, a little boy fell down and another picked him up, I ran to take the picture under a shower of bullets.

Mbuyisa Makubo and Antoinette Pieterson were trying to find a car to take the boy to the clinic. Makubo saw our press car and took Hector there.

[Reporter] Sophie Tema opened the door and put Hector into the beetle. With Sophie helping, the driver took Sophie and Hector to Orlando West clinic, but Hector was certified dead on arrival.

They came back. The students were still running away to the hill near the house of Kaizer Motaung, called Devil Hill. They came down with stones, and dustbins to protect themselves from bullets.

I removed the film from my camera because I knew the police would pounce on me and order me to hand over my camera. I put it into my sock. The police confronted me: "Bring us your cameras!" they ordered. They pulled out all the films. All were destroyed.

Now it was just chaos.

I gave the film which I had hidden in my sock to the driver who took it back to the office. I remained and loaded another film.

The police called for backup. A hippo arrived and began mowing the students down. Students ran away, a helicopter came with teargas, I also had to run.

"Sam, don't sleep at home, they are coming to fetch you at 3am." He also told me the order had been given "shoot at Sam if you see him taking pictures anywhere".

By now the students were looting council-owned bottle stores, and rampaging. A bread van was stopped and a milk truck. They ate bread and drank milk. White people were injured. The whole day and the whole night, nobody slept, administration offices were burned, they killed a very good doctor.

I stayed on the streets all day. The driver returned to fetch my film.

At 3pm the picture was in the extra-late newspaper, on the front page. The debate about the choice to use the shot of Hector Pieterson dying was very strong – "it will cause war in SA", the chief sub-editor Brian Malt said, but Percy said "this happened, why hide the truth?"

On the 17th of June the picture was in the UK newspapers, byline courtesy *The World*.

I went home very late, I never slept. The police went into the hostels that night encouraging hostel dwellers to go and kill boys who were "telling them not to work". There was shooting all night and shouting "Black power". I packed my things into the car boot, ready to go.

The rioting was no longer in one place, but all over Soweto. Police came the next day to shoot students looting shops along Potchefstroom Road. A stray bullet hit a Kaizer Chiefs player and he died there. Police shot at a press car and the bullet went in under the seat of the driver. [Press photographer] Alf Kumalo was taking pictures, the students thought he was police and they assaulted him and smashed his camera.

But because of that picture the police were looking for me now. When Soweto started to cool down, the violence moved outside Joburg.

The station commander at John Vorster Square phoned me at work at *The World* and said: "Is that Sam Nzima? Come here to have coffee with me, or a cup of tea, now, today." Percy Qoboza intervened and asked him "What do you want him for?" The commander said: "We are trying to reform, but the cover page of a magazine from Russia has this picture of Hector with the words 'police are killing students in Soweto'. Communists will attack us because of this picture."

You see the picture had got as far as Russia because *The World* was a member of UPI (United Press International).

I had a friend who was a security policeman, he told me, "Sam, don't sleep at home, they are coming to fetch you at 3am". He also told me the order had been given "shoot at Sam if you see him taking pictures anywhere".

I had to choose between my job and my life. I went to Percy and said: "I'm in danger".

The Star and the *Rand Daily Mail* both wanted me to work for them. But I left Johannesburg, drove to Bushbuckridge, to my home at Lilydale. My wife was a sister at Baragwanath. The picture destroyed my home and my future in journalism.

I opened a business, a bottle store there. Two months later I got a visit from policemen posing as salesmen. They took me into the storeroom and produced a file of cuttings. "Did you take this picture?" "Yes." "Why? If you do here what you did there, we will beat you up and lock you up."

They imposed house arrest on me. Every Friday they would come and check on me. They would send a policeman with a book to make me sign. This went on for a year and eventually, they stopped coming. I thought I would be safe in Bushbuckridge but they followed me.

The picture that destroyed my future in journalism, I must make a living out of it. There are other pictures that survived that day: the sequence of Hector Pieterson, six more pictures showing what happened. The policy of the paper was that you were not allowed to take film home and so the negatives were locked up in the editor's office.

For Christmas 1976 the South African Council of Churches printed 800 copies of the picture with a biblical message and the words "No Christmas in Soweto". They sent 400 out of the country and the police confiscated the other 400 at Diakonia House. Then they banned the picture. The Argus group [owners of *The World*] took this to court. There was no Act applicable and they won the case.

The negatives were sent to the bank [for safekeeping]. Police raided the offices, and then *The World* closed down. Police took all the documents they thought were a threat.

The negative I have is a copy of a copy. I don't know what happened to the original negative. I asked the chief subeditor and he doesn't know.

The original picture in is my control. In 1988 Brian Malt, the same chief subeditor, came to work for the *Lowvelder* and he wrote a letter on my behalf to the Argus company asking them to give me copyright. It is now registered in my name.

The picture has become the icon of the whole world. Bill Clinton asked to meet me and he said to me: "Do you know your picture is all over the world?" It's even in the UN High Commission in New York and in St James Church.

But this is a tug of war for me with the government, with various departments, the June 16 Foundation who want to use it as a watermark on stationery. I am still battling this thing.

When they used the picture for the Hector Pieterson memorial there was no negotiation with me. And it was made into a bronze statue presented to Mandela – also without reference to me. ■

Dreams, desires and aspirations

by Yvette Greslé

The photograph, one of modernity's most ubiquitous visual forms, pervades our experience of the world. In an age of heightened consumerism, photographic images can embody our dreams, desires and aspirations. Photographs amplify the effect of the headlines reverberating off daily newspapers. On a more intimate scale, snapshots or portraits, in albums and picture frames, document our everyday lives, our rites of passage and our family histories. Some photographs, having achieved iconic status, come to represent an event, an era or an emotion. Examples are the many memorable photographs shot by photojournalists or soldiers during the political conflicts of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Several images come to mind: Huynh Cong Ut's horrifying 1972 photograph of Vietnamese children fleeing a napalm strike, a frightened, naked child at its centre; Sam Nzima's photograph of Hector Pieterson so poignantly capturing the tragedy of 16 June 1976 and, more recently, the degrading images, by an unknown American soldier, of US soldiers torturing Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison. These particular photographs capture – within the midst of large-scale political battles – humanity in all its terrifying vulnerability.

The political currency that a photograph carries is an important factor in ensuring its iconic status, cultivated by such factors as its international circulation and its continued appropriation. Sometimes photographs resonate with one another in powerful ways. News photographer Thomas E. Franklin commenting on his photograph of three firefighters raising the American flag among the ruins of the Twin Towers, recalled: "As soon as I shot it, I realised the similarity to the famous image of the Marines raising the flag at Iwo Jima." This Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph, taken in 1945 by Joe Rosenthal, depicts United States soldiers raising the American flag at the summit of Mount Suribachi during the Battle of Iwo Jima in World War 2. It was later used by Felix de Weldon to sculpt the Marine Corps War Memorial situated just outside Washington DC.

In their forthcoming book *Icons of Liberal Democracy: Public Culture in an Age of Photojournalism*, scholars John Lucaites and Robert Hariamn argue that photojournalism and documentary photography do more than facilitate the memory of landmark moments. Speaking to journalist Ryan Piurek, Lucaites comments on the Abu Ghraib photographs: "It was the photographs, released and disseminated on the Internet, that gave significance and presence to that event and got people exercised about it. Those photographs told us nothing new. But they visualised it. They put us in the position to see something about democracy that upset us."

Franklin, speaking about his now iconic 9/11 image (it even appeared on a postage stamp) commented: "This was an important shot. It told more than just death and destruction. It said something to me about the strength of the American people and of these firemen having to battle the unimaginable."

There is often a chance element to the act of taking the photograph that comes to represent so much. According to the version of events that surround the Nzima photograph, the dying Hector Pieterson was picked up by Mbuyisa Makhubo who together with Pieterson's sister Antoinette ran towards Sam Nzima's press car. In an interview with journalist Lucille Davie, Nzima recalls: "I saw a child fall down. Under a shower of bullets I rushed forward and went for the picture... I was the only photographer there at the time. Other photographers came when they heard the shots." The history of Nzima's photograph, today a symbol of the events of 16 June 1976, the brutality of the apartheid regime and, in actual fact, the genesis of the Hector Pieterson Museum in Soweto, speaks of the power embedded in the photographic image. ■

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Yours, mine and ours

by Anthea Garman

When *Grocott's Mail* in Grahamstown wanted to use the Hector Pieterson photograph for the front cover of a Youth Day supplement celebrating the courage of the Soweto students of 1976, they decided to go the official route by contacting the photographer's agent and paying for the picture. They were told a single use would cost them thousands of rands. Obviously an impossibility for a small-town, community newspaper.

I was curious. The picture was all over the show as NGOs, the news media and various government departments celebrated the 30th anniversary of June 16th. In many cases the picture – grainy and often photocopied – was obviously being used without permission and the photographer, Sam Nzima, whose name has only recently become attached to it as the creator of that iconic picture, was as absent as his picture was present.

I contacted him to ask some questions and thus began a conversation in which he talked about his complicated relationship with that particular picture, which has attained huge symbolic – and international – status in a way only a few photographs achieve. But it is also the picture that ruined his career as a journalist and forced him to flee his home in Soweto. It is a picture that, while revered as "history" and owned as "belonging to the people", is often used indiscriminately without reference to its maker or his rights. It is a picture whose use often fills him with anger as he attempts to curtail its publication and assert his rights as its author. As a result the value attached to the picture in rands climbs steeply as its unauthorised use proliferates (even if the images are growing fuzzier and more indistinct with time).

When an image comes to speak so powerfully for the events of history and comes to mean so much that millions assert their ownership of it emotionally and symbolically, how does its owner assert his rights to control its uses? What is the creative balance between *ours* and *mine*?

Recently Levi Strauss announced an Aids-awareness campaign in which the Pieterson image would be recreated with the child in arms dying of Aids. ANC Youth League president Fikile Mbalula responded: "People should not use national symbols, including the picture, for their own profit-making interests and insult our history, our moral integrity and the integrity of the struggle." While Nzima wasn't asked his opinion, his son was horrified.

The amazing coincidence is that had that particular child not been shot at that moment, had that photographer not been crouching in the right place at that exact time, the memorial which stands might have been known not as the Hector Pieterson Memorial but the —— Memorial.

Many other authors of iconic pictures of South African struggle heroes have received the same fate: who took the ubiquitous Steve Biko picture? Who snapped Sobukwe? Who was the author of the face of Hani on the T-shirts?

By chance I discovered the author of the much-used Matthew Goniwe picture, Professor Julian Cobbing, in the history department at Rhodes University. Cobbing was an aspiring photographer in the 80s and had a loose attachment to the band of photographers called Afrapix. His picture – at a funeral in 1985 – was taken six weeks before Goniwe was murdered. Cobbing has another career and an assured income so he doesn't feel as stressed about his picture as Nzima feels about his. Nevertheless, every now and again a couple of hundred rands will arrive when someone doing the right thing has paid Cobbing for the use of the picture. But he has also been alerted of an agency that has appropriated his pic for their own uses and is selling it.

He feels strongly, however, that picture and creator should never be parted in the minds of media consumers. Iconic pictures, he feels, have a "double impact", there is the symbolic worth attached to the subject matter and the acknowledgement of the creator of that captured moment. Both are "part of the archetype of the photograph", he says. ■

Plagiarism and the ends of reading

Essay by Rosalind C Morris

The contemporary culture of letters appears to be in crisis. Its faltering status is evident in the rising tide of accusations of plagiarism, made against writers both new and established: Darrel Bristow-Bovey, William Mervin Gumede, Pamela Jooste, Antjie Krog and Cynthia Vongai (not all have been proven). Beyond the individual merits of any given case, journalistic accounts of plagiarism in South Africa raise a number of significant ethical questions. They nonetheless tend to frame the issue in terms of naïvely simplistic oppositions: plagiarism either exists or it does not; individual texts are either wholly original or stolen; authors are either honest or dissimulating.

As with many discourses of crisis and 'criminality', that about plagiarism tends to exceed actuality. Moreover, it is the proliferation of accusation (rather than of crime itself) that most often suffices as evidence of a social failure.

Consider, for example, Ferial Haffajee's claim that "the greatest threat to media freedom… comes from within, in the form of inaccurate reporting and plagiarism". As reported by Deirdre Donnelly, Haffajee cites a statistic according to which, "of all the threats made to the Press Ombudsman, over 70% are simple acts of inaccuracy".[1]

By far the numerically dominant concern of the Ombudsman, one notes, is inaccuracy. Yet plagiarism somehow looms as a sign of what ails the Fourth Estate. One therefore needs to ask why plagiarism functions so effectively as a sign of ethical failure. What does it represent about the current status of literature and the author within society?

The obvious answer is that plagiarism entails intentional dissimulation, hence culpability, whereas inaccuracy is a merely erroneous representation. This may be true in individual cases, but the significance of 'plagiarism discourse' cannot be understood solely in terms of its own categories. It needs to be understood in its social and historical context, so that its ethical force and its political functions can be understood. And this requires asking about the economic structures that encourage it, but also about the ideological conditions within which individual accusations of literary misappropriation work to both occlude institutional forms of plagiarism and to substitute for other kinds of criticism.

South Africans are not alone in their concern about plagiarism, of course. Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code* is undoubtedly the most visible of the recent international cases, but there are countless others. In the United States, the case of Harvard sophomore Kaavya Viswanathan has also attracted much attention. Her precocious first novel *How Opal Got Kissed, Got Wild and Got a Life*, is now known to have incorporated large portions of two separate works by Megan F. McCafferty.

At Harvard, Viswanathan shares the status of copyist with such renowned figures as historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, who has been accused of improperly acknowledging her sources in *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys,* and the Law School's Charles Ogletree, who has confessed to plagiarising the work of Jack Balkin in his book, *All Deliberate Speed: Reflections on the First Half-Century of Brown v. Board of Education*.

A more politically-charged case has been made against Ward Churchill, a faculty member at the University of Colorado, who was initially investigated following his publication of a controversial essay on the events of 9/11 and who was subsequently accused of research misconduct. The university affirmed Churchill's free speech rights, and refused to censure him for the content of his essay but found, upon review, that the misconduct charges had basis. On 9 May 2006, they issued a report indicating that Churchill was guilty of plagiarism and of "failing to comply with established standards regarding author names on publications".[2]

These highly visible episodes provide the representative forms for what is widely perceived to be a general and growing phenomenon. By July 2006, a quick Google search of the word plagiarism turned up 30 400 000 references. Estimates of the prevalence of plagiarism in American colleges suggest that anywhere between 40% and 80% of students may be misappropriating material from other sources.[3] There are no comparable statistics for South Africa, but university administrators express concern that they might be comparable.

There is also a burgeoning economy associated with plagiarism, and several electronic detection services are available online, including CopyCatch, EVE2, EduTie, TurnItIn, and Plagiarism.com (some of which are used in South African universities). According to James Purdy, none of these engines is more effective than Google, but they are lucrative businesses in and of themselves, and royalties from the patented software is a source of considerable income for the companies (and some universities) which generate them.[4] Even more occult economies may be at work, however. Purdy also suggests that some of the detection services may also have links to the mills that sell such papers to students in the first place.

Although there can be no doubt that plagiarism in schools is a problem, Brian Martin has suggested that the frenzy of accusation directed against students might provide something like an ideological screen behind which institutional plagiarism, such as ghostwriting and bureaucratic authorship in which only the senior official is credited, remain obscured.[5] An acute version of this dynamic can be seen in the Viswanathan case. Little, Brown had signed Viswanathan to a $500 000 two-book contract when she was only in high school but she shared copyright (equally) for the work with an entertainment company, Alloy Entertainment.[6] Supplanting both authors and editors, ghost writers, packaging companies, and book doctors are increasingly called on by publishers

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to help convert an idea into a saleable book, or simply to increase its likely market share.

Alloy Entertainment's parent company, Alloy Media and Marketing (which has an annual operating budget of nearly $200-million), promises clients seeking the youth market that it can "connect with consumers through targeted, unavoidable platforms that elevate brands as a part of daily life". In the book market, it works by transforming the function of the author into that of celebrity endorsement.

This most recent transformation of the author function culminates the brief history of a unique form of individuality, one that emerged only in the modern era of capitalised publishing. In the early histories of literature, the book was an object of copying, whose unity was guaranteed not by the author but by the title of the work. Books were compiled of stories told and retold, and they were often published anonymously. Many copyists in the European Middle Ages could not even read, never mind claim to be the originators of the texts.

A very modern authorship

Authorship in the modern sense emerged when the unity of the book (and hence the commodity status of the book) became linked to the author, rather than the publisher, through connection to a readership. Or, as James Siegel says of literature in Indonesia, it occurred when the writers of texts began to address their readers as consumers. The rhetorical trace of this emergence can be seen in the "dear reader" moments of early European novels. According to Siegel, it can be seen in Indonesian literature when the author begins to title his work, "A Story that Actually Happened".[7]

No doubt there are as many forms in which authorship has emerged as there are languages. The point is that copying lay at the origin of literature. Authorship emerged not when writers began to invent or even alter already existing stories, but when, for largely economic reasons, they began to claim that their contributions to the form of the story added something new and unique to it. To understand the accomplishment of the author therefore required a knowledge of the tradition—literary and cultural—whence it emerged. This is why, as Friedrich Kittler says, it is the emergence of a mass readership that makes possible the cult of the author.[8]

In Europe that development occurred only at the end of the 18th century. In many parts of the world, which have only recently been subject to market economies, international copyright treaties and the aesthetic conventions of authorship, this history may reach back less than a century. But it took some time for the state to assume the burden of protecting authors' rights to the work. Only when these economic rights were secured by the coercive apparatus of the state, did the problem of copying – at least as old as Plato – become a problem of authorship (and the economic rights subtending it), rather than, say, a problem of the risk to society posed by an incapacity to distinguish between actuality and art.

A relation with others

It is important to recall here that the concept of intellectual property, on which plagiarism depends as a category, refers less to the relationship between a person and the thing (however abstract) which they possess, than it refers to a relation with others. When enforced by the state, this relationship excludes others from deriving revenues and/or benefits from the property that one claims – including intangible benefits, such as credit for authorship, and cultural capital.

As much as the law governing copyright, patents, and trademarks, the regime of intellectual property is sustained through the discourse of plagiarism. This is why it is so central to the project of moral education. For, students today are not merely taught to recognise the elements of their cultural traditions, or to appreciate the unique concatenation of words and literary forms by which a story becomes a piece of literature. Indeed, too little of such teaching occurs now. The moral education to which they are subject also renders them appropriate consumers for the market place of intellectual property.

To be sure, students need to learn to identify and adjudicate sources of knowledge. They must also learn the protocols of professional practice, including those of citation. But one can imagine that there are other discourses – not based in the logic of property – through which they might acquire these important skills.

Education is a matter of organising desires. This is why, today, the valorisation of the author works by rendering her or him as a celebrity – someone with mass recognition, someone who is the object of either identification or desire – or both. It demands reading engagements, interviews and photogenicity as much as skill with words.

But what kind of criticism is enabled by such a system? In contexts where authorship takes the form of celebrity (the 'genius' of the televisual age), criticism tends to concern itself with biography. The writer – his or her literary skill and knowledge, political commitments, and, increasingly, historical representativeness – rises to the fore in such contexts. Thus, a novel may be analysed to reveal the operations of its aesthetics, or to disclose the political structures animating it but, in the end, it is the writer who will be held culpable for these accomplishments or failures. The social milieu whence the writer emerged becomes mere context.

Rare today is the criticism which attends to the work as an autonomous semiological system. And just as well. For, such criticism always runs the risk of an arch aestheticism and a naïve, if not disingenuous, politics of non-intervention. Nonetheless, the present moment has seen a perversion of the old ideological criticism. Now, instead of a criticism which takes the work as its object, *ad hominem* accusation is practised as a kind of end run around reading itself. One has only to hurl the epithet of plagiarist at a writer, and the content of a work of art is reduced to words and phrases searchable on a computer database. The totality of the work, and with it the very possibility of literature, threatens to vanish in the ether.

I am not saying that writing should not be scrutinised if it displays evidence of misappropriation or fraudulent misrepresentation of sources. Nor that writers should not be held accountable for these improprieties, particularly when they are enjoying the fruits of misbegotten credit. But the growth in plagiarism – in all domains of bureaucratic and artistic life – and the need for its regulation cannot lead us away from the equally significant question about what is lost when criticism is reduced to this form of highly personalised accusation.

Claims to legitimacy

Many editorial comments about the Watson/Krog affair represented it as the expression of ethno-linguistic competition and/or resentment, belying the possibility that the accusations were less about plagiarism than about a claim to political legitimacy in the new South Africa. There were also economic motivations in the case, of course, with Watson's charges expressing legally dubious proprietorial claims to derivative rights emanating from the /Xam poetry and its transliterations.

In the Ward Churchill case at Colorado, accusations of plagiarism clearly stemmed from a desire to find some publicly-recognised form of malfeasance, after efforts to restrict Churchill's political speech failed.

A backdoor critique deployed when all else fails, charges of plagiarism can be made when there is a reproduction of mere phrases – even when these would not be eligible for copyright on creative content grounds. Copyright law does not protect the material form of ideas when the ideas are generally held and/or there are such limited ways in which an idea could be expressed that some repetition in phrasing by speakers of the same language becomes inevitable. Moreover, it recognises the possibility of simultaneous and independent origination – in other words, coincidence of formulation.

Why then, do we hear so much about plagiarism on the basis of relatively minor repetitions? Mainly, because search engine technology, which makes plagiarism so eminently plausible to so many students and lethargic writers, also makes the spurious accusation possible. And this is because literature is increasingly construed as a searchable rather than a legible text. The implications of this fact may be more profound than the so-called ethical crisis of plagiarism. The reader, it appears, is being displaced by the 'Googler'. This does not mean that literature is dead; but it does suggest the need for a different approach to the problem of plagiarism.

In fact, it suggests that the problem of plagiarism reflects a crisis in the culture of reading as much as it reveals the debasement of writing. The Googler cannot distinguish the mere repetition of phrasings from conscious intertextuality. Worse still, he is limited to the texts searchable within a given engine. On this basis originality becomes a position in the database (no longer even an archive). The earliest entry is as far as the Googler can go in the archaeology of an idea.

One might ask why, in a nation in which the idea of social welfare, or social good, has been used in arguments against patents, and their protection under the Trips (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) agreement, the proprietary rights of the author seem to loom so large, even to the extent that the threat of their violation overshadows the question of truth.

Socially responsible criticism

Criticism ought to begin by asking not only "Which elements of the text have appeared before?" but rather, "In what ways, or to what extent, does the new text deploy its many constituent elements to say something new, and to do so in a way that is not wholly dependent on a prior writer?" This question acknowledges, as all socially-responsible criticism should, that the work of every writer relies on knowledge of the tradition that precedes him or her. The writer and the text are in and of the world. But this question also demands readers who share knowledge of the world and traditions within which a writer works. And here is the real political demand of criticism – which must proceed even in silence: namely, general education for all people in the habits of reading, and not merely Internet searching. Plagiarism must be managed, but we will only be able to resist its politically-instrumental deployment if there are readers who know the difference between citation and intertextuality, invocation and misappropriation, text and database. ■

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Internet lockdown or the end of freedom

by Vincent Maher

Some time in the near future we may well find ourselves looking back and realising that the combination of the dot-com crash, the legal action against Napster and the Bush administration marked the end of a period of cultural freedom on the Internet. The signs of this change are among us right now, but it might already be too late to reverse this trend.

There are three key areas where the rights and freedoms that seemed to be intrinsic to the Internet – built into its very fabric – are being bludgeoned with a very blunt instrument, an amalgam of the law, fear, ignorance and silence. The first has been termed "net neutrality", the second revolves around intellectual property rights and the third around privacy and surveillance. The current incarnation of each of these aspects of the Internet is precisely what makes it a radically different type of mass medium that is, at least theoretically, more democratic and so, as the theory goes, better for our global culture than the endless looping of MTV and the Cartoon Network.

Even the most hardened geeks tend to switch off when someone invokes the register of Internet governance or net neutrality, not because it seems irrelevant but because it seems to be in the same league as fighting for environmental rights, a battle in an arena where the real players are too big for one individual to take on.

Network neutrality

In short, network neutrality means that all websites and services have equal access to the available bandwidth on the various telecommunications networks that make up the Internet. This is how it has been since the beginning, if you ignore China and other countries that censor the web for political and economic reasons. The issue of neutrality came into the spotlight recently when an amendment to the US Telecommunications Act that would have specifically protected net neutrality, was defeated in a lobbying bunfight (read more details about this on savetheinternet.com).

The outcome is not conclusive, but what has become apparent is that many of the large telecommunications companies in the US would like to see a scenario where they can legally throttle or slow down websites that do not pay, while simultaneously speeding up the services that they either own or have partnered with. This type of scenario hearkens back to the idea of privately-owned and restricted networks that use the Internet as their backbone, much like the Microsoft Network (MSN) in the early days.

If we imagine the Internet organised around these principles, there doesn't seem to be much difference between it and the current mass media like cable or satellite TV: you'd have to buy a package that includes the websites you want high-speed access to.

This is probably an unnecessarily pessimistic vision and, no doubt, the actual outcome would be something more palatable. As usual, it comes down to money. Each web user pays to access the Internet, each website pays its Internet service provider (ISP) for the bandwidth it uses, and each ISP pays for the bandwidth it uses to the large infrastructure providers. If I were an optimist I'd think that charging large websites for high-speed channels across the Internet might bring about a further decrease in ISP charges but the fact remains that the possibility would legally exist for a curtailment of our freedom to surf.

Intellectual property rights

Much like the egalitarian allocation of bandwidth, the protection of intellectual property rights involves a balancing act between market forces and the freedoms of individuals or corporations.

In the beginning, the World Wide Web was designed to be a space for sharing and collaborative work. The original architecture of the web was intended to allow anyone to read and write a page, the way a Wiki works today, but this was never implemented to its full extent. There was a definitive period between the days when peer-to-peer (P2P) file-sharing networks like Napster and Audiogalaxy started up and exploded the traditional notions of copyright ownership in the music and movie industry, and the time when the big corporations woke up and started their legal reign of terror on the web. Since then we have seen the collapse of many P2P networks, children and 80-year-old grannies sued, and a propaganda machine that spins a suffocating yarn of anti-piracy talk.

The moral and ethical issues of digital piracy are more complex than a simple equation with stealing a handbag or shop-lifting: copying is a theft of potential business with no conclusive evidence that it prevents those sales from taking place anyway. In many ways, the sharp response from the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) and the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) is an attempt to use the legality of copyright to bide some time while they figure out how to deal with a fundamental flaw in their business model in the age of the Internet. The recording industry is based substantially on distribution and, like estate and travel agents, are increasingly finding themselves out of the distribution loop.

The extent of the corporate response to this is various. On the one hand, online shopping solutions like the Apple iTunes Store have been successful and have demonstrated that people will buy music online if the price and configuration is right and convenient. On the other hand, the enforcement of ownership and the rights to copy are being built into the hardware and the software of the future – the term Digital Rights Management (DRM) refers precisely to the structural incorporation of the logic of ownership into the very machines we run at a fundamental level.

The newest generation of DVD standards (Blu-ray and HD-DVD) both use Advanced Access Content System (AACS), a DRM implementation that will effectively prevent the playback of high-definition video unless your monitor or video card do not also use a specific standard for copy-protection developed by Intel. What this means, in plain English, is that the fair-use that copyright law currently affords you, will be extremely difficult if all your hardware is not compliant and, even then, you will be at the mercy of the hardware manufacturers and standards developers. Your computer will have a legal framework built into it.

The other side of the coin is the advocacy groups emerging to protect certain freedoms, like the freedom to give away your work on a license less restrictive than copyright. Organisations like Creative Commons have been particularly visible in this area, offering a public license that enables the creator to specify what others can do with their work. While it is often difficult to fully grasp the significance of Creative Commons, it is easier to understand if you strip away all the rhetoric and consider it practically: whenever you create something, copyright is automatic; you don't even have to put a © on it, so people tend to avoid building on the creative work of others for fear of retrospective legal action; the Creative Commons license allows you to build on the work of others in a way that protects you legally if you become a superstar one day. It's that simple. The spin-off is explicit cultural freedom from the legal framework.

With this knowledge comes a culture of internalised surveillance in which we constantly have to remind ourselves that everything we do can resurface later, that ambiguity and experimentation with ideas and actions on the Web can emerge as damning evidence later, in a different context.

Surveillance and the illusion of anonymity

So far I have discussed threats to the freedom within the mechanism of the Internet itself and threats to the freedom to use and build on the culture that is forming within the medium. More often than not, freedom is an illusion of anonymity. We can track an increase in surveillance everywhere, from cameras in cities to the massive mobile phone or ATM networks that can pinpoint our location, movement patterns and habits quite accurately.

One of the consequences of the American war of terror is the polarisation of society and the unlikely willingness of individuals to give up their rights in exchange for reassurances of national security. This conservatism and ethnic protectionism has created a psychological groundswell that somehow paints those campaigning for civil liberties as irrelevant agitators or hippies, out of touch with the 'real' problems faced by the West.

Ironically, the Internet may seem like a haven for those who crave anonymity from the airport scans, the cameras and the forms. I say ironic because the Internet, if one conceives of it as a virtual space, is the most monitored environment you could go to, it's simply not visible, hence the illusion of freedom. This, too, is changing.

In South Africa it is now illegal to give someone anonymous access to a computer network, and access providers must store that information for a set duration and be available to hand it over if the government wants it.

In the US, the government issued a subpoena for search records recently, and Google was the only search provider to resist the pressure in a public battle that took place simultaneously with their decision to allow their search results to be censored by the Chinese government for the sake of increased market share.

The simple fact is that most, if not all, websites keep a record of your IP address (the unique number that distinguishes the computer you are using from all the others), the time and date, the previous site you were visiting and other information. This would allow someone with reasonable technical expertise to figure out your entire online life.

It makes you wonder, then, why people think the Internet is the Wild West, where anything goes. Perhaps it is because many still consider it not to have the same weight as the traditional media. Last year, for instance, some visitors to the Guardian Online were up-in-arms because the *Guardian* printed comments they submitted to the website, even though the Guardian was within its rights to do so.

In another conversation, a blogger told me she was considering deleting five years of her personal life history because she was about to apply for a new job. Suddenly the weight of her public history was too much to bear, and I can understand why.

Like the recording industry, governments and police are waking up and realising that these records exist, that they can be extracted and used as evidence in a prosecution. With this knowledge comes a culture of internalised surveillance in which we constantly have to remind ourselves that everything we do can resurface later, that ambiguity and experimentation with ideas and actions on the web can emerge as damning evidence later, in a different context.

There are other aspects to this too, that revolve less around privacy and more around the level of visibility of one's public activities. Erasing a record online is becoming increasingly difficult as search engines like Google cache pages of the web so they remain available even if you delete the original. Bloggers might copy and paste something you said, others may save it to their hard drives. In fact, I have seen several instances of private conversation via email erupting onto the Blogosphere. It has reached the point where you need to specify a license agreement for the reuse of the content of your email, to protect confidentiality.

Let's put this all into a dark premonition: in 2016 the speed at which websites get to you will be determined by commercial agreements beyond your control or the capacity of your network, your computer will not let you do much except what is strictly and bluntly legal and you will be nagged by paranoia every time you go online. The startling thing is that this version of reality will not seem any different to the way things are now because, in many ways, it vibrates with the timbre of inevitability. ■

Chris Kirchhoff

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INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERS

Gender equality? Eish!

Chris Kirchhoff

by Ferial Haffajee

At the *Mail&Guardian*, we exist in a cocoon. Always have done, in fact. The reason the newspaper took so easily to a woman editor is that female leadership is in its DNA.

It's also a PC newspaper, so it's always valued gender equity and practised it, though some of my sisters at the newspaper may not always agree.

So, I was shocked at the recent Sanef (South African National Editors' Forum) AGM by the results of our research into a glass ceiling in the media industry. It paints a picture of an industry stuck in the dark ages – which in South Africa is pre-1994. Cosy boys' clubs; frustrated senior female journalists for whom the promise of freedom is not arriving.

The Glass Ceiling Study was done among Sanef members. Out of a universe of about 150 members, about 40 responded, most of them women – which is probably an indication of interest. As Prof Lizette Rabe who co-ordinated the study acerbically noted, it has taken Sanef three years to get the study done.

It presents a scary picture of the intrinsic maleness of newsrooms and ingrained sense of entitlement and that men don't see the issue as important.

At our Sanef meeting, as this research was presented, an esteemed colleague blustered: "Never mind about that, when are we going to tackle female domination of the magazine industry?" Another said: "Do we really have to give women four months maternity leave? It's ridiculous. Why do I have to pay a premium for female skills."

Eish!

In the report, women complained that senior female journalists took on the perceptions and prejudices of their male colleagues in order to win acceptance. They complained that there is no emotional commitment to equity; it's viewed as another box to tick. And they reported a backlash: men affirming each other – in the ribald and irreverent atmosphere that is the newsroom, it's become a topic of jibe and cynicism.

The golf course and the pub remain the main sites of doing business and making contacts. To play the game, you've got to imbibe this culture. So, women are frustrated because the workplace is still not delivering an atmosphere of empowerment.

What shall we do?

I work in a happy empowering space, so my next comments may be coloured by that. With a constitution and laws to back us up, there is no need to feel the victim. Sanef needs to lead by popularising this research to our industry. We must take it into newsrooms, talk about it and show that non-sexism is a right of equal value to non-racialism.

Our research is qualitative and based on the Sanef membership lists. We need an industry-wide audit so we really know what's happening.

What are our owners going to do? We must develop a national plan, conscientise and then monitor. This is hard work but it must be done. Talk to them in their own language – the language of the bottom line. Women readers are keeping newspapers alive now, and they are the managers of household budgets.

Also, accept that we are on the cusp of a wave: Phyllicia Oppelt (editor *Daily Dispatch*); Debra Patta (executive editor e.tv news); Portia Kobue (head of news Kaya-FM); Robyn Chalmers (deputy editor *Business Day*); Rehana Roussouw (deputy editor *Weekender Review*), Alide Dasnois (newly-appointed as editor of the *Pretoria News*).

But… why is Paula Fray (ex-editor *Saturday Star*) not running the SABC news and current affairs programmes? Why has Lakela Kaunda (ex-editor *Evening Post*) gone back to government? And Pippa Green (ex-head SABC Radio News) back to university?

Years ago, we did not accept that it could be business as usual in the media when the impetus for racial transformation started. So, what we need to do now is:

- build bridges and alliances between women;
- build gender equity into our business plans;
- run training and development programmes for women;
- create the facilities and flexi-hours for women with families;
- put in place supportive and enabling working environments. ■

2006 Women in the Media awards

- Overall winner: Ferial Haffajee (*Mail&Guardian* editor)
- Finalists: Ruda Landman (Carte Blanche presenter), Neo Ntsoma (*The Star* photographer) and Sue Valentine (radio journalist and Aids journalism pioneer)
- Lifetime Achiever: Barbara Cooke (media researcher)
- Rising Star: Nikiwe Bikitsha (SABC radio and TV presenter)

(hosted by *The Media* magazine and MTN)

Chris Kirchhoff

Glass ceiling, concrete ceiling

After 12 years of a 'new' South Africa, for many senior women journalists in the country's newsrooms it's still a matter of 'same old', writes ***Lizette Rabe****.*

What are the realities facing women journalists, specifically senior women, in South African newsrooms? What do they identify as obstacles, and which strategies can be implemented to redress the situation?

This was the gist of the questions asked in a study to establish the realities, obstacles and challenges facing senior women journalists in South African newsrooms across all media.

What were the answers?

As was almost to be expected, a confirmation of what was recorded in other such surveys, both nationally and internationally, was found. In a male-dominated society, women are still on the receiving end of discrimination.

After 12 years of a "new South Africa", it was more or less still a matter of "same old" for South African women journalists. With a Constitution built on human rights such as anti-racism and anti-sexism, the latter is still something that exists on paper, not in practice.

As a brief background, the survey was conducted as a follow-up of the "en-gendered" AGM of the South African National Editors' Forum of 2003. It is significant that no funding could be found for this specific study, and that the Sanef (all-women) sub-committee on diversity in the end had to do it without any dedicated resources whatsoever.

Nevertheless, the women got it going. A questionnaire was sent to (at the time) all 149 Sanef members. In total 40 respondents completed it – in other words a sample of 27% of the population. It is also significant that the total membership of Sanef consists of one-third female and two-thirds male, yet the respondents represented the opposite: two-thirds female and one-third male. Another indication of what the priorities are?

The circumstances under which such important research had to be done – decided upon three years ago, with no funding, in the end done by the specific members of the all-women diversity committee who already have over-extended diaries – was indeed a confirmation of the attitudes, realities and obstacles women in South African media face.

The qualitative questions were, as was to be expected, the most revealing (or, maybe, confirming). One can safely conclude from the data that discriminatory practices, structural inequalities, cultural factors, prejudices, patriarchy and sexism are still alive and well in our South African newsrooms.

The intrinsic "maleness" of the newsroom and journalism practice, as result of a male hegemonic society, is a major cause for women not to be found in senior positions.

In general, it seems there is improvement regarding acceptance of women managers, although many prejudices still prevail. One might conclude that there is a will on the part of (still overwhelmingly) male management, but that no way has been found (yet) to address the situation.

From the data it can be concluded that it seems women journalists are more gender-sensitive in dealing with day to day news events. Therefore, one can say that a critical mass of women in these positions will lead to a change in news practice and representations. Although, as has been established in numerous studies, women often perpetuate the existing male constructs of the newsroom environment. One respondent said: "Because women journalists usually join male-dominated newsrooms, over time they unwittingly embrace the perceptions of their male colleagues over what makes news and they begin to report news from this perspective."

It is telling that the term "old boys'club" was mentioned no less than nine times by respondents (not counting similar phrases such as "old boys' network").

The fact that women's empowerment meant that they have more disposable income, and that more women in the newsroom, also on senior levels, would lead to higher "women content" would actually be to the benefit of the bottom-line, was also identified. As one respondent said: "This is not about activism alone: it makes good sense to be relevant to women readers as they are becoming a global majority with increasing economic oomph."

Sadly, the commercial imperative, if nothing else, could provide the impetus for male decision-makers in the media world to implement change. (As one respondent said: "It's about the money, honey.")

An audit to get statistics of how many women are on which levels, was also requested by one respondent. For another, the issue of sexual harassment is another topic that requires research.

The following issues were identified as needing urgent attention:

Sexism

Non-sexism, is, as non-racism, a constitutional right. Yet, women still experience that they are regarded as lesser citizens in almost every aspect of their work. One respondent: "I do think senior men think they are gender-sensitive when in fact they are not.

And the fact that they do not know that they do not know, is even worse than to argue/debate with those who are outright discriminating."

Another: "I do hear phrases like 'is he man enough?' when discussing a youngster's ambitions. I have read an evaluation of a cadet… 'x is surprisingly reticent for such an attractive young woman...' – written, of course, by a man."

And another: "There's a sense that many men do often still feel they are superior to women. No amount of workshops is going to change this ingrained sense of entitlement. As women I think we need to get on with things while being aware of the realities."

Racism

Responses included that "preferences and privileges enjoyed by white men" still prevail, but also, that the "white, old boys' club" seems to have been replaced by a "black, old boys' club".

Prejudice

Male prejudice, experienced from all levels, both in age and in race, was another obstacle. One respondent said employers tend to appoint "in their own image" and do not realise the characteristics that women bring into the equation as important or valid. Another response: "Prejudice is still a factor, especially the higher you go – overt and covert."

Another: "They are simply not seen as equals by the vast majority of men, who still hold the reins of power in all news organisations. Examples: Women are patronised and their opinions do not appear to be taken as seriously as those of men. This can be subtle, like jokes made at their expense when they give their opinions, or teasing. It seems friendly and even affectionate, but it is actually demeaning."

Newsroom culture

The "macho" newsroom culture/newsroom discourse also stops women from contributing. The "distinct maleness" and "culture of maledom" of newsrooms are perceived as major obstacles. One respondent: "Old boys' clubs where assignments, policies etc, are discussed at golf clubs, in bars etc, virtually forcing women to adopt a male-defined social life to be 'one of the boys' – or be left out. (Linked to which, look at the distressing amount of alcohol abuse among young women reporters – go to any media function to see it)."

Another: "Existing networking structures – a male network still exists to a large degree; general sense of isolation – that you have to play a 'male game'."

And: "Women managers are accused of being emotional and incompetent if they are not perceived as tough (and vindictive and bitchy if they are). They are also vulnerable to rumour and innuendo about their sexual activity or history to a degree that men simply are not. In general, it is clear that men prefer being managed by other men and I think most men would agree with that. They often unconsciously subvert women managers without even being aware of it."

"Men still feel able to rip off the feminine gender, but newsrooms are irreverent at the best of times. At [title], as a woman in management I felt supported by my peers but found that some of the black men in the office would not listen to me – only to another man (of any race)."

Knowledge of equity laws

The findings in terms of the knowledge of equity laws and policies, and how they are applied, were shocking.

Employment conditions

The "intrinsic nature of the job" – which at its best can be described as human unfriendly – was identified as another obstacle.

Institutionalised discrimination

It seems this is still a reality, both in terms of pay and promotion practices. One respondent: "Testosterone-dominated organisations do not take women seriously at higher levels. Interesting that these are the levels where skills are not the only requirement, but also the ability to fit in and perpetuate that establishment. In newspapers, women are rarely accepted at the upper levels of the organisation."

Family responsibilities

Not only is there a lack of infrastructural support such as crèches, but women find they are "treated with distrust" when having to tend to children. "I also found that 'maternity leave' meant taking time off 'to a mental institution' because upon my return all my decisions were questioned twice as much as before."

Lack of professional bodies

The lack of a professional body such as a journalism union was also mentioned. It was argued that such a body would, for example, fight for facilities.

News and news practices

The hegemonic male constructs of newsrooms should be challenged, leading to new definitions of news and news production. A need to re-invent, redefine, renew and re-imagine news is seen as a necessity for our (post-colonial), post-apartheid society. One respondent: "Broader, deeper, constant debate as to what constitutes news, and what sort of social reality affects/underpins news events, news production and the social responsibility of news purveyors – as monitors/watchdogs/reporters."

Career paths and mentors

Workshops to address inherent sexism and to build capacity in terms of gender awareness and gender correct ways of reporting were identified. One respondent said it should not be experienced as a them versus us: "I don't want them (men) to feel alienated and marginalised because the struggle is for equality and empowerment, not for reverse discrimination."

Workshops for women in which they can be empowered to believe in themselves and free themselves from the social construct that "men do it better" were also recommended. Career planning and opportunities to expose women to all kinds of experiences, to prepare them for leadership is also a huge need.

Women as role models to mentor younger women are also needed. "Women are not empowered and mentored to believe in themselves, that they can fill a senior position, because women also buy into the perception that they cannot 'compete' with men, cannot be 'as good as men', etc, when they in fact can do things better than men."

Two more reactions: "Consciousness-raising for everyone. Courses [to address sexism, racism, elitism, cronyism] should be devised or bought if they exist, so that people can learn how to avoid them because these attitudes are often unconscious." And: "Women also need to be trained in how to manage sometimes hostile men. I know from experience that it is not easy. Women need to be trained to accept their own worth and learn how to act in a senior position and how to handle authority."

Lack of political will

Respondents referred to the fact that there seemingly is no will to redress the inequalities. One indicated that "fines for non-adherence to equity laws" is not enough. Another respondent: "Thirty years ago my fate and that of others was decided by a clique of men in power, often while they networked in the pub! Nothing has changed. Cliques of white males still look after one another's interests and appoint one another at the expense of women and people of colour."

Another: "A majority of senior men think 'political correctness' (as they call it) is a joke – and this is much truer of white men than black men who have, in most cases, at least an understanding of why certain clauses of the Bill of Rights exist. (That doesn't necessarily reflect how they behave in one-on-one interactions with female individuals, but at least they talk the Talk!) I regularly see relatively junior women staffers asked (half-jokingly, maybe..?) to get tea; referred to as 'girls' and if not exactly sexually harassed, then certainly expected to participate in banter that many might find undermining. Some senior editors still automatically try to date attractive younger female colleagues, but that's thankfully getting rarer."

Another respondent: "There needs to be a willingness and openness to give women the same opportunities. While there might be no guarantees that all women – black or white – might succeed in leadership positions, there is nothing that says they won't."

What to do?

It is clear that some senior women journalists not only experience a glass ceiling, but indeed one made of concrete. Sanef resolved at its AGM that it would "pay attention to the challenges faced by senior female journalists in the South African media", as the study found "that many women in the industry still face serious obstacles in achieving senior leadership positions".

Indeed, as one respondent said: "Just do it". ■

The Sanef study – some details

The study was completed by:
- 6 editors
- 29 senior news journalists (various senior executive levels)
- 5 educators/trainers

Responses:
- 40 respondents out of 149 members
- 65% female; 35% male

Experience of 40 respondents:
- 45% had more than 20 years
- 45% had 10-20 years
- 10% had less than 10 years

Reasons for leaving (If you were a senior woman editor)
- retrenchment
- harassment
- pressure
- a "sense of isolation"
- no support base
- undermining
- not being taken seriously, and
- no space for flexibility

"One can safely extrapolate from the data that discriminatory practices, structural inequalities, cultural factors, prejudices, patriarchy and sexism are still alive and well in South African newsrooms. These are clearly prohibiting South Africa's women journalists from realising their potential."

Towards a women's

by Jane Duncan

In March 2003, Genderlinks and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (Misa) conducted a global Gender and Media Baseline Study. The study covered a total of 25 110 news items in September 2002, across all Southern African Development Community countries. It was found that women constituted only 17% of news sources, 1% less than the global average of 18%. In South Africa the figure was 19%. The race and gender breakdown is particularly disturbing, with only 7% of sources being black women, in spite of the fact that black women constitute 45% of the total population.

There was a general paucity of female voices in relation to economic and political stories, as well as sports. Women speak the most on gender equality and gender violence. The economics statistics are especially interesting: while women generate 20% of stories, only 10% of sources are women. While women generate 16% of stories on politics, only 9% cited female sources. This implies that journalists have not found ways to engender political and economic stories.

More recently, the South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) has detected ongoing discrimination in newsrooms. According to Sanef: "…discriminatory practices, structural inequalities, cultural factors, prejudices, patriarchy and sexism are still alive and well in our South African newsrooms…"

These are deeply worrying statistics, and point to the fact that newsrooms are hostile terrains for women, both as journalists and as sources. Clearly, some inventive solutions must be found. The authors of the Gender and Media Baseline study argue that journalists should strive for:

- equal number of men and women as news sources;
- equal number of male and female journalists;
- stories that have no gender stereotypes;
- acknowledgement that every story is a potential gender story;
- self assessment of gender bias.

My opinion is that the laudible targets set in the Baseline study will not be met using the current strategies, because they are based on conscientising key decision-makers in newsrooms, possibly backed up by quotas.

Competitions celebrating women's achievements in the media are becoming increasingly popular, as are features on so-called women leaders, in a bid to popularise women's voices. As valuable as they may be in building women's confidence and self-image, such competitions pit women against women and individualise the struggle against gender oppression.

In fact, there is a general poverty of strategy when it comes to achieving gender balance in the media.

Deep structural reasons

There are deep structural reasons why women are so underrepresented. A women's media movement would need to address the underlying reasons, and move gendered media activism beyond the tried and tested approaches of seeking greater representation or addressing the problem as one of simply a lack of consciousness or appreciation of the role of women, or the lack of knowledge of audiences in how to engage media.

A "commonsense" approach to addressing gender imbalances in the media has taken root, built on an often-undeclared set of theoretical assumptions. I would argue that these assumptions are built on the liberal feminist tradition, which emphasises the attainment of equal rights while remaining blind to the structural reasons why such rights are allocated unequally.

Feminism itself is a contested terrain. An emancipatory feminist vision needs to embrace and build on, but move beyond, a liberal rights-based discourse, which may make marginal differences, and have some successes, but will not fundamentally alter the picture painted by these surveys.

Currently the movement that does exist tends to be depoliticised, tame, safe, timid. It does not grapple sufficiently with the fact that media both construct and are constructed by social relations: a women's media movement needs to recognise this and commit itself not only to changing the media, but to changing social relations.

The two projects are so interdependent that they cannot be separated. A women's media movement must have politics: politics of society and politics of media. It needs to take positions on optimum working conditions for media workers, and fight for these. It needs to take positions on the key media policy questions of the day, such as tabloidisation, consolidation, foreign ownership, commercialisation, public broadcasting and regulation. It needs to take positions on black economic empowerment, privatisation, globalisation, it needs to be anti-neoliberal.

Women, globalisation

Globalisation of the economy has exacerbated womens' marginalisation from the productive economy, and has greatly increased the amount of unwaged work they undertake. Computerisation coupled with capital intensity of production has fuelled structural unemployment and has also led to the rise of atypical forms of employment. Casualisation and informalisation of work have become the order of the day. Women especially have been forced into unemployment, underemployment or precarious, unstable and highly exploitative forms of work. Women have also been made to compensate for many of the cutbacks to basic services fuelled by globalisation. In the process, their unwaged work in the home has increased: caring for ill family members owing to cutbacks to health services; fetching water and fuel to compensate for water and electricity cutoffs.

Women, media, globalisation

According to a Gender and Media 2002 audience survey, television is the most important source of news for women (49% of whom rely on television as a source of news), followed by radio. There is also a marked gender gap in newspaper readership, 21% of men rely on newspapers as their main source of news compared to 15% of women. Women with primary level education relied on radio for news.

Income deprivation has much to do with this; a woman who cannot afford to buy a pre-paid water token for R20 will be highly unlikely to afford newspapers on a regular basis.

Media consolidation

A women's media movement needs to also engage with the gendered nature of media ownership, control and funding. The consolidation in the economy generally and the media specifically has benefited men. In a recent *Sunday Times* "rich list" nearly all of the rich are men, and although their representation is relatively low, there are an increasing number of black people on the list. The only media-related executive on the list is Neil Jacobson of Johnnic Communications, who earned a 549% increase in salary since 2004.

media movement

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In May 2003 it was reported that salary settlement levels in the media were far below the then inflation level of 11.6%. Contrast these settlement levels with Jacobson's 549% increase in salary a year later. These disparities highlight the need for strong media unions to represent the interests of journalists.

The media industry has also been especially vulnerable to the forms of workplace restructuring typically associated with globalisation. Journalists are being expected to multi-task, leading to a blurring of boundaries between formerly distinct roles. Atypical forms of employment, including freelancing, is becoming more apparent, and more women are being employed on these bases in the industry, not necessarily because of a firm commitment to gender equity, but because women are more vulnerable to exploitation given their precarious position in the world of work. It will not be possible to address these problems without a comprehensive campaign against forms of media consolidation that promote atypical employment, multi-tasking, dismantling of benefits for women (such as maternity leave), and a generalised upward redistribution of income from media workers to media managers and owners.

Poor women's voices

A women's media movement would need to ensure that poor womens' voices are heard, even (or perhaps especially), when womens' voices are raised in opposition to the anti-poor and anti-female aspects of government policy, such as cost-recovery in electricity and water. Certainly women activists engaged in social movement struggles rarely find their way into the lists of celebrated women; they tend to be too hot to handle.

No woman of the year award is likely to be handed out to unemployed Phiri Concerned Residents' Committee member Jennifer Makoatsane, who has with other residents waged a bitter struggle against the imposition of pre-paid water meters in Soweto. Community radio station Jozi FM has been flighting advertisements placed by Johannesburg Water extolling the virtues of pre-paid meters. When they were approached by residents wanting to put their side of the story, they were told that they could do so if they bought the airtime, just like Johannesburg Water. A women's media movement should take a position on the commodification of a community radio service in a manner that crowds out poor women's voices.

Both, and

What should a women's media movement address? Stereotypes in media content, or the growing burden of unpaid work on women? Gender quotas in newsrooms or a free basic water supply of 50 litres per person per day? Increasing knowledge about how audiences can complain about stories, or full employment? The choice should not be either, or, but both. If the problems outlined by Sanef, Misa and Genderlinks are to be addressed, then a comprehensive approach is called for.

Focusing on increasing the representations of women in the media is important, but it is not enough. Womens' marginalisation in the media is not simply a result of a lack of sensitivity in media circles; it has a highly complex political economy, and we need to craft tools to address the problem in all its complexity. This will imply building strategic alliances with other social movements engaged in emancipatory struggles, with media possibly becoming a movement-of-movements.

Fifty years ago, women rose up to protest against the gendered nature of apartheid laws. National apartheid has been defeated, and the historic role of women in achieving this defeat must be celebrated. But a new form of apartheid – which is global – will require new forms of struggle by women, in instances where the enemy is much more difficult to identify.

In order to defeat global apartheid, we will need more rather than less debate on economic and political issues; and we will also need more gendered debate.

We should not just aim for sexual equality in the family, society and the media, but an end to the sexual division of labour, manual and intellectual. ■

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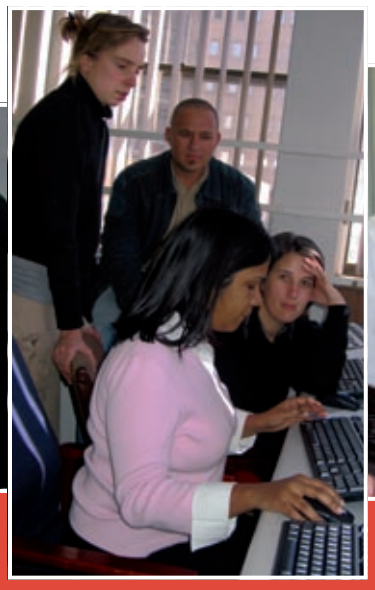
Photographers demand to be allowed to do grammar, repor
corridors, columnists discuss the meaning of voice. There is
ings in Zulu, swapping of books on narrative, photostating
missing a class, anger about the style book not being updat
home at the end of the day.

Elizabeth Barratt writes about the Star's


The editor stands in front of the class and outlines the day's course. They will learn about five elements of *The Star* and *Saturday Star's* editorial strategy. First is the Johannesburg focus: we have not been reflecting the amazing changes happening in one of Africa's biggest cities, he tells them. Then he gives them a wicked, 15-minute general knowledge test.

There are photographers, news editors, reporters, graphic artists, editorial assistants, subeditors and executives in the class. Before teatime he has collected 10 new Jo'burg story ideas from them to add to what is by now a long list stuck up in the newspaper's conference room. Next he explains the basic elements of narrative journalism.

This is the 10th day in three weeks that Moegsien Williams, editor of one of the biggest newspapers on the continent, has marked off in his diary to teach his staff of about 140, including regular freelancers. His co-trainer is the creative director David Hazelhurst, who is off production to take all staff through an intensive WED (writing, editing, design) exercise.

These strategy sessions are difficult to organise: besides taking 12 to 15 staffers out of a four-edition, 21-hours-a day, six-day newsroom for the day, they also clash with the Teeline (shorthand) and Zulu classes that are running over a few months. There is the Narrative Group that meets weekly, after a course by Mark Kramer and Adam Hochschild, and the senior writers and columnists have an Opinion and Analysis Group every fortnight or so – these are both study and critique groups.

And for two weeks, 35 journalists, junior and senior, have had Grammar Master for two hours every day – three classes running daily, taught by Melissa Stocks, revise subeditor from Independent Cape. You'd think the word "grammar" would put everyone off – but so far it is this course that has brought out the highest level of staff commitment.

This is just the start of a year-long programme of training for *Star* journalists that has been devised to motivate, challenge, improve skills – and raise the quality of the newspaper.

Behind this lies two factors: research by the South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) showing the generally low standards of journalism in South Africa, backed by our own experience, and the financial support of a foreign-owned company that must by law contribute deeply to skills development. It is thus a top-down instruction and a bottom-up need. As Independent's flagship paper, *The Star* is leading the way in developing courses that can be used, if required, elsewhere around the group in South Africa.

It also comes immediately after moving to a new PC-based, thin-client editorial production and content management system, Prestige, after 10 years on what had become a rather out-dated QPS on Macs. And it comes at the start of a new push to interact more with our newspaper website, and move beyond print towards multimedia news production.

However, the editor chose not to just throw the available money at the problem. Instead, he has insisted on a complex plan of customised, in-house training for all staff, with all courses having content and outcomes in line with *The Star's* strategic plans. And he has joined in on some courses, teaching and learning – and writing the tests.

The plan has three streams flowing at the same time:

- General – training for all staff in the newspaper's strategy, Internet searches, Zulu, use of Outlook and time management, for example.
- Basic – all of these courses are available to those who require them for their jobs, but are designed to cross different editorial departments: grammar, shorthand, Photoshop, interviewing, story structures, headlines, page design, using numbers in stories and writing for the web, for example. Many of these also serve as refresher courses for mid-level staff.
- Quality – targeted training for four selected groups: narrative writing, opinion/analysis, investigative journalism and newsdesk management.

The first stage, however, was to look more deeply at the needs by getting all staffers to play Newshound. This assessment tool was created by psychologist (and ex-journalist) Brian Dyke many years ago to assist with the selection of juniors for the cadet school. It runs as a multiple choice question-and-answer game on computer, and the results come up in a spreadsheet which makes analysing them quite easy.

Newshound looks at three aspects of thinking which are important for journalists: attention to detail, comprehension and logical thinking. It was updated and used two years ago for the selection of trainees for Independent's subeditors' course, and the idea of using it for journalism student selection was workshopped last year with SADC trainers at Rhodes University.

As a recruitment tool it must be accompanied by interviews and writing tests, which reveal other aspects

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of personality, motivation and skills. We also want to create benchmarks for what standards we can expect from different levels so it can be used for wider recruitment than just beginners. But in terms of our training programme, it is helping to direct our training choices and methods: we are now building aspects of these thinking skills into as many of our courses as possible.

Managing this complex system of courses has been slightly simplified by doing all of the communication on two new, large, grey notice boards opposite the lifts on the editorial floor. Sign-up sheets, letters of explanation from the editor, class lists, examples of where strategy has not been achieved, photos of classes in progress and forms on which to give opinions about what training should be done next, are all put up there.

Adapting an idea we found on the Internet used by the Raleigh *News & Observer* in the United States, our human resources department has had simple little booklets made up for each staff member. In it they can record their training courses. In line with the editor's approach, it has "Learning Organisation" written on the top, and has a page for personal details as well as one for short notes on each course completed.

Behind the scenes, of course, is a rather painful tracking, listing and managing process to ensure 140 staff from different shifts are available (not always possible due to the ever-changing nature of news), plan course content, examine what has worked for other newspapers around the world, rearrange training rooms, find trainers from within and without, follow-up on the dropouts and – most importantly of all – instigate ways to champion the changes being brought in so staff can implement what they are learning.

All of this is being carried along by a tidal wave of editorial enthusiasm. Photographers demand to be allowed to do grammar, reporters criticise Pulitzer Prize-winning articles in the corridors, columnists discuss the meaning of "voice". There is arguing over who is teacher's pet in Teeline, loud greetings in Zulu, swapping of books on narrative, photostating of articles from the Poynter website, agonies about missing a class, anger about the style book not being updated and bundled up piles of extra work or reading taken home at the end of the day.

Some senior staff are cynical, some seem scared to pit their wits and skills against juniors and some just plain don't like their demanding routines being disrupted. A few have avoided having their own work critiqued. But these resisters are a small group that is already shrinking. Most are beginning to welcome the chaos and challenge that they are expected to manage as well as participate in.

As one executive remarked: "All the moaning and bitching has gone: staff are all too busy doing their homework." Or as another noted: "These days reporters run out of the newsroom when they go on stories!"

All of our training must head in one direction: it must work towards achieving *The Star's* strategy. This is an editorial but also a business imperative: Johannesburg is a highly competitive media environment. In the past couple of years, two daily newspapers have been started up and have been closed down – and both had elements of direct competition with *The Star*. At the same time, there are more magazines and radio stations than ever before, and the use of the Internet to get news is suddenly growing rapidly. *The Star* needs to ensure that it builds its reputation as the prime provider of news and views of its city.

This is just the start; there's a long way to go. It is highly idealistic to try to implement everything so that results are seen in the newspaper and hopefully on our website, and sustain this level of commitment of people and time which takes staff repeatedly out of *The Star's* demanding production cycle.

The immediate spin-offs are that it is creating an expectation of higher standards of work as well as more outspokenness and interaction among staff. People from different departments have all got to know each other better in class, they know what everyone else has been taught and their opinions have been sought. It's the start of what we hope will be a change of culture: the growth of a learning culture.

So when you hear the loud buzz of staff generating new story ideas in the training room after the editor has, for the 10th time, given his in-depth and anecdotal explanation of what we are missing in coverage of our changing Jo'burg, there is no doubt that the message is getting through. ■

Suckers for numbers

by Robert Brand

Most media practitioners would agree that numeracy – a basic competence with numbers – is an essential skill in modern journalism. Without it, we can't fully understand the world we live in, or explain and interpret it for our audiences. Virtually every aspect of life these days is quantified or measured by statistical or numerological data. Yet new research indicates that South African journalists are error-prone when it comes to numbers.

In that they are not alone. Mathematical incompetence among journalists world-wide remains, as Maier (2002a) puts it, "legendary". Journalism seems to attract students who have an aversion to numbers. Maier's 2003 survey of journalists at a major US newspaper provides empirical evidence supporting the claim that "journalism is a refuge for students uncomfortable with math". The study found that journalists who had majored in journalism were worse at maths in high school, tended not to take maths at university, scored less well in a maths test, and had less confidence in their own ability in maths than those who had studied other subjects at university.

There is no comparable empirical evidence in South Africa, but the South African National Editors Forum's 2002 skills audit concluded that reporters "lack(ed) skills with regard to relatively uncomplicated calculations". More than half of the reporters questioned by Sanef's researchers couldn't give the correct answer to the question: "If 4 000 000 Zimbabwean citizens indicated they were going to vote, and 2 000 000 indicated they were not going to vote, what percentage of Zimbabwean citizens will vote?" (De Beer & Steyn 2002).

What does "numeracy" – or "mathematical literacy", the term preferred by our education authorities – mean? It does not mean mastery of mathematical fields such as algebra, calculus and geometry. It refers, rather, to the ability to use numbers to meet the demands of everyday life and work. For journalists, that includes the ability to do basic arithmetic, interpret and analyse statistical data, and understand basic economic indicators. Without those essential skills, journalists can't do their jobs properly.

As Deborah Potter (1998) of the Poynter Institute says: "Journalists need math skills to make sense of numbers the way they need language skills to make sense of words… Too often reporters and editors are suckers for numbers. A number looks solid, factual, more trustworthy than a fallible human source. And being numerically incompetent, journalists can't find the flaws in statistics and calculations. They can't tell the difference between a meaningless number and a significant one. The result is stories that are misleading and confusing at best, and at worst flat out wrong… Journalists who fail to master math …lack a basic skill needed to decipher much of the information in the world around them."

Although there have been a number of studies in the US and Canada documenting the frequency of mathematical errors in news media, there has been relatively little research into the kind of errors committed by journalists, or the extent to which journalists rely on numbers to cover the news. Maier (2002) conducted the first mathematics audit of a US newspaper to address those questions. In South Africa, the research record is thin: the Sanef skills audit, which only touched on the issue, and a master's thesis by Amelia Genis at Stellenbosch University (2001).

Neither of those studies attempted to quantify numerical errors or the extent to which journalists rely on numbers. Genis' study is an overview of error types that commonly occur in journalism, and contains some useful anecdotal data. The Sanef skills audit does not specifically address the issue of numeracy. It identifies the newsgathering process, writing and accuracy as areas that need to be addressed in training. Accuracy includes, though it is not explicitly stated, accurate presentation of numbers (ie mathematical facts). It also raises the important issue of the role of mathematics in journalism training. De Beer and Steyn state the following in a footnote to their report on the audit: "Editors expressed concern that the essential skills needed for modern-day reporters are not adequately addressed. These include knowledge of and training in subjects like economics… It was argued that tertiary institutions should train students in these subjects… This also included calculation and mathematical skills."

In my research, I attempted to answer three questions: How often do news reports in a daily newspaper involve mathematical calculation? How often do mathematical errors occur in those reports? And what types of mathematical errors occur in those reports?

Twelve consecutive weekday editions of the *Cape Times*, a daily newspaper based in Cape Town, South Africa, were examined to measure the frequency of quantitative elements in news reports, the frequency of mathematical errors in those reports containing quantitative elements, and the types of errors that occur. The sample consisted of 230 locally bylined news reports. It excluded the business pages, where a higher level of numerical competence could be assumed, as well as wire service and correspondents' reports over which the newspaper has limited control in terms of accuracy. The news reports were systematically examined to determine whether they involved a mathematical element. Those that involved a mathematical element were then examined for possible errors, and the errors that were discovered were categorised.

My choice of the *Cape Times* was a convenience sample, dictated by availability (I am a subscriber to the newspaper and therefore had easy access to any number of copies). It is therefore not representative of the South African media or newspapers, and the results cannot be statistically generalised. The aim of the study, rather, was to identify hypotheses for further research.

Even so, the choice of the *Cape Times* as a sample can be defended on grounds other than convenience. If there is such as thing as a typical South African daily newspaper, the *Cape Times* would be it. It is a mid-sized, English-language, metropolitan newspaper. Its average daily circulation at the time my research was conducted (49 500) and readership (319 000) are the median circulation and readership of the 18 daily newspapers surveyed by the Audit Bureau for Circulations and the South African Advertising Research Foundation. It is owned by the second-largest newspaper publisher in South Africa, Independent News and Media; therefore, one can reasonably assume that it is as well-resourced as could be expected.

Following Maier's example, a news story was considered to involve a quantitative element if it included either an explicit or implicit mathematical calculation. The definition excludes simple numbers such as an age, a price or a date. The definition of "mathematical error" is more complicated. Maier adopted an open-ended definition, which included factual errors as well as errors of interpretation and presentation. Of necessity, this involved subjective assessments, and that is the reason why Maier didn't attempt to quantify how many errors were made. Since the one aim of my study is to quantify the number of errors, I adopted a narrower definition including only factual errors (bearing in mind that some errors in interpretation may also be factual, for example errors in the interpretation of statistical data).

To gauge how often maths is required in daily news coverage, 230 stories from the *Cape Times* were examined over a three-week period. Of those, 92, or 40%, were found to contain a quantitative element. Of the 92 stories containing a quantitative element, 26, or 28%, were found to contain errors.

The errors could be categorised into five broad types:

- Numbers don't tally – 24%
- Unquestioning use of number – 24%
- Internal inconsistency – 22%
- Misinterpretation of numbers – 19%
- Misuse of mathematical term – 11%

In the first category, numbers don't tally, most errors were simple arithmetical mistakes: for example, a news report stated that there were 5.2 million Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers in South Africa, of which 2.9 million were coloured, 2.5 million white and 213 000 black (5 May, p5). Another story stated that 44 000 traffic fines had been issued illegally. The report then states that 6 500 people had already paid fines that were served incorrectly, and that the city had instructed the operator not to prosecute "the remaining 39 000 'non-compliant' notices".

Incorrect calculation of a percentage resulted in a number of errors: a report on a dispute between teachers and the government stated that a labour union represented 17 600 teachers, "amounting to 61% of the province's teachers". The same report later quotes a government official as saying that the

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province has 28 000 teachers. That means that the union, with its 17 600 members, represent 62.9% of the teachers.

Unquestioning use of numbers that are self-evidently wrong resulted in a number of errors which should, on reflection, have been obvious to the reporter. For example, a report on the plight of children attending farm schools quotes a spokesman for an NGO as saying "some children have to walk 35km to school every day". That is clearly impossible and an obvious exaggeration (at a walking rate of 5km per hour, walking 35km would take 7 hours).

Internal inconsistencies were common, often within a report itself, or between the report and headline, or the report and illustration. For example, a report on four Cape Town sailors who sailed a dhow from Kenya to Tanzania states that the boat is based on a "1 500-year-old design". The caption under the picture accompanying the story says it is based on a "2 000-year-old design".

Misinterpretation of numbers has to do mostly with the interpretation of statistical data, where the reporter draws incorrect or insupportable conclusions from the data available. For example, on 10 May the newspaper reported on page 1 that "Half of SA drivers are on the road with fake licences". The report is based on an audit of 10% of South Africa's 7 million drivers' licences at a small number of licensing stations, which were targeted because of allegations of fraud. The sample is therefore biased and non-representative, and the findings cannot be generalised as the reporter does. In the same report, a "verification company" is quoted as saying 18% of driver's licenses submitted to it for verification turn out to be "forged or fraudulent".

Misuse of mathematical terminology implies a lack of understanding of the meaning of terms. A common error confuses the term "percent" with "percentage point", for example when a decline in the inflation rate from 5.5% to 4% is described as a 1.5% drop". In fact, the rate declined by 1.5 percentage points. The difference between the two numbers is 30%, not 1.5%.

The proportion of stories in the *Cape Times* containing a quantitative element compares with Maier's findings at the Raleigh *News & Observer*, which found that 48% of stories contained a mathematical element. However, the error rate of 28% is much higher than that found in comparable studies, where error rates varied from 3% at the *Vancouver Sun* in Canada (Bailey 2001) to 12% at the Raleigh *News & Observer* (Maier 2002b). This clearly suggests that South African journalists are not as comfortable with numbers as they should be.

Low levels of numeracy among journalists, however, cannot be seen in isolation from broader social and education problems facing the country and the media.

The national education department has recognised the problem, and has instituted mathematical literacy as a school subject. This approach may improve the situation in the long term. However, it is now four years since Sanef's skills audit drew attention to shortcomings in journalism training, and the effect on issues such as accuracy in news reporting.

It is clear from my research that numeracy is also major problem. Perhaps it is time for tertiary institutions to include numeracy training in the journalism curricula, and for media houses to focus attention on this problem. ■

'A number looks solid, factual, more trustworthy than a fallible human source. And being numerically incompetent, journalists can't find the flaws in statistics and calculations. They can't tell the difference between a meaningless number and a significant one.'

Chris Kirchhoff


Chris Kirchhoff

A vulnerable art

Arts coverage offers a unique opportunity for creative, exciting and engaging journalism. Yet it has turned out to be one of the most marginalised and vulnerable beats in the newsroom, says researcher ***Alan Finlay****, who worked on Hisses and Whistles, an investigation into arts journalism in South Africa.*

Chris Kirchhoff

A strange thing happened while completing this research: everything changed. Well, almost everything, it seemed. The *Mail&Guardian* admitted publicly that its arts coverage was not quite what it had been in the past, and promptly made some sort of amends. Independent News and Media consolidated its entertainment supplements into a single content hub, so that only the best copy would be published. Just launched, *The Weekender* promised to beef up serious music coverage, and added one or two more books pages to the weekend read. And rumour had it that an unnamed Afrikaans newspaper intended to revive its arts section.

The optimist in me said this had something to do with our research; awkward questions were being asked, throwing a spotlight on a rather obvious blemish in the newsroom: the lack of space, time and resources given to good arts coverage. The cynic in me knew better; that it was merely a coincidence, a freak storm that would pass and everything would soon settle back to normal. This was arts coverage, after all; and as one journalist put it, the arts are always "the first to go".

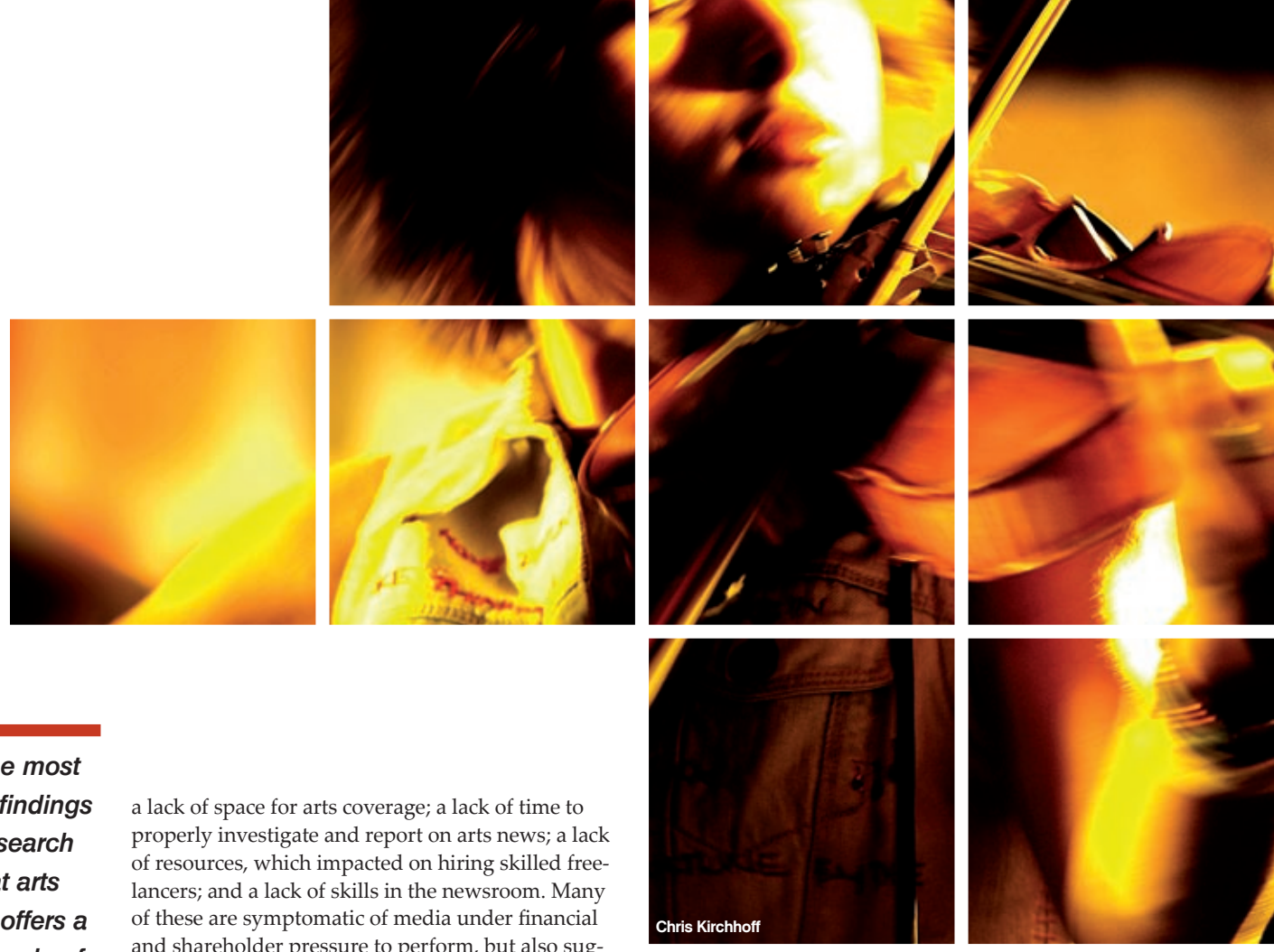
The research I'm referring to is *Hisses and Whistles*, the first baseline study into arts coverage in the mass media in South Africa, conducted by the Media Monitoring Project and Open Research, and sponsored by Business and Arts South Africa. The research aimed to assess the state of arts coverage in the media by quantitatively monitoring the arts content in 23 newspapers, 10 television shows and six radio programmes over a one-month period (June-July 2005). To complement the quantitative findings, 29 interviews were conducted with a range of players in the media 'production line', including media managers (or those who represented the business side of media production), arts journalists, arts editors, subeditors, publicists and presenters. Of these, 21 were in-depth, face-to-face interviews.

The arts community was also asked for its response in an email survey. A total of 49 responses were received from artists, academics, entertainment lawyers, gallery managers, publicists and events organisers, from across the arts disciplines.

One of the most important findings of the research was that arts coverage offers a clear example of how advertisers and media markets can defeat the ends of good journalism. Arts coverage, which offers a unique opportunity for creative, exciting and engaging journalism, is one of the most marginalised, and vulnerable beats in the newsroom.

A total of 4 499 content items were monitored during the research period. The range of content was broad, and included coverage of all key arts genres, as well as television, fashion, pop culture and lifestyle content, which we considered 'not arts' content. Nearly a quarter of the content items monitored were advertisements. Music (20% of the items) was the most frequently covered topic, followed by television (16%), film (15%), theatre (12%) and books (10%). Celebrity gossip accounted for a surprisingly low 7% of the content items, and pop culture and lifestyle 5% of the content items.

On average 40% to 60% of the space in arts and entertainment supplements in newspapers was set


Chris Kirchhoff

aside for advertisers. Of the remaining editorial space, sometimes as little as 15% was given over to a serious attempt at arts coverage.

A number of informants said that arts coverage needed to be packaged alongside other kinds of content, such as lifestyle, travel or celebrity gossip, to keep audience interest and attract advertising. Despite research to the contrary, few in decision-making positions in the media felt there was a general public interest in the arts, and few attributed this perceived disinterest to the quality of coverage or simply the lack of coverage (the idea that the media can grow audiences was only partially acknowledged).

The findings showed that arts genres receiving the most coverage overall tended to be those that could be more readily presented as entertainment. After we had stripped out all the 'not arts' content, such as television coverage and lifestyle content, we found – mirroring our initial broad content sample – that music (33%) was the most frequently covered arts genre, followed by film (23%), literature (fiction and poetry only – 13%) and theatre (12%). The visual arts accounted for 8% of the arts content items, and dance, the orphan of arts coverage, only 3%.

At the most, 25% of all arts coverage could be said to be analytical. Publicity, whether straight cut-and-paste from media releases, or disguised rewrites, accounted for as much as 60% of editorial. In one instance, four out of five interviews aired in a programme's arts slot were organised by the same publicist – a feat the publicist was understandably proud of.

Our quantitative findings showed that race played an important part in who was most frequently covered. 62% of the artists covered during the month-long monitoring period were white, 32% black, 3% Indian, 2% coloured and 1% Asian.

Similarly, the arts in Africa are under-reported. While coverage of South African arts accounted for 65% of content items monitored, the arts from Europe and the United States accounted for some 32% of coverage, the arts from Africa only 2%, and Asia 1%. Tom Cruise, Michael Jackson, Bob Geldof (there is some irony here), and Angelina Jolie were among the most frequently mentioned artists during the monitoring period. Of the South African artists, only kwaito star Zola and theatre veteran Janet Suzman made the top 10 artists covered.

The arts journalist

Informants saw the role of the arts journalist differently. Some felt "cultural journalism" better described their work. Their job was to tap into a dynamic, fluid and changing cultural space (where "Black is the future. Black is multiple identities and attitudes"). This entailed a broader, inclusive approach to arts reporting; something more akin to the role of the journalist as cultural activist seen in the 1980s. There was also a need to serve as a kind of cultural archivist by resurrecting forgotten or marginalised cultural icons. Formal distinctions between the arts genres, between art and society more broadly, and formal conventions such as arts criticism (the "cri-tick", as one informant put it) were seen as eurocentric and divisive.

For others, crumbling distinctions between arts criticism, reporting (including investigative journalism) and publicity, did not reflect an evolving role for the arts journalist, but were instead indicators of a lack of training and professionalism.

The interviews also showed that the constraints in the newsroom affecting arts coverage are very similar to the constraints affecting other kinds of reporting, such as health reporting. These included a lack of space for arts coverage; a lack of time to properly investigate and report on arts news; a lack of resources, which impacted on hiring skilled freelancers; and a lack of skills in the newsroom. Many of these are symptomatic of media under financial and shareholder pressure to perform, but also suggest an unwillingness to invest properly in good coverage of the arts, and a tendency not to take arts coverage seriously.

One of the most important findings of the research was that arts coverage offers a clear example of how advertisers and media markets can defeat the ends of good journalism.

Informants spoke of a lack of professional recognition in the newsroom (including lower salaries compared to colleagues on other beats), and a glass ceiling: most thought it extremely unlikely that an arts editor would become the editor of a newspaper. These, combined with limited job opportunities (for instance, if was felt that there are more opportunities in sports reporting), made arts journalism an unattractive career option for new journalists.

Several informants pointed to a lack of up-and-coming talent in the profession, in particular among black journalists. Talented black arts journalists were often offered more lucrative positions on other beats, such as politics or economics. This, combined with a lack of commitment in media houses to train journalists in arts reporting, meant that many felt the future of arts journalism in the country was bleak.

The responses from the arts community were, on the whole, balanced and fair. Some offered good solutions (such as "Get the various editors of the poetry journals to advise you… give them guest columns in your arts pages, and they will point you to the country's poets") while others offered first-hand examples of being at the green end of journalism: "Instead of a question, 'How did you come up with those radical harmonies between the guitar and bass?', we get instead, 'How would you describe your music?'. The latter question is obviously up to the journalist to describe and NOT the musician – but this question is asked at every interview; because, simply, they have no clue."

Others spoke of a lack of risk-taking among established critics and editors, suggesting a struggle for new art to be recognised and properly understood. Of the 49 respondents to the email survey (a reasonable response rate), 14% felt positive about arts coverage, 61% said it wasn't very good, and 25% were neutral.

The SABC says it is serious about the arts. Interactions with senior management suggested there is a commitment – and even a personal interest – in the arts. There is also a recognition that the public broadcaster needs to do more for the arts. The SABC also says that the arts community is free to approach it with any suggestions for programming ideas. However, while the Broadcasting Act provides some direction for arts coverage, it is vague enough for the corporation not to be held directly accountable by the public on its arts programming. Little of the good will towards the arts evident at the broadcaster is on paper; it lacks a written policy strategy on arts coverage to support and guide decision-making around arts programming.

This means that the arts are vulnerable. Even at the public broadcaster arts coverage faces a similar fate to coverage in the commercial media. The SABC says licence fees and government grants do no cover all programming costs and that advertisers shy away from arts-only programmes ("the mindset is not there"). The result is a preference for the more "popular" arts, and the light lifestyle and entertainment mix that can be easily sold to advertisers. (Even in the absence of this commercial imperative, it was suggested, the SABC would not change its broadcasting approach to arts coverage because the arts are "niche" and the public broadcaster has a mandate to appeal to the broad population.)

The potential for further research suggested itself. While broadcast holds largely unexplored potential for good arts coverage, research limitations meant that we could only monitor a sample of arts programmes on radio and TV. Other media, such as community radio, websites, magazines and journals, could also be considered to complete the picture.

The state of arts coverage in Africa needs to be better understood. Why is it that coverage of the arts in Africa is so poor? Is it because the arts in Africa simply aren't being covered? Is it a language issue? Or is the South African media simply not interested?

The research also suggested space for advocacy: newspapers and radio stations need to be made aware of the demand for good arts coverage (as one person put it, at the very least write letters to the editor when coverage is dropped). The SABC's lack of a written policy on arts coverage needs to be addressed. Leadership is needed to make collective demands on the public broadcaster so that its real potential to support and document the arts can be unlocked. ■

Alan Finlay writes here in his personal capacity. Download the research report at www.openresearch.co.za

BLACK, GREEN AND PROUD

MONDI SHANDUKA
NEWSPRINT

Mondi South Africa has recently combined with Shanduka Resources to form Mondi Shanduka Newsprint. As a newly empowered company we are set to rise to greater heights as the leading supplier of newsprint and telephone directory paper in South Africa. Mondi Shanduka Newsprint manufactures in accordance with ISO 14001 environmental standards and our forests comply with the Forest Stewardship Council principles. What's more, our newsprint brands contain 25-35% recycled fibre (significantly more energy efficient than virgin fibre). Undoubtedly these achievements make us proud, as does our association with the Rhodes Journalism Review. The Mondi Newspaper Award archives are now available via the Cory Library at Rhodes University, and the winning entries are also proudly on display at the new Africa Media Matrix building.

African Media Barometer

South Africa

Get a grip on freedom

by Hendrik Bussiek:
facilitator of the African Media Barometer

South Africa is said to have one of the best bills of rights in the world – and indeed it does. The country is often referred to as the beacon of democratic hope for Africa and a haven for freedom of expression – but is it?

"There are powerful pockets of fear regarding freedom of expression: political, geographical, institutional and personal. As a result there is self-censorship for fear of being labelled, isolated or cut off from resources. In many cases, people have to be brave or be heroes in order to express themselves – they have to make personal choices."

"In broader society there is no clear understanding of the need for media freedom and freedom of expression, and why this is such an important right. Civil society does not campaign for media freedom and the media do not do enough to link this to the right of all to freedom of expression."

These are two of the most striking conclusions of the African Media Barometer Report on South Africa documented in this supplement. A panel of journalists, editors, publishers, media experts, civil society activists and human rights lawyers met in early May 2006 for a *bosberaad* near Tshwane to examine the status of the media and freedom of expression in their country. This was part of an Africa-wide, self-assessment exercise begun last year and so far already conducted in Zambia, Namibia, Botswana, Kenya, Swaziland, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Madagascar and Ghana (with eight more countries to follow before the end of 2006). It is an experiment that goes beyond the usual studies and surveys and has yielded many thought-provoking insights and some quite unexpected results.

There are shelves full of studies on the media in Africa, many of them written by scholars from America or Europe. "They fly in and out of our country," said one participant in the exercise in Kenya, "have interviews with many of us and then write something – we usually don't take these reports seriously." There are Freedom of the Press surveys such as the one done annually by the New York-based Freedom House. The data for these surveys are collected from foreign correspondents, international visitors, human rights and press freedom organisations and a variety of news media. The criteria are set, and the data evaluated, at headquarters. And they frequently come up with oddly confident and generalised results like the one in their 2005 report which said that the media in Kenya – a vibrant and diverse lot – is "not free", putting it on a par with countries like the Gambia or Zimbabwe.

In order to arrive at a more accurate picture, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (Misa) and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FEF) came up with the idea of the African Media Barometer. Concerned and informed citizens, both from the media and from broad civil society, come together for a weekend of intense discussion and judge the state of media affairs in their country according to a number of general, homegrown criteria, mainly lifted from African documents. The most important of these is the Declaration on Principles of Freedom of Expression in Africa adopted in 2002 by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights – one of the most progressive documents of its kind worldwide. It was largely inspired by the groundbreaking Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press (1991) and the African Charter on Broadcasting (2001). The commission, by the way, is not just a talk shop. It is the authoritative organ of the African Union mandated to interpret the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights which is binding for all member states.

In all, 42 indicators were developed for the purposes of the barometer, covering four broad areas: the realisation of the right to freedom of expression, including freedom of the media; the diversity, independence and sustainability of the media landscape; the regulation of broadcasting, including the progress or otherwise made in transforming the state broadcaster into a public broadcaster; and – of particular importance in a self-assessment exercise – the level of professional standards.

In order to come up with a meaningful assessment of the current state of affairs, the panels tackle a host of pertinent and sometimes tricky questions: is the right to freedom of expression really practised by their fellow citizens – including journalists – "without fear"; is public information easily accessible; is a wide range of sources of information available and affordable to citizens; is broadcasting regulated by an independent body and is the national broadcaster really accountable to the public (not the government); do the media truly follow voluntary codes of professional standards including principles of accuracy and fairness?

Throughout the discussions a rapporteur takes detailed notes and compiles the results into a comprehensive report. Said one panellist during a tea break: "It is as if we are all writing a book together."

One aspect of the barometer process that helps to concentrate minds and keep discussions focused is the scoring at the end – in true democratic fashion by secret ballot. Possible scores range from a low 1 ("country does not meet indicator") over a medium 3 ("country meets many aspects of indicator but progress may be too recent to judge") to a high of 5 ("country meets all aspects of the indicator and has been doing so over time"). The aggregate score achieved on each of the indicators can then be used both as a measurement of development in a given country over time (it is planned to repeat the exercise every two years), as well as to make comparisons between countries.

The scores awarded so far show that panellists generally took a realistic view – neither giving undue praise or papering over shortcomings in a mistaken attempt to be patriotic, nor wallowing in negativism or cynicism even if the situation is indeed grim (as in the case of Zimbabwe). Although South Africa overall scored best for all sectors (between 3.0 and 3.5 – "country meets many aspects"), the results are still far from satisfactory – given the ambitions this country has. In the category "freedom of expression", for example, Ghana (3.7) fared better than South Africa (3.1). With regard to professional standards, South Africa (3.0) is on par with Ghana and Botswana, with Kenya scoring slightly higher (3.2) – a fair result as people who know these countries will confirm. One field where South Africa does stand out from the rest is broadcasting (3.5) – thanks to its progressive broadcasting legislation and the diversity of its TV and radio programmes.

The results of the African Media Barometer do not just make for interesting reading – they are also powerful lobbying tools. Take Botswana, for example, the (other) much praised "cradle of democracy in Africa". Its dismal score (on average a low 1 to 2 for freedom of expression, diversity and broadcasting regulation) came as no surprise to members of the panel, who spoke of their country as a "democracy without democrats". The report is now being used to make people take an honest look at the real state of affairs. In Zambia, panellists resolved to work urgently towards the repeal of still-existing pieces of colonial legislation, such as sedition laws, that impinge on freedom of expression. In Namibia there was consensus that a defunct Media Council as a self-regulatory mechanism for the media should be urgently revived. And in Ghana there are now serious steps under way to transform the state broadcaster into a truly public broadcaster after it was found that the country scored worst of all in this sector.

In South Africa, the report deserves the serious attention of the media, human rights and democracy activists and civil society in general. As a first step it is to be discussed in a colloquium, jointly organised by Misa South Africa and the SA Human Rights Commission.

Perhaps the most significant lesson to be learnt from the barometer results for both the media and civil society is a timely caution: do not become complacent about the state of freedom of expression in the country and allow something to slip through your fingers that you already thought you had a firm grip on.

All country reports are accessible under www.fesmedia.org

Scoring system

In an anonymous vote, panel members are asked to allocate their individual scores to the respective indicators after the qualitative discussion according to the following scale:

1. Country does not meet indicator.
2. Country minimally meets aspects of the indicator.
3. Country meets many aspects of the indicator but progress may be too recent to judge.
4. Country meets most aspects of the indicator.
5. Country meets all aspects of the indicator and has been doing so over time.

The panel

Amina Frense, broadcast news editor and media activist; **Anthea Garman**, senior journalism/media lecturer; **Libby Lloyd**, media consultant; **Cyril Madlala**, editor and publisher; **Virginia Magwaza-Setshedi**, media and social movement activist; **Thoko Makhanya**, health and environment activist; **Jo Mdhlela**, religious media and liaison officer; **Mfanafuthi Sithebe**, trade unionist; **Shireen Said**, gender rights lawyer; **Tseliso Thipanyane**, human rights lawyer.

Rapporteur: **Elizabeth Barratt**
Facilitator: **Hendrik Bussiek**

Resources

- The African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights "Declaration on Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa" http://www.achpr.org/english/resolutions/resolution67_en.html
- The Windhoek Declaration of 3 May 1991 http://www.unesco.org/webworld/fed/temp/communication_democracy/windhoek.htm
- The African Charter on Broadcasting of 3 May 2001 http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/5628/10343523830african_charter.pdf/african%2Bcharter.pdf

1.1 Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, is guaranteed in the Constitution and protected by other pieces of legislation.

Analysis:
South Africa is governed by a Constitution which guarantees and protects the right to freedom of expression including media freedom. Section 16 states:

"(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes:
(a) freedom of the press and other media;
(b) freedom to receive or impart information or ideas;
(c) freedom of artistic creativity; and
(d) academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.
(2) The right in subsection (1) does not extend to:
(a) propaganda for war;
(b) incitement of imminent violence; or
(c) advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion, and that constitutes incitement to cause harm."

The Constitution further in section 32 protects the right to access information:

"(1) Everyone has the right of access to:
(a) any information held by the state; and
(b) any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights.
(2) National legislation must be enacted to give effect to this right, and may provide for reasonable measures to alleviate the administrative and financial burden of the state."

In Section 192, the Constitution requires that an independent body to regulate broadcasting be established:

"National legislation must establish an independent authority to regulate broadcasting in the public interest, and to ensure fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing South African society."

The necessary rights and protections are therefore built into the Constitution and the laws required by the Constitution have been put in place, namely the Protection of Access to Information Act No 2 of 2000 (PAIA) and the Independent Communications Authority Act (No 13 of 2000).

Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, are effectively protected and promoted.

However, there are other laws that are still in place from the apartheid era which can be used to restrict freedom of expression – these have not yet been revised or legally tested against the Constitution.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5
Average score/5	**5**

1.2 The right to freedom of expression is practised and citizens, including journalists, are asserting their rights without fear.

Analysis:
On the surface, South Africans are expressing themselves freely, including: through the media in opinion columns, letters and chat shows; in religious institutions with religious leaders expressing themselves in a range of ways; and through theatre. Workers and members of civil society are also expressing their views on the streets through protests. In some of these areas, such as the media, there is a problem with individual access and affordability for poor/rural people so in mainstream media it is often the urban and better-educated parts of the population, the elite few, who more easily exercise their rights.

Freedom of expression includes the right of people to express themselves through protest rallies and marches – mass expression. There are regulations that restrict this: you have to get permission and this could be abused. There are examples of certain types of protest coming under more restriction: issues like landlessness and anti-globalisation, for example, have produced more draconian responses from the authorities, with marches being prevented. From the side of protesters, there have been cases of intimidation and violence against those who have not joined in, such has been seen with the death of security guards during their strike in April/May this year (2006).

Defamation laws have been used on occasion to threaten media. Such cases seldom end up in court, revealing that they were indeed just meant to be threats.

Overall it was noted that political sensitivity of commentators and members of the media has a chilling effect on freedom of expression. There is an overall sense that there is some space for freedom of expression but it is not widely used because of threats and fears.

In some geographical areas (for example, in parts of KwaZulu-Natal), the fear is greater than in others. In some places "it is necessary to be brave and courageous in order to express dissenting opinions".

Politically, there are loyalties and fears of a backlash that restrict freedom of expression. For example, intellectuals are often scared of criticising the ruling party publicly or in the media, so any criticism is limited to "corridor speak". Their fears include being branded as an enemy of the government, not getting tenders, doors being closed in terms of promotions, being isolated and excluded from organisations, and resources no longer being available.

Ordinary people see highly-respected people apologising for expressing opinions or criticisms, so it is often presumed that they do not feel free to express themselves – or that they expect to come under strong fire for doing so.

What is there to be scared of? Much less than in the past. Much of the fear is self-imposed: intellectuals limit themselves to debating behind closed doors and engage in emotional name-calling. An example was given of a government spokesperson who when working as a journalist used to write columns critical of the status quo but who recently in an article labeled black intellectuals who question issues "coconuts".

People find it hard to openly criticise a party, group or leader who they overall support – though we are beginning to see more open debate of this type happening in the media.

For journalists, the most serious fear and intimidation occurs at the local level. People know where their homes are, so if local or community media journalists write stories that are unpopular, they are afraid of being physically attacked. This problem exists in some rural but also some urban areas. There have also been reports of advertisers (both municipal and commercial) threatening to withdraw adverts if exposés are run – thus threatening such media with closure.

On a national level, the intimidation is more subtle. There have been reports of journalists being called by a mid-level government official when they have written something that is perceived to be sensitive or anti-government/ANC, and questioned about the story. This may not be action by the state, however, but by over-eager individuals. In part this seems to be a hangover from pre-1994 when loyalty to the liberation movements was regarded as being necessary.

This not only relates to political issues, but also to social and cultural areas. For example journalists do not reveal what is happening in the soccer or taxi industries. There is the fear of being isolated and intimidated, fear of being labelled, fear of being cut off from resources. Some stated that death is also a consequence.

Churches have similar experiences: they need to be able to relate to the government, but this involves quite often being subtly asked to tell priests to speak well about government or to tone things down a bit – and being warned to be careful. Church officials sometimes get phoned at night, and asked: why did you tell this to the media, and make the president angry? As a result, people in churches feel they must conform, rather than feeling free to speak out.

These various degrees of fear and lack of tolerance extend to a personal level. Many South Africans are in domestic situations where they are not free to disclose information or opinions: that they do not believe in their parents' religion, that they are gay, that they are HIV-positive. There is intolerance in homes and families which can result in some cases in death – as seen in the high rates of domestic murders as well as violence and abuse.

In conclusion, there are powerful pockets of fear regarding freedom of expression: political, geographical, institutional and personal. As a result there is self-censorship for fear of being labelled, isolated or cut off from resources. In many cases, people have to be brave or be heroes in order to express themselves – they have to make personal choices.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 2, 2, 4, 3
Average score/5	**2.6**

"For journalists, the most serious fear and intimidation occurs at the local level. People know where their homes are, so if local or community media journalists write stories that are unpopular, they are afraid of being physically attacked."

"...there are powerful pockets of fear regarding freedom of expression: political, geographical, institutional and personal. As a result there is self-censorship for fear of being labelled, isolated or cut off from resources. In many cases, people have to be brave or be heroes in order to express themselves – they have to make personal choices."

1.3 There are no laws restricting freedom of expression such as excessive official secret or libel acts, or laws that unreasonably interfere with the responsibilities of media.

Analysis:
One of the biggest problems is Section 205 of the Criminal Procedures Act, which compels journalists to reveal their sources of confidential information. Although a "record of understanding" between media and government representatives was drawn up in which it was agreed that such disclosure would not be enforced without prior consultation, this is not always adhered to. There is a sense that police use the section to make journalists do their work for them. Government has not debated this, though civil society has in detail.

There are other laws such as those defining key points and the Prisons Act which are sometimes used to restrict the media, eg trying to prevent photographers from taking photos of the former deputy president Jacob Zuma's house.

In South African law, there is no criminal, only a civil libel clause.

There is also the problem of police not always understanding the laws and using them to intimidate journalists – who are also not always clear about the laws and about their rights.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	2, 1, 5, 3, 3, 3, 2, 3, 3
Average score/5	**2.8**

1.4 Entry into and practice of the journalistic profession is legally unrestricted.

Analysis:
There are no legal restrictions to becoming a journalist and no laws regarding registration.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5
Average score/5	**5**

1.5 Protection of confidential sources of information is guaranteed by law.

Analysis:
This is not the case. Section 205 of the Criminal Procedures Act compels journalists to reveal their sources.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1
Average score/5	**1.1**

1.6 Public information is easily accessible, guaranteed by law, to all citizens, including journalists.

Analysis:
The Promotion of Access to Information Act (No 2 of 2000) (PAIA) is in place and thus access to information held by the state and "by another person … required for the exercise or protection of any rights" is guaranteed by law. This is overseen by the Human Rights Commission.

However, there are two problem areas regarding accessibility and awareness:

Firstly, companies and organisations have to make their information easily accessible, in simple wording and in different languages – they have to comply with a list of what needs to be made available and draw up a manual. Implementation of the law in this regard is often half-hearted.

Secondly, there are problems with using this legislation to gain information: there are difficult, expensive, bureaucratic processes to go through and the law is long, complicated and far from user-friendly. Government officials themselves often do not understand the law. People who do not want to give information benefit from this situation – it can take years to get information from them, even though there is a 30-day limit for dealing with requests. You need legal and financial resources to insist on your rights. Surveys show that media do not use PAIA because it is too cumbersome, and that officials abuse it to keep information to themselves.

Many government officials also do not realise that providing information would ease tensions. For example, recent municipal-level unrest is directly related to lack of information, knowledge about citizens' rights and knowledge of how to use PAIA – people ask for information and do not get it, so their anger results in violent protests. Most of these protests are around people wanting information about what is happening in their areas.

It is ironic that a law meant to make information easily available is in fact seen as so cumbersome as to restrict information. Instead of giving information freely, officials who fear communication and accountability are reluctant to release information, and fall back on insisting that citizens and journalists go through bureaucratic processes. This legislation has not fostered openness, it has instead often increased secretiveness and control. PAIA itself has become an obstacle.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	1, 2, 5, 3, 3, 2, 2, 4, 2
Average score/5	**2.7**

1.7 Civil society in general, and media lobby groups actively advance the cause of media freedom.

Analysis:
There are media-focused groups such as the South National African Editors' Forum (Sanef), the Media Institute of South Africa (Misa) and the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI). The Institute for a Democratic South Africa (IDASA), the Media Monitoring Project and Genderlinks also actively campaign to extend media freedom.

However there is a problem that in broader society there is no clear understanding of the need for media freedom and freedom of expression, and why this is such an important right. Civil society does not campaign for media freedom and the media does not do enough to link this to the right of all to freedom of expression. Many civil society groups were involved in the call for a public broadcaster before 1994, but there has been little sign of campaigning since then.

Civil society does not join in when the media's right to freedom is threatened, eg there was silence from them when Muslim groups boycotted and threatened the *Mail&Guardian* in response to publishing a cartoon about Islam to illustrate the debate about the rights of freedom of expression and religious freedoms. It is doubtful whether they would fight to protect media freedom.

Instead, civil society reacts when there are political objections to what the media publishes, and blames the media rather than understanding the need for criticism and tolerance of different viewpoints. It thus adds to the climate of fear as described in 1.2. There is a need for media to involve civil society in the whole debate on media freedom and freedom of expression for more diverse media to be developed that would allow people to see that they can get different opinions from different media.

Community groups don't understand that they have a right to media freedom, they do not know how to use the media for their own benefit. They think media freedom is just something for journalists. The media must be actively involved in increasing media literacy and the importance of freedom of expression – and the rights of the media as part of this.

This limited understanding of the wider philosophy of media freedom may be preventing a campaign on a wider level. In addition, many citizens have a conflicted approach to media: there is anger when people hear news and views that they do not like, eg papers are burnt (*Mail&Guardian, Sunday Times, City Press*) at vigils surrounding trials of the former deputy president Jacob Zuma and people say they would be better off without these media. At the same time, the media are being criticised for not giving accurate, detailed news and a wide variety of opinions.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	3, 2, 5, 2, 2, 2, 2, 4, 2
Average score/5	**2.7**

Overall score for sector 1: 3.1

"It is ironic that a law meant to make information easily available is in fact seen as so cumbersome as to restrict information... this legislation has not fostered openness, it has instead often increased secretiveness and control. The PAIA itself has become an obstacle."

"Civil society does not join in when the media's right to freedom is threatened... it is doubtful whether they would fight to protect media freedom."

The media landscape is characterised by diversity, independence and sustainability.

2.1 A wide range of sources of information (print, broadcasting, Internet) is available and affordable to citizens.

Analysis:
Print media:
22.7% of all South Africans read daily newspapers and 30,5% read weekly newspapers (2005 AMPS survey). Overall, 40% read one or other of all newspapers included in the survey: this figure would increase slightly if all the smaller community-owned newspapers were added.

The majority of South Africans thus do not buy or read newspapers. Some choose not to buy newspapers, while for others they are unaffordable or inaccessible. In some areas – such as in Gauteng and regions around city centres – a wide range of print media are available, in other areas there is little or no choice of media.

Here is an example of an extreme case of lack of availability and affordability: in a rural area of KwaZulu-Natal, if you want to get the Zulu language paper *iLanga* to see the matric results, you have to spend R10 on transport to go to buy the R2 newspaper. In comparison, a loaf of bread costs about R5.

The government has however established (with support from major media companies) the Media Diversity Development Agency which provides grant and other support to non-profit and small and micro media projects to address issues of media development and diversity. This is an important step – but the MDDA is focused only on small and micro media – and cannot for example provide support to medium-sized enterprises.

Having a range of print media is not just an issue of numbers. Alternative newspapers which existed in the 1980s provided a diversity of views – but closed down after losing funding in the early 1990s.

There is also the issue of diversity of languages, as the mainstream print media are mostly in English or Afrikaans. Most people cannot get print media in their home languages. However, publishing in isiZulu has been revitalised in KwaZulu-Natal:

- *iLanga*, which has been around for decades, is now published twice a week and has a Sunday edition and a free edition on Wednesdays, and its circulation has grown to 110 000 (2005 figures).
- In 2001 the first daily Zulu newspaper was established: *Isolezwe* now has a daily circulation of 86 000 (2005).
- *UmAfrika* had been liquidated in 2001, but was restarted and it now has a circulation of 32 000 a week.

There are small vernacular newspapers in other areas of South Africa, but, unlike the Zulu language papers, these are not commercially profitable papers.

Broadcasting:
Broadcast media overall, especially radio, have a wider reach in South Africa through the public broadcast network.

There is a wide range of radio stations accessible in all South African languages. According to studies, 92% of the population listen to radio. However, there are still areas of no coverage and other areas where people cannot access a radio station in their home language because of frequency limitations. A study is currently being conducted by the MDDA, SABC, Sentech and the Department of Communications to determine how many people are affected and where they are located. Many of these people are dispersed over large areas and it would be expensive to broadcast to small groups. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) is trying to grow its reach and has achieved an increase from about 80% to 92% of the population over recent years.

Community radio has also increased rapidly over the past decade with over 100 stations on air with a combined listenership of about 17 million people (2005 survey past seven days listenership), making the community radio sector the second most successful radio medium.

Television broadcasting has seen phenomenal growth along with electrification – about 86% of the population watches television. Not all areas have a choice of all television channels – SABC1, 2 and 3, and e.tv. Satellite services M-Net and DSTV are available to subscribers.

Internet:
Survey figures for internet usage are very low, and Internet is only being used by people in the top income brackets. According to AMPS 2005, 3.3% of the total population had access to the Internet, while only 6.2% of the total population had used email in the past four weeks. There are problems of knowing how to use the technology as well as affordability. There is a gap in access for children, as only some schools have Internet facilities. Telkom plays a role here as Internet is accessed on landlines: landline telephones connectivity has been rolled out to many new areas, but when these lines are not used due to an inability to pay the cost, they are disconnected. There is no competition to Telkom. According to 2005 AMPS statistics, the percentage of the population with access to a landline in their homes decreased to 21.7% of the population from just over 24% in 2003.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	2, 3, 3, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 4
Average score/5	**2.8**

2.2 Citizens' access to domestic and international media sources is not restricted by state authorities.

Analysis:
There is no restriction of access by state authorities and there is no censorship.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	5, 5, 5, 3, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5
Average score/5	**4.8**

2.3 Efforts are undertaken to increase the scope of circulation of the print media, particularly to rural communities.

Analysis:
Distribution of newspapers is limited to target audiences. Mainstream print media extend their distribution to areas where they judge it is worth the cost. The mass tabloid *Daily Sun* now reaches a few areas where newspapers were not previously available, but mostly it is expanding along current distribution routes.

The MDDA together with the Association of Independent Publishers is making a strong effort to promote and protect smaller print media and obtain resources for them.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	5, 3, 3, 2, 3, 3, 2, 2, 4
Average score/5	**3.0**

2.4 Broadcasting legislation has been passed and is implemented that provides for a conducive environment for public, commercial and community broadcasting.

Analysis:
Legislation has been passed and implemented. There is a three-tier system in place – public, commercial, community – and there is growth in all three sectors.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	5, 5, 4, 3, 5, 5, 4, 5, 5
Average score/5	**4.6**

2.5 Community broadcasting enjoys special promotion given its potential to broaden access by poor and rural communities.

Analysis:
Community radio has been well resourced and supported over the past 10 years.

Millions of rands have come in from a range of national and international funding institutions – often at the expense of support for alternative print media.

Community radios can receive funds from the Department of Communication, eg for programmes that include voices from civil society. Other organisations such as the Open Society Foundation provide ongoing support for non-profit radio stations.

The MDDA has in recent years also helped with community radio broadcasting. Because of the broad assistance from other sources, the MDDA uses its funds for areas like rental costs, phone bills and mentor programmes.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	5, 5, 5, 4, 5, 4, 4, 4, 5
Average score/5	**4.6**

"The majority of South Africans do not buy or read newspapers. Some choose not to buy newspapers, while for others they are unaffordable or inaccessible."

"Community radio has also increased rapidly over the past decade with over 100 stations on air with a combined listenership of about 17 million people, making the community radio sector the second most successful radio medium."

2.6 The editorial independence of print media published by a public authority is protected adequately against undue political interference.

Analysis:
There are no major state-financed and controlled print media in South Africa, although on the local level there is a growing number of small print media published by municipalities. The number of these publications is not significant yet and therefore this indicator is not applicable in South Africa.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	N/A
Average score/5	**N/A**

2.7 Local and regional independent news agencies gather and distribute information for all media.

Analysis:
There is one national news agency: the South African Press Association (Sapa), owned by the big media houses.

Although there are attempts at developing specialised (geographically or by topic) news agencies, only a few have so far succeeded. These include African Eye News Service, East Cape News Agency, health-e, I-net Bridge, Backpage Pics and Touchline.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	3, 4, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 4
Average score/5	**3.2**

2.8 Media diversity is promoted through adequate competition regulation/ legislation.

Analysis:
The MDDA Act is aimed at producing media diversity – as it has only been active for three years now it is too soon for a proper judgement.

There are good competition laws in place providing for a competition commission to ensure a vibrant market economy. Although there are obvious tendencies towards monopolies especially in the print sector, no challenges have been brought before the commission yet.

Broadcasting competition is limited by the scarcity of frequencies – though this will change with digitisation. Digitisation and convergence however will not immediately address access to media by poor people.

In the field of subscription and satellite television there is no competition, with M-Net and DSTV being the monopolist. There is currently a call for applications for other subscription broadcasters, however, given the dominance of the DSTV group it will be difficult for new broadcasters to establish themselves.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	3, 4, 3, 2, 3, 3, 3, 2, 4
Average score/5	**3**

2.9 Government promotes a political and economic environment which allows a diverse media landscape.

Analysis:
The media works in a capitalist environment that allows diversity in some areas and not in others.

The MDDA was not allowed to address the wider economic environment, but was limited to supporting non-profit and small media. Community radio has grown through outside funding.

The government generally has a non-subsidy policy for all areas of the economy including media. The public broadcaster gets 2% of its budget from government.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	2, 3, 2, 3, 2, 3, 3, 2, 3
Average score/5	**2.6**

2.10 Private media outlets operate as efficient and professional businesses.

Analysis:
The business performance of private, ie commercial media can be measured in adspend, which has gone up: 23,3% compared to a rise in the consumer price index of 1.4 % in 2004 and 20.6 % compared with 2.4 % in 2005.

All mainstream print businesses went through restructuring exercises in the 1990s to become more efficient and profitable, and all have shown greater profits as a result. Commercial radio stations have also done well in terms of profits: some former SABC radio stations which were privatised started to make profits immediately, while "greenfields" stations (those started from scratch) took longer as they had first to build their reputations.

The only private television station, e.tv, recently reached the point of breaking even and is now starting to make profit.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	3, 3, 4, 3, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4
Average score/5	**3.7**

2.11 State print media are not subsidised with tax-payers' money.

Analysis:
This is not applicable as there are no state print media in South Africa. A recently launched government publication, *Vukuzenzele,* explains basic access to services and is seen as mostly educational and therefore a legitimate government activity.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	N/A
Average score/5	**N/A**

2.12 Government does not use its power over the placement of advertisements as a means to interfere with media content.

Analysis:
Government at national, provincial and local levels does interfere with print media by the selective placement of adverts and particularly by withdrawing advertising in response to being criticised. This has happened in relation to the *Mail&Guardian* in the past. There are also examples of it happening at a provincial level with newspapers. At a local level it is prominent: municipal officials even announce publicly and proudly that they are withholding advertisements from community newspapers. In broadcasting the problem is not prevalent.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	1, 2, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 1, 1
Average score/5	**1.4**

2.13 The advertising market is large enough to maintain a diversity of media outlets.

Analysis:
Although adspend has increased tremendously (see 2.10) this has had no effect on diversity. Traditional media do well as there is a focus of adspend on high-income audiences. Advertisers will not advertise to audiences that they perceive as not being able to buy their products. If listeners of a radio station are perceived as poor, it will not attract adverts.

On the other hand, there is a lack of skill among small media in attracting advertising, so all available opportunities are not being used.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	2, 3, 3, 2, 3, 3, 3, 2, 2
Average score/5	**2.5**

Overall score for sector 2: 3.3

"The government generally has a non-subsidy policy for all areas of the economy including media. The public broadcaster gets 2% of its budget from government."

"Government at national, provincial and local levels does interfere with print media by the selective placement of adverts and particularly by withdrawing advertising in response to being criticised."

Broadcasting regulation is transparent and independent, the state broadcaster is transformed into a truly public broadcaster.

3.1 Broadcasting is regulated by an independent body adequately protected against interference, particularly of a political and economic nature.

Analysis:
The broadcasting and telecommunications regulator, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA), is an independent body, protected by the Constitution and the ICASA Act. It has more independence than most regulators around the world.

There is protection against interference in legislation but there is a human factor that can come into play when economic independence is considered. ICASA is not able to pay really competitive salaries to attract the best skills in the country and is up against economically powerful companies able to hire the best legal minds. However, practice has shown that ICASA has often made decisions unpopular with the industry, thus demonstrating a high level of independence.

A planned amendment to the ICASA Act could reduce the regulator's independence and be in conflict with the guarantee of independence stipulated in the Constitution: for this reason the President has refused to sign it and sent it back to Parliament for redrafting.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	4, 5, 4, 4, 5, 5, 4, 4, 4
Average score/5	**4.3**

3.2 The appointments procedure for members of the regulatory body is open and transparent and involves civil society.

Analysis:
At present the appointments procedure is as follows:

- The portfolio committee of Parliament in charge of communications puts adverts in newspapers asking for nominations.
- Members of the public can nominate anyone – except members of Parliament, office bearers of the state or any political party, or people with a financial interest in the industry.
- The committee examines the names, looking for representivity, skills and commitment to freedom of expression, and then shortlists candidates.
- Candidates are interviewed in public, and the interviews are screened on television (DSTV).
- The portfolio committee comes up with a list of names needed to fill the vacancies.
- This is passed to Parliament for ratification.
- The list then goes to the President for appointment. He/she can reject names but not suggest others. So far, this has not been done.

This procedure is regarded as open and transparent. Civil society can nominate and support candidates.

In practice, however, there is the danger that appointments can be the result of political jockeying (if you accept my candidate, I accept yours) – this can reduce the political independence of councillors.

The appointment procedures are currently under review.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	5, 3, 5, 3, 5, 5, 5, 2, 5
Average score/5	**4.2**

3.3 The body regulates broadcasting in the public interest and ensures fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing society at large.

Analysis:
The law stipulates that ICASA regulates broadcasting in the public interest and ensures fairness and a diversity of views.

This legal mandate can be used by organisations that have the perception of being treated unfairly to challenge ICASA's decisions in a court of law.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	4, 3, 4, 4, 4, 4, 5, 3, 5
Average score/5	**4**

3.4 The body's decisions on licensing in particular are informed by a broadcasting policy developed in a transparent and inclusive manner.

Analysis:
The government is in charge of providing a broad broadcasting policy cast in legislation and in the White Paper on broadcasting which is developed through an open and democratic process.

On this basis ICASA develops its own regulatory policies through an equally open process by at first publishing a discussion paper, inviting comments and organising hearings. Issues regulated by such policies are, for example, local programme content, the viability of the public broadcaster, and licence conditions for the SABC.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	5, 4, 4, 3, 5, 4, 4, 5, 5
Average score/5	**4.3**

3.5 The public broadcaster is accountable to the public through a board representative of society at large and selected in an independent, open and transparent manner.

Analysis:
The selection and appointments procedure for the SABC board is the same as that for ICASA. The difference is that SABC board members are part-time, and are expected to hold a minimum of four meetings a year.

In recent years they have been holding so many meetings that there are questions around their part-time status and the money being earned. The board is representative of society as prescribed by the law: in terms of gender, geography, religion and other criteria.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	2, 2, 4, 3, 4, 4, 4, 2, 3
Average score/5	**3.1**

3.6 Persons who have vested interests of a political or commercial nature are excluded from possible membership in the board, ie office bearers with the state and political parties as well as those with a financial interest in the broadcasting industry.

Analysis:
In a society where two thirds of the people support one party, a similar representation is to be expected on any board in terms of political leanings.

By law people with vested interests are excluded from the board – but this is not necessarily reflected in reality. It seems there are too many loopholes in the law or in practice. There is evidence that some members of the board may have vested commercial interests in the telecommunications industry. This is against the language and spirit of the law.

However there are no board members who are office bearers of state bodies or of political parties.

There is, however, some mistrust of the present board, with continual questions being asked about its independence. There was a more positive perception of the first two boards. However, there has been no evidence of any interference with the board.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	5, 3, 5, 4, 5, 5, 5, 4, 5
Average score/5	**4.6**

3.7 The editorial independence of the public broadcaster from commercial pressure and political influence is guaranteed by law and practised.

Analysis:
Protection against political interference is guaranteed by law. In practice, however, there are doubts. These doubts are fed by the present chief executive for news and current affairs who said publicly if he had to choose whether to cover what the government has done or a

"ICASA is protected against interference in legislation but there is a human factor that can come into play when economic independence is considered. ICASA is not able to pay really competitive salaries to attract the best skills in the country and is up against economically powerful companies able to hire the best legal minds. "

"Protection against political interference with the public broadcaster is guaranteed by law... In practice, however, there are doubts. The perception is that there is a subtle political bias in favour of government in the news."

situation where government is criticised for alleged failures by some groups, he would choose the former. The perception is that there is a subtle political bias in favour of government in the news. Also, for some top editorial appointments (but not all) there are questions around the journalistic independence of those who have a distinct party politicial background.

In the daily process of compiling the news, there is no government interference and items are chosen on the basis of news values. However there are only 18 minutes of prime news time available due to the need to include 12 minutes of adverts in the main bulletins.

There are questions around political pressures put on the SABC and compliance with these when, eg high ranking politicians on the provincial level demand to appear on the news with interviews or statements.

There is no evidence of a pattern of political bias or interference in news decisions, though there is a common belief that there is subtle political pressure which is acceded to. Most of this political pressure is seen as coming from provincial and local politicians who are in the habit of phoning editors. Pressure is also experienced directly by journalists in the field (see 1.2). There are no institutionalised measures or formal policies to protect journalists though it is reported to be common practice for their seniors to intervene on their behalf.

There are also clear examples of professional and balanced news coverage at SABC. When a minister, for example, denied having used a particular phrase in a statement and claimed to have been misquoted by the media, the SABC played his original comments immediately after his denial as evidence that it had indeed reported him correctly.

During election times, examples of intimidation of journalists in the field continue to be reported, especially in hotly contested geographic areas.

It was concluded that there was no direct evidence of political interference.

Regarding commercial influence, the public broadcaster SABC is in reality a commercial company (SABC Ltd.) with the government as its sole shareholder. It relies heavily on commercial revenue (advertising) for 85% of its funding – it thus airs programmes that bring in advertising money rather than fulfilling its public service mandate. The Department of Communications has lobbied for more public funding for the SABC but the Treasury has refused.

There are now plans under way to change the mix of income by an increase in public funding to enable the SABC to fulfill its public broadcasting mandate properly instead of concentrating on profits.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 4, 1
Average score/5	**2.7**

3.8 The public broadcaster is adequately funded in a manner that protects it from arbitrary interference with its budget.

Analysis:
The SABC has two wings, a public wing and a commercial wing. It relies on commercial funding for 85% of its budget. Licence fees do not provide as much revenue (13%) as they do in some European countries. Government funding makes up 2%, subsidising certain, mainly educational, programmes. Given this preponderance of commercial revenue, SABC does not seem to be adequately funded and its performance is prone to considerations of profit and arbitrary interference by commercial interests.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	2, 3, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 1, 2
Average score/5	**1.9**

3.9 The public broadcaster is technically accessible in the entire country.

Analysis:
In South Africa there is 92% radio coverage and 85% television coverage of the entire territory. This is quite good for a country with difficult – mountainous and semi-desert – terrain.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	5, 4, 5, 2, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4
Average score/5	**4**

3.10 The public broadcaster offers diverse programming for all interests.

Analysis:
Commercial imperatives make it difficult for SABC to cover all interests – programmes need to be directed to the top income brackets to satisfy advertisers. This applies to both radio and TV, though the radio stations do better than television in covering a variety of interests as there are more stations.

The content of television is dominated by westernised and American programmes with little emphasis on educational and development programming. There are too many repeats of programmes, eg the soap *Isidingo* is repeated thrice on different channels at different times.

There is little coverage of and a paucity of productions from the rest of Africa, keeping the South African public unaware of their neighbouring countries. The xenophobia in the country could be partly caused by this ignorance.

Local programmes are often not broadcast during prime time even when they are highly popular, eg the township serial *Yizo Yizo*. It was not aired in prime time because it attracted no advertising.

In conclusion, all interests are not covered and programming is not diverse enough. The situation has improved on both counts over the last 10 years but progress has been slow.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	3, 3, 4, 2, 3, 3, 3, 2, 4
Average score/5	**3**

3.11 The public broadcaster offers balanced and fair information reflecting the full spectrum of diverse views and opinions.

Analysis:
Time for current affairs and other debates is very limited on television and interrupted by advertisements. The number of information programmes, in many different languages, has increased. Programmes for children, however, do not present useful information and a variety of views. There is limited investment in South African drama productions and in documentaries.

Radio broadcasts talk shows and chat shows presenting a wide range of views and interests with some of these discussion programmes being probing and highly professional. However, again, investigative and documentary programming is limited.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4, 3
Average score/5	**3.3**

3.12 The public broadcaster offers as much diverse and creative local content as economically achievable.

Analysis:
Local content on SABC is increasing and the broadcaster has much more locally produced and relevant programmes than before 1994. Some of the best programmes are produced by the education department and they are publicly funded. There are, however, few creative programmes that reflect life in South Africa.

While the SABC has a policy of treating all South African languages equitably, this is limited by funds (advertisers appear to prefer to put their money into English and Afrikaans language programmes) and by skills.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	4, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 2, 3
Average score/5	**3**

Overall score for sector 3: 3.5

"There is no evidence of a pattern of political bias or interference in news decisions, though there is a common belief that there is subtle political pressure which is acceded to. Most of this political pressure is seen as coming from provincial and local politicians who are in the habit of phoning editors."

"The content of television is dominated by westernised and American programmes... there is little coverage of and a paucity of productions from the rest of Africa... the xenophobia in the country could be partly caused by this ignorance."

The media practise high levels of professional standards.

4.1 The media follow voluntary codes of professional standards which are enforced by self-regulatory bodies.

Analysis:
Codes of conduct and self-regulatory bodies are in place for print and broadcasting media.

Print media companies have established a one-person, self-regulatory body – the Press Ombudsman. A code of professional standards was developed by all stakeholders. Participation is voluntary but most major media houses are part of the process.

There are two broadcast bodies – one statutory and one voluntary – and broadcasters have a choice. The Broadcasting Monitoring Complaints Commission is part of ICASA, and headed by a judge. The Broadcasting Complaints Commission of SA is a self-regulatory body under the National Broadcasting Association. Both bodies have essentially the same code and similar sanctions. SABC and commercial operators, being members of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), have opted for self-regulation. Community broadcasters come under the BMCC.

There is also the Advertising Standards Authority, which is self-regulatory.

There is a perception that too often self-regulation is guided by self-interest, ie that the authorities are biased towards the industry.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	3, 3, 5, 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 4, 4
Average score/5	**4.2**

4.2 The standard of reporting follows the basic principles of accuracy and fairness.

Analysis:
Skills audits commissioned by the SA National Editors' Forum have shown that there is a high level of awareness of problems around these issues in all sections of the media industry. All media assert that they wish to strive for accuracy and fairness, though there are practical and deadline problems that result in inaccuracies.

Overall there is a sense that the standards of accuracy and fairness have been dropping. Some of the reasons are a lack of skills, poor training and juniorisation – problems experienced across the general workforce, not just the media. The media is also affected by the general decline of standards at tertiary education level over the past decade. Newsrooms do not have enough resources to do their jobs well. This is compounded by poor newsroom management where staff may be inexperienced or scared to assert their authority. The effect of losing skilled media staff to the growing government and corporate communications areas over the past decade is being felt.

There are complaints that interview information is skewed when it appears in print, and that headlines do not always reflect the body of the story. These problems seem to get worse with an increasing tendency to sensationalise in an attempt to compete with mass-appeal tabloids which have hit the streets over the past three years.

Most newspapers use too many anonymous sources and/or one-source stories.

In the case of online news sites, staff do not seem to have any special qualifications and standards are particularly low.

With regard to SABC TV and e.tv, they are seen as equal in standards, with similar problems of inaccuracy. In the case of SABC news, reports carried in different languages often have a different slant – so people watching bulletins in different languages have different knowledge and views of events. There is a particular difference noted between English and vernacular news – part of this is a perception related to the history of the SABC, part of this is due to the news choices that the different editors make.

Radio reporting faces the same problems as described for print and for television.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	3, 3, 4, 3, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3
Average score/5	**2.8**

4.3 The media cover the full spectrum of events, issues and cultures, including business/economics, cultural, local and investigative stories.

Analysis:
Generally, the media are seen as covering the full spectrum as described above.

Investigative stories are done by *Mail&Guardian, Sunday Times* and *Noseweek*, as well as the online agency health-e. On television there is SABC's *Special Assignment* and to some extent e.tv's *3rd Degree*. Many stories across the media have smaller investigative elements.

Some geographical areas and some disadvantaged groups are neglected in media coverage. Generally, international news on television and radio is neglected, giving thorough coverage only to disasters and wars. Coverage of events in the rest of Africa has improved slightly over the past five years, particularly in print media, but is still patchy.

Arts and culture coverage has recently been studied – there is a sense that this area needs to be improved beyond just entertainment reporting.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 4, 4, 3, 3
Average score/5	**3.2**

4.4 Gender mainstreaming is promoted in terms of equal participation of both sexes in the production process.

Analysis:
The top echelons of the hierarchies in most media are still male dominated. In mainstream print media there are at present only three women editors at the most senior level (*Mail&Guardian, Daily Dispatch, Business Report*). There are women up to the second highest levels but it seems to be nearly impossible to break that ceiling. Women usually reach the top rung of the ladder as heads of human resources or legal departments but hardly in editorial positions.

SABC and e.tv now have women in many top positions with the SABC making conscious efforts to promote women into top jobs.

Generally there seems to be hardly any effort to create an enabling environment for women. Crèches, for example, are non-existent (with the notable exception of M-Net). Women have to fit into the (white) men's world. And expectations are high: women have to be over-perfect to reach higher positions.

A special case of discrimination occurred at the community radio station Radio Islam in Johannesburg. There, management refused – for "religious reasons" – to allow women on air. Only a massive intervention by ICASA (temporary withdrawal of the licence) forced the station to change its policy. Today, management concedes that women's voices on air enrich their programme. While this was a case of rules prohibiting women's involvement, many media do not have explicit bans but subtle reinforcement of gender inequality.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	2, 3, 2, 3, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 2
Average score/5	**2.6**

4.5 Gender mainstreaming is reflected in the editorial content.

Analysis:
With the rise of women to elevated positions in government and business in South Africa, more women's voices and images are appearing in the media. There has been much publicity around this area and most media make a conscious effort to be more sensitive about women's issues.

However, it was noted that greater strides should have been made in this respect over the past 12 years. There are also many examples of women still being portrayed as sex objects: the back pages of some newspapers, sexy images in tabloids and the way women are portrayed in music videos, were listed in particular.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	4, 2, 3, 3, 1, 3, 2, 2, 2, 2
Average score/5	**2.4**

4.6 Journalists and editors do not practise self-censorship.

Analysis:
Referring to 1.2, there is a high level of fear of expressing unpopular or dissenting opinions and the result is widespread self-censorship.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	3, 3, 3, 3, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2
Average score/5	**2.3**

"There is a perception that too often self-regulation is guided by self-interest... the authorities are biased towards the industry."

"The top echelons of the hierarchies in most media are still male dominated. There are women up to the second highest levels but it seems to be nearly impossible to break that ceiling. Women usually reach the top rung of the ladder as heads of human resources or legal departments but hardly in editorial positions."

4.7 Owners of private media do not interfere with editorial independence.

Analysis:
Editors prefer to have independence and usually fight for it. However, their dependence on commercial funding for survival is keenly felt, and this pressure has increased.

The panel understood "owners" as also including the business side of media operations, in particular the advertising departments. There is a perception that the dividing lines between editorial and advertising are not as rigid as they were 10 years ago, in both print and broadcast media. There is also increased and overt pressure from some advertisers who do not believe in media freedom or editorial independence. This influences editorial coverage when advertisers openly threaten to withdraw advertising, as in the case of a large supermarket chain said to have demanded a say on how or whether a story on rotten chicken meat was to be used by newspapers. It is believed that previously such threats by advertisers were not taken into account in deciding on editorial coverage.

Budget issues and commercial pressures to appeal to particular audiences are also seen as limiting an editor's ability to choose her/his editorial mix.

Private broadcasters are seen to be having an even more limited understanding of how sponsorships influence editorial content. Examples regarding e.tv and private radio stations were quoted.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	3, 3, 2, 2, 2, 1, 4, 2, 2, 2
Average score/5	**2.5**

4.8 Salary levels and general working conditions for journalists and other media practitioners are adequate to discourage corruption.

Analysis:
In South Africa, it is generally accepted that salaries in the media industry are high enough to discourage corruption. At SABC a survey showed journalists' salaries to be market-related or better. However, there are public relations exercises by companies and by government which are potentially corrupting influences.

The central issue here is whether there are sufficient codes and checks in place – and opportunities to create awareness about such codes – across all media to prevent corruption. Print media and broadcasting do have such codes and processes. No promises are allowed to be made regarding coverage in exchange for trips. The rule is that coverage and reviews will be critical but balanced, and news choices will be based only on news values. Many newspapers have ethics codes in place which, for example, prevent journalists from accepting gifts valued at more than R100 or from going on trips when they are not covering a story.

The panel perceived the biggest threat here to be a problem experienced by all media: a lack of resources to cover stories. In order to travel and cover stories, financial help for accommodation and transport has to be accepted. This relates to political stories, coverage of government activities, sports, travel, motoring, entertainment, arts and culture etc. This is a serious threat to journalistic independence as journalists feel indebted to their sponsors and under pressure not to be too critical. It also results in editorial choices not being made because of news value but due to the resources of the organisers of events. Occasionally, some print media acknowledge the fact that a story was covered through the use of such financial help – but this is not a widespread practice except in relation to travel stories. News values are also being skewed when the choice of story to be covered depends on who is providing transport and accommodation.

In spite of salaries generally being adequate, there is also a desire among some journalists to live the "high life" and some have been known to accept favours, entertainment and other advantages from corporate or political contacts. This is a threat to their individual journalistic independence.

Other corrupt offers, made to secure airtime and print space, have also occurred.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	3, 2, 4, 3, 3, 1, 4, 3, 3, 3
Average score/5	**2.9**

4.9 Training facilities offer formal qualification programmes for journalists as well as opportunities to upgrade their skills.

Analysis:
The media industry complains that tertiary journalism qualifications are not of sufficiently high standard, that practical skills are not adequately imparted and that those who received tertiary training have been found to lack competency when put into newsrooms. Journalism and/or media studies qualifications are currently offered at most universities and technikons. A few universities also offer post-graduate journalism degrees.

There are training institutions, in particular the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, that run short courses for on-going training of journalists. Most of these previously offered only certificates of attendance, but with the institution of the National Qualifications Framework and the Sector Education and Training Authorities (Setas), a basic journalism qualification has been drawn up with three possible areas of specialisation. There is further talk of introducing a journalism qualification which would be more suitable for community media.

As a result of each industry having to contribute to the national skills levy and in return being allowed to claim expenses from this levy for skills programmes and training towards qualifications, media houses have over the past five years all increased their efforts to provide journalism training and further education to staff. Under the scheme they can also claim for journalism interns, so some media now provide more opportunities for interns to get practical experience. Journalists themselves are also beginning to ask for training that gives them proper and verifiable qualifications.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	4, 3, 5, 5, 4, 5, 4, 4, 3, 3
Average score/5	**4**

4.10 Journalists and other media practitioners are organised in trade unions and/or professional associations.

Analysis:
The South African Union of Journalists (SAUJ) has closed shop. The Media Workers Association of South Africa (Mwasa) is still in operation and takes part in salary negotiations at some media companies. The Communications Workers Union says it has signed up 60% of the old SAUJ members at SABC and has made some inroads in radio and e.tv, as well as in print media in KZN. Overall, fewer journalists now belong to trade unions than was the case 10 years ago and there is no specialist journalism trade union.

The South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef), a professional organisation for editors and senior journalists, is active and most editors are members of the forum. The Media Institute of Southern Africa (Misa) has an operational South African chapter.

A need for a body for mid-level journalists to discuss professional concerns has been expressed. Press clubs are operating in some cities but are mostly not dominated by journalists or dedicated to issues of the journalistic profession.

Scores	
Individual scores/5	3, 4, 3, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4, 2, 4
Average score/5	**3.4**

Overall score for sector 4: 3.0

"Editors prefer to have independence and usually fight for it. However, their dependence on commercial funding for survival is keenly felt, and this pressure has increased."

"...there is also a desire among some journalists to live the 'high life' and some have been known to accept favours, entertainment and other advantages from corporate or political contacts. This is a threat to their individual journalistic independence."

Chris Kirchhoff

Terrified by Voice of the People

by Isabella Matambanadzo

A green police truck, whose colour has evaporated from years of operating under Zimbabwe's sunshine, rolls past sputtering in its wake a dusty mix of red earth and diesel fumes.

The driver's arms are strained taut as he struggles to balance his unwieldy load. He brings the vehicle to a growling halt on the slope of the gates leading to the holding cells of the Harare Magistrate's Court at Rotten Row, a ring of a building that squats on the fringes of the inner city business zone of Zimbabwe's capital.

Young armed guards in crisp uniforms spring over the back of the truck, their morning breath steaming into a fog against the winter chill. Their cargo emerges: barefoot prisoners walk like mismatched twins shackled together at the ankles by crimes coming before the courts. It's 15 June, 2006.

In Court Room number 4, the magistrate listens to arguments in the case of a car thief. Then the case of some men involved in a housebreaking matter comes to the fore. Finally the court calls for David Masunda, chairperson of Radio Voice of the People (VOP).

The public prosecutor leaps from his rickety chair. "This matter has been postponed your Worship," he informs the court in quick protest. Stumped, Masunda stops walking to the dock and stands suspended in the middle of the court room like a puppet controlled by powers pulling invisible strings.

He turns his eyes to VOP's lawyer Beatrice Mtetwa for directions. With a knowing gesture, she reaches for her face and gently nudges her black rimmed glasses back into place. "But as my learned friend knows, your Worship, this matter was confirmed as proceeding as late as yesterday. I personally checked with my learned friend's office and it was agreed that we would be going ahead with the trial."

Mtetwa has for the last decade or so been defending the rights and freedoms of journalists in Zimbabwe. One of her most widely-followed cases was that of Andrew Meldrum, the American journalist who fell victim to obnoxious media regulation laws introduced by former Information Minister Jonathan Moyo. Meldrum was expelled from Zimbabwe in May 2003 after 23 years as a correspondent for the British *Guardian* newspaper.

In 2005 the New York-based media rights campaign group, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), awarded Mtetwa their 2005 Press Freedom Award, an honour very rarely bestowed upon non-journalists.

And today it's easy to see why more than three years ago Meldrum said Mtetwa was a "fearless lawyer", defending freedom of the press and the rule of law in Zimbabwe under the most difficult and dangerous of conditions. Hearing her voice defend you only makes his words ring that much more true.

"This matter cannot be further postponed, your Worship. My clients have been on remand since January and this is quite prejudicial to them," asserts Mtetwa.

But the magistrate is bewildered. Before her is a separate file for John Masuku, the Executive Director of VOP. She can't seem to understand why the same case has separate documentation. Not being able to make head or tail of the particular

Voice of the People

Why are African governments so terrified of a free, plural media? What do we do when the odds seemed so stacked against us for wanting to enjoy our right to know and share knowledge?

➡ act in the VOP drama, she calls for a recess. The matter is redirected to court room number 1.

The lawyers grin at each other in a code of approval. Magistrate Billa who presides over court room number 1 has a reputation for upholding the law and respecting judicial procedure. His court room sends out the same air of efficiency and seriousness of business. The audio recording equipment is in full function. A young man in headphones fusses over the voice recording levels, moving microphones and quickly labelling cassettes. The translator has a very professional demeanour about him and is confident of his words.

The VOP team walks into the middle of a case of two women caught in dispute over a foreign currency deal gone sour. Then their case is called. The wooden dock is too small to hold all 10 of them: Maria Nyanyiwa-Mataruse, Takunda Chigwanda and Nyasha Bosha, staff members of Radio VOP, are the latest additions to the accused list of John Masuku, and the members of the board of trustees, David Masunda, Arnold Tsunga, Lawrence Chibwe, Nhlanhla Ngwenya, Millie Phiri and myself, Isabella Matambanadzo.

Prosecutor Justin Uladi says the case cannot proceed to trial as programmed because the state's key witness, one Obert Muganyura, the technical director of the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), who was due to give evidence, had gone to Switzerland. There are groans and grunts of disapproval from the room. A hush of respect descends into the room when the magistrate asks for a response from VOP's lawyer.

"This is unacceptable," Mtetwa tells the court, her voice so assertive it seems to come from a public address system hooked up somewhere deep within her tiny frame. "Since January the prosecution has been telling us and even yesterday (Wednesday) they said they are ready for trial and we keep getting these postponements."

"How did it get like this?" I ask myself, taking my mind back to all the modules of media law we gobbled up ahead of final term exams at Rhodes University in the 1990s. I could not recall a case as absurd, and frankly as irritating, as this one. "Bella, this is persecution for sure," whispers Arnold Tsunga as if he can magically hear my inner voice.

Tsunga is the executive director of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, ZLHR, a professional association of lawyers interested in promoting a culture of human rights in Zimbabwe through various means. Litigation is one of their strategies. Their members have packed the courtroom and so sound is their standing across the region that they have managed to mobilise a network of highly-regarded African and international trial observers.

In December 2005, when plainclothes police officers raided and ransacked the VOP offices, ZLHR were there in a flash. The police had a warrant for the "seizure of radio broadcasting communication equipment and its associated accessories to include: computer hardware, software and any documents related to the activities of the radio station". When they could not find any equipment of that nature they went back to the station and rewrote the warrant to say "any equipment and materials", says Otto Saki of ZLHR's litigation team, who was on the scene at the time of the raid. "That's when they took the three female members of staff, held them in police cells for four days and released them without charge."

The VOP staff members were held as "bait" to entice VOP's director John Masuku to present himself at the police station. When Masuku reported to the police station on 19 December 2005 he was detained for four days and taken to court on 23 December to answer to charges of contravening Section 27 of the Broadcasting Services Act. Masuku made bail at Zimbabwe $4 million.

The festive holidays were an uncertain time for VOP staff and board members, who were unsure what the pre-Christmas arrests were leading to. Everything was revealed in January when a renewed spate of home raids and arrests began. It reads like a diary of well thought-out intimidation.

In the early hours of the morning of 18 January 2006 two police officers and one soldier visited the home of VOP trustee Arnold Tsunga in Mutare, the eastern border town connecting Zimbabwe to Beira, Mozambique's trading gateway. They ordered Tsunga's home staff to go to the police station, accusing them of hiding information about Tsunga's whereabouts. They were released after the intervention of lawyers without any charges being preferred against them.

But that was not the end. The next raid took place on the weekend of 21 January, a Saturday that saw Harare police from the Law and Order Section proceeded to arrest Anesu Kamba, a driver at ZLHR, and Charles Nyamufukudzwa, a caretaker, for allegedly obstructing investigations. When the two said they knew nothing about the matter the police were referring to, the police began a spate of home raids. First, they searched Tsunga's home, taking with them a photograph displayed in the family room. They did not have a warrant to search the home or remove Tsunga's belongings.

A different set of police officers in a pick-up truck had visited the house of Nhanhla Ngwenya, another trustee of VOP, and had threatened to take away some of his electronic appliances as ransom. More teams were hunting for the other VOP trustees. A team went to my mother's home. On the advice of our lawyer we resolved to report to the police station collectively. During our arrest, we were told by the arresting officers that their case was at the direction of officials within a structure known as the Joint Operations Command (JOC) and that there were instructions for our incarceration.

Since January we have been reporting to police stations and court rooms. In our view this is a way of intimidating us and criminalising work we do quite lawfully. Even government ministers have made remarks in the state press about journalists and non-governmental organisations that are quite threatening.

The Minister of State Security, Didymus Mutasa, was reported by the *Manica Post* newspaper as saying that government "will not sit on its laurels" and watch a "crop of journalists" sell "the country to the enemy by writing falsehoods" with the "intention" of "undermining national security" and "agitating violence in the country". He warned that although the journalists were using pseudonyms in reporting for "pirate radios, websites and other media", government had "since identified them from their closets" and that the "net will soon close in on all those who are involved in these illegal activities".

In February Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa told security officers from the Southern African

Development Community (SADC) region who were meeting in Harare that "enemies of the state" were using the private press against Zimbabwe's government. He said Zimbabwe's private press needed "urgent reform" because Western-sponsored journalists were distorting the true Zimbabwean story.

"The current media set-up requires reforms as it permits enemies of the state to mislead the public to the detriment of the country's interests," state radio reported.

Since the introduction of restrictive media laws in 2002, four independent newspapers have been shut down and in some instances, their equipment impounded.

Scores of journalists, Zimbabwean, some from Botswana and others from overseas, have been arrested. The VOP trial comes back to the courts in the last week of September in conditions where the judiciary is marginalised, human rights lawyers are treated with contempt and state witnesses do not show. In addition, the conduct of the investigating and arresting police has been quite unprofessional. Zimbabwe is a signatory to international and regional human rights instruments such as Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, yet it is quite clear that the VOP team and other journalists are being deliberately persecuted for seeking to enjoy their rights to Freedom of Expression and freedom of the airwaves.

When considered against the history of a failure by the police in Zimbabwe to conclusively resolve the mysterious bombing on 29 August 2002 of VOP's former offices in the Milton Park suburb in Harare, it is safe to say that there are forces in Zimbabwe deliberately intent on silencing the voices and demands for free and fair airwaves.

Why are African governments so terrified of a free, plural media? Right across the continent stories are unfolding about journalists being murdered in mysterious circumstances, journalists being arrested, media organisations and freedom of information groups being harassed. What do we do when the odds seem so stacked against us for wanting to enjoy, quite responsibly, our right to know and share knowledge? ■

Fear is everywhere

by Hendrik Bussiek

The right to express oneself freely depends on where one is, who one is with and what one says" – that is one of the findings of the African Media Barometer on Zimbabwe. It captures much of the essence of what citizens with a mind of their own, and not least those in the business of journalism, experience daily.

Ten women and men met over a weekend in April 2006 in a lodge far away from the capital, Harare, to express themselves freely. They came from all walks of Zimbabwean civil society life – media and human rights activists, the church, the university, a newspaper, a publishing house. They gathered to discuss the state of freedom of expression in their country and they spoke as if there were no limits to this right.

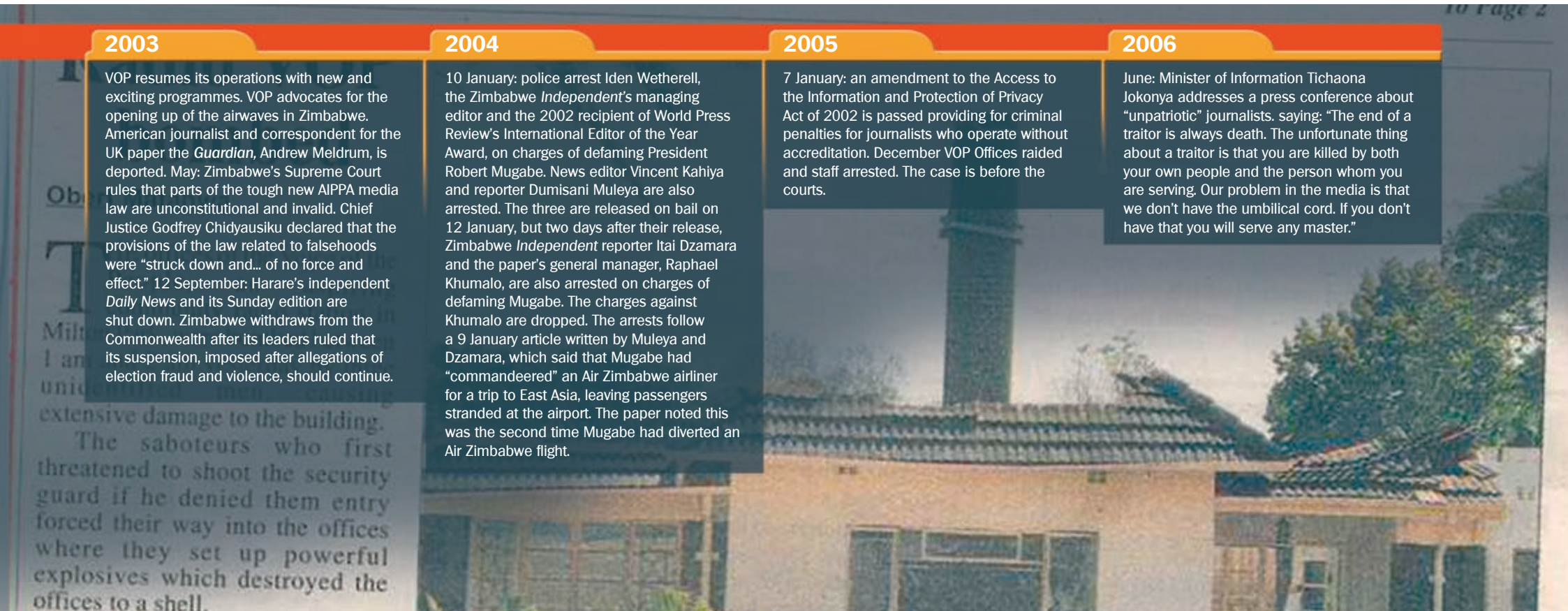
As a panel they took part in the continent-wide African Media Barometer exercise, a project that seeks to assess the state of the media using indicators drawn from African policy documents, mostly from the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. And the assessment is done not by outside 'experts' but by informed citizens in each of the countries concerned. (See *Rhodes Journalism Review* No 25 and the report on the SA Media Barometer in this edition).

One of the first indicators is whether people practise their right to freedom of expression "without fear". In Zimbabwe fear is everywhere. "One cannot speak freely on the bus or in public or go to the national broadcaster or the media with one's views, if these are not in line with the views of government. In rural Zimbabwe there is fear of victimisation, fear of disappearance, torture, and violence when one expresses oneself… Politicians and policy makers are even more restricted than the average citizens, as they cannot openly express their views: they make totally different statements on one and the same issue depending on whether they are in private or in public… Even the supposedly private spheres are affected. Children cannot talk freely with their parents or adults, and women can also not freely express themselves to their husbands."

"The fear factor is always there – and it is increasing, particularly in the public sphere. Government is determined, to the point of obsession, to increasingly control what people say and do. Private schools are controlled. If Zimbabweans say something outside the country presumed to be critical of government, the net could be closing in on them and their passports may be seized."

"Journalists and the media are under particular restrictions for various reasons. The state media have to suit the policy makers' expectations. The independent media live under the threat of being deregistered by the Media and Information Commission, thus they exercise self-censorship for fear of not having their licences renewed."

This commission is appointed by the Minister of Information and Publicity in the President's Office and was established by the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) – an Orwellian misnomer for a piece of legislation aimed at precisely the opposite: to make access to information difficult and to protect the government, rather than the privacy of individuals. All media have to be registered with the commission, as have journalists. A media practitioner can be struck off the roll under section 80 of the Act: "A journalist shall be deemed to have abused his (sic) journalist's privilege and committed an offence if he (sic) ➡



falsifies or fabricates information." It is the commission which determines whether a piece of information is "false" or "fabricated".

Self-censorship has thus become a survival strategy and it "occurs in both the state and independent media – both consciously and unconsciously. Many reporters, whether working for the state or the private media, are 'conditioned' in the sense that they know what is expected of them without anyone having to give them directions. They suffer from the 'publish and perish syndrome', afraid to publish certain stories for fear of victimisation."

"Journalists do not want to offend the Media and Information Commission for fear of losing their accreditation or being arrested under AIPPA. For example, when a prominent businessman disappeared from Harare, having been arrested for allegedly spying on the government, the news got to the media but no one dared to take it up. It was only after (the state-controlled) *The Herald* had written about it that all the other papers followed suit."

No wonder, then, that "corruption is rampant". One of the main reasons "is the constant fear of losing one's job by falling foul of the stipulations set by AIPPA. This exposes journalists to the temptation to accept bribes and incentives as long as they are available… Journalists ask business people not for a bribe, but for a 'loan' as a condition for a favourable article. They regularly get 'presents' such as radio-3CD changers, beds and other assets from persons who want to avoid having negative stories written about them. Certain politicians are always frequenting the press' meeting point, the Quill Club, where invitations start with lunch and progress until something more substantial is offered and the terms are spelt out: 'I can help with bridging your loan gaps', 'I have influence and I can assist with the bureaucrats'. A journalist was offered 'a little ladder to get him to finish building his house'. Then the politicians tell their story – and get it published."

There are only two privately-owned weeklies left, *The Zimbabwe Independent* and *The Standard*. *The Daily Mirror* and *The Sunday Mirror* are owned by an academic aligned to the ruling party. *The Financial Gazette* is said to be owned by the governor of the Reserve Bank. All other papers are state-owned and controlled, with *The Herald* as the flagship. But even this daily is not easily accessible: a copy (as at March 2006) "costs Z$100 000, nearly as much as a loaf of bread – and most people prioritise bread over newspapers".

This leaves broadcasting as the main source of information, more aptly "described as 'narrowcasting' as the state-controlled Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings has a monopoly over the airwaves. There is no other broadcasting operator in the country. ZBH is certainly not the first choice of the people – but they have no alternative".

"The broadcaster is biased towards advancing the cause of the ruling party and government. There is a lot of reporting on the president, government and the ruling party. Typically, news stories start off by saying: 'The government warns the public', 'The minister urges civil servants', 'ZANU(PF) cautions against …' etc, regurgitating statements at state functions and ruling party meetings."

Zimbabweans lucky enough to have access to Internet at home or (more commonly) in their offices, read online newspapers run by Zimbabweans in the diaspora, including ZimOnline, Zimdaily and NewZimbabwe.com, with ZimOnline being the most popular. Their sources: correspondents inside the country who gather and supply stories against all the odds and ever present dangers.

Even these online services, however, are now under threat: "An Interception of Communications Bill which will make the surveillance of all communication including Internet traffic 'legally' possible has been drafted. In the draft, the persons who can make applications for the interception of communications include the chiefs of defence and intelligence, the director-general of the president's department of national security, the commissioner of the Zimbabwe Republic Police and the commissioner-general of the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority. All Internet service providers (ISPs), freight forwarders, courier companies, postal and telephone service providers and any providers of any medium that facilitates communication, need to put in place systems to monitor and record all information that passes through their system at their own expense."

All in all then, the stranglehold on freedom of expression and the media is getting more suffocating by the month. And the atmosphere of oppression, of constant fear, of self-censorship and dishonesty, and the daily struggle for survival in a hostile climate has helped to resurrect and feed another monster: sexism and male chauvinism: "Media houses are described as being notorious for sexual harassment of women. It has been reported that 'carpet interviews' are infamous, meaning that some women get a job and survive in the media houses only in exchange for sexual favours. There is also the systematic exclusion of women from prestigious arenas such as business and financial reporting and the lack of assistance of new female journalists in the newsrooms to take up this area. All this forces women who seek a better working environment out of the newsrooms and into the public relations sector". ■

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Chris Kirchhoff

East meets South

Nepad and the continent's leader's stated intention to engage across the political, social and economic landscape have set the scene for African media owners to communicate. ***Sandra Gordon*** *considers whether there is real value in doing so.*

Cocooned for so long from the economic realities of other African countries, locally-based media owners were slow to venture into the rest of the continent. However, with encouragement from our government, over the past five years we have witnessed major media players begin a journey of exploration and development. Despite the challenges of doing business across our borders there is growing realisation that South African media owners can and should look to the rest of Africa for growth and that, arguably, we have an obligation to share our knowledge and experience.

There are a multitude of examples that reflect the willingness of local companies to experiment, albeit cautiously. The SABC and Multichoice have extended their broadcast platforms across the continent and it is clear that these are long term initiatives and that, at this point, their objectives may well be politically, rather than economically, driven. Another media type that has moved into the rest of South and East Africa with alacrity is outdoor billboards. The local market is dominated by Clear Channel and Primedia and both have aggressively gone in where other more traditional media have feared to venture. Johnnic Communications has launched *Business Day* in Nigeria, Media 24 has extended their *Drum* and *True Love* brands into Kenya and Nigeria and e.tv is looking to partner with their counterparts in television and radio with e.tv and the Yfm youth radio concept. We can expect continued activity despite the fact that in most cases profits are yet to flow.

The African expansion challenges facing South African media owners include poor infrastructure, restrictive legislation, concentrated ownership structures, politically-motivated interference, unstable political structures and a lack of press freedom. Under these circumstances brave media owners with big budgets and perhaps a socio/political agenda will pave the way, while the more cautious will follow when there are successful media case studies to imitate.

However, the dissemination of knowledge is an area that South African media companies, both big and small, are paying attention to. They are generous with their time and keen to explore opportunities as they pass on their expertise.

The best example is an initiative of the Sol Plaatje Media Leadership Institute (an associate of the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University) and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (a German-based foundation that promotes the work of media practitioners). For the past three years they have organised an annual get together of media practitioners and in April this year invited me to speak on the importance of branding in print media.

It was generally acknowledged that this year's congress "East meets South: strategic challenges for African Media", was the most successful so far. In part this was due to being in the surprisingly (to South Africans) sophisticated and friendly city of Nairobi, but most significantly to the calibre of the delegates and their positive approach.

A cross section of delegates, including media owners, editors and journalists enjoyed two days of discussion and debate. In addition we had time to establish relationships that have endured and developed over the past three months.

The papers presented were above reproach – interesting, enlightening and thought-provoking. However it was the networking among the 31 attendees that really added that extra bit of value. To learn of the difficulties experienced by fellow journalists, editors and media management in the region both impressed and alarmed me.

I was impressed by the Nation Group – they control a television station, newspapers and a radio station, are owned by the Aga Khan and publish the most profitable daily in the world. We heard of new ventures in Uganda – a new tabloid, *The Red Pepper*, that makes *Die Son* and *Daily Voice* look tame – and was amazed at the fortitude of media owners in Malawi (healthy and growing newspaper and radio station run by entrepreneurs), Mozambique (*Savanna* – a brave tabloid filled with objective reporting) Botswana (flourishing daily newspaper) and Zambia (a mining magazine owned and run by a woman).

What alarmed me? The dire circumstances under which some of them operate. As I write, there are journalists in detention, the bulk of them from Eritrea and Ethiopia. Some two weeks before we arrived in Kenya, the offices of the Standard Group in Nairobi were visited by government representatives who trashed their printing presses and a broadcast unit. A presenter from another country was afraid to answer questions about the media landscape in which her company operates – in this case not fearful of politicians, but of her bosses who control every stitch of their media environment. A Swazi national cannot get funding for a comic magazine, *Super Buddies*, aimed at educating children about HIV/Aids – this despite having the highest incidence of the disease in Africa; there is apathy and chauvinism in this conservative kingdom.

Every couple of months there are hair-raising stories of intimidation of media owners and their staff and while South Africa has a constitution and courts of law that provide comfort, the bulk of our African neighbours do not.

At the close of the congress delegates prepared a statement calling for freedom of the press. While the South African attendees were comfortable with the suggestion that we append our names to the document, other delegates were not. They contemplated the reaction of their governments and media owners back home and shied away. Reminded me of the old days in South Africa.

So perhaps this is what all African media participants have to share that has the most value – our collective experience of how to operate under dire circumstances and to succeed against insurmountable odds.

The South Africans gave many of the other delegates hope and in some cases established warm and worthwhile contacts that will flourish over time and, who knows, may result in good business. ■

TABLOIDISATION WAS A HOT TOPIC AT THE AFRICA MEDIA LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE. 'TODAY, THE MERE MENTION OF THE RED PEPPER AT A DRINKING JOINT IN UGANDA IS ENOUGH TO GET PEOPLE BEHAVING PROPERLY,' SAYS EDITOR RUGYENDO.

by Francis Mdlongwa

In Uganda, the *Red Pepper* tabloid has quadrupled its circulation in five years and its youthful managing editor, Arinaitwe Rugyendo, bubbles with confidence as he speaks of a "revolution" sweeping the Ugandan media market and spearheaded by his newspaper.

Red Pepper is not just another tabloid thriving on sensationalism and scandal, but is living up to its name by being a fresh newspaper that is making a difference to the lives of young Ugandans.

The newspaper is not only transforming the Ugandan news media's content and making it more understandable, interesting and relevant to readers, but is reshaping the way news is covered by becoming more accessible and "participatory".

At least this is the view of Rugyendo, 29, who says the rise of *Red Pepper* spells trouble for Africa's traditional print and broadcast media still steeped in "coursework journalism" of lecturing audiences and dishing out knowledge, information and news from a privileged "we know it" position.

"Today, the mere mention of *Red Pepper* at a drinking joint in Uganda is enough to get people behaving properly. *Red Pepper* has assumed the role of Mr Tell It All. It is the national policeman," he said.

"There is a (growing) belief that what other media fear to say will always find its way into *Red Pepper*. There is a growing belief that *Red Pepper* has the most credible information on politics and intelligence!"

But exactly how and why is *Red Pepper* different from other Ugandan tabloids, or the country's traditional mainstream media? For the record, the tabloid's modest circulation of just 6 000 copies a week at its launch in 2001 has grown to more than 25 000 now and the newspaper has become a daily.

"This has been achieved by looking at the paper's clients not merely as recipients of information, but as contributors to what the paper packages. We call this 'participatory publishing'. We allow the readers to be part of the news they are supposed to buy and read."

A participatory revolution

I later emailed Rugyendo, asking him to expand on this theme for inclusion in this write-up. "A small peasant will call in from the deepest part of the village any time in the night and report to us what has happened around him. You will find the story in the subsequent editions… there is a feeling that *Red Pepper* editors are like 'police', always there for them and ready to receive your call and have your story run without the bureaucracy that comes with the official (and mainstream) media and its legalese."

To an extent, *Red Pepper* appears to be fostering citizen journalism – currently being practised by some online newspapers that are allowing ordinary people with Internet access to act as reporters who tell their own stories from their localities.

The impact of media's tabloidisation of news – the generally sensationalist coverage of what some media analysts see as trivial stories that focus on sex, scandal, salacious details of people's private lives, etc – on the media market and society was just one highlight of several media management topics debated by the summit.

An annual event, the conference was attended by more than 30 leading African media owners, chief editors and media scholars, giving them a rare opportunity to network at the highest level and to share experiences and ideas on how they are confronting a broad range of challenges that face their media companies in their regions.

Although tabloidisation of news has long troubled mainstream publishers in the developed North who have seen their profits whittled down by the 'alternative' tabloids, the phenomenon is relatively new in a reforming and liberalising Africa.

But as happened in the North, African bosses of established media companies are increasingly seeing this new reportage as also threatening their media firms' bottom lines and very survival, and are seeking ways of combating or coexisting with it.

While some media scholars see tabloids as pandering to the lowest common denominator of public taste, others see them as filling a critical public information void left by self-centred traditional media whose reportage does not address the needs and wants of ordinary people.

In Rugyendo's words: the old ways (of reporting) of the media were the preserve of an elite minority and they served to exclude the voices and concerns of the majority population, particularly the poor and women. Tabloidisation has therefore sought to liberate the mainstream media from this ideological backwardness to start seriously addressing aspects of society that it has traditionally ignored.

In fact, Rugyendo argues that the advent of *Red Pepper* in Uganda has not only "broadened and democratised the content of the media" by creating new readers, but has forced the mainstream media to adopt tabloid-style journalism to survive and become relevant to society.

The trick? News media must present short, sharp and crisp news stories which deal with ordinary people's daily lives; their triumphs and tribulations and their joys and sorrows; and when running political stories these need to be 'sanitised' to make sense of them for the people.

"*Red Pepper*, which kicked off as a weekly in 2001 and went on to become a bi-weekly before graduating to the daily it is, fits the description of tabloid and then goes on to defy that very description," Rugyendo argued.

"The defiance was and is mainly meant to achieve a revolutionary flexible response to market needs… Where will you find a paper with titillating tidbits of the First Family (in Uganda), when the next pages discuss the perennial problem of cattle-rustling in eastern Uganda…?"

He recalled that at the launch of *Red Pepper* – which one media analyst has branded 'too hot to handle' – "professional moralists" had ganged up against *Red Pepper*, accusing it of peddling pornography. "Many failed to see that the paper offered what other publications had neglected: the fearless expression of informed opinion and analysis blended in the light stuff.

"To the present day, 'Intelligence Briefing' (one of *Red Pepper's* opinion pages) still creates the impression that it is written by the country's spy chiefs; (but) it is simply the informed opinion and analyses of *Red Pepper's* editors, period. And because 'Intelligence Briefing' has predicted several events with almost prophetic foresight, suspicion of direct linkages to intelligence abound.

"The net result of this packaging is that a priest could buy *Red Pepper* with a semi-nude picture on top, which he may or may not like, because he has to get to those other columns inside, which he thinks are vital for his own information, or for his flock.

"Another peculiar aspect is that *Red Pepper* has not

stuck to reporting what celebrities do but has, in fact, gone on to turn little-known achievers into celebrities." Rugyendo estimated Africa's youths at 500 million out of a population of 800 million and said of the youth market: "Our (news) products must seek to talk to them and in turn they must feel the product is theirs and not ours…

"With this kind of generation, do we (as editors) ever stop to imagine the per capita movie access in Africa? What about the per capita Internet access in Africa? How about the per capita discotheque access in Africa? What of the per capita fun consumption in Africa?

"These are the market needs realities we are facing because these aspects constitute what is shaping the majority of readers', listeners' and viewers' views of the world. The media in Africa must adapt to these trends…(and) shift from course-work journalism to reality journalism, where we must respond to the market needs without compromising our (journalistic) principles."

Rugyendo's upbeat mood on *Red Pepper* was shared by some conference delegates, who saw mainstream media as failing audiences because of various factors, including issues concerning ownership of media firms, media's commercialisation of news and media's quests for profit.

Debasing discourse

But many delegates, predominantly owners of long-established media groups, felt tabloidisation of news debased public discourse and therefore threatened democracy and the ethical conduct of the journalism profession itself.

Makerere University's journalism school head Peter Mwesige, a former editor of a national newspaper in Uganda, criticised tabloids and market-driven journalism for diminishing the profession's public service role.

"My quarrel with tabloids is that they rarely interrogate the social problems they cover, (and) they have a potential to depoliticise society by robbing people of a forum through which to engage in public debate on key issues," he argued.

"The fact that there is a market for tabloids should not be confused with whether they always add to the education of the citizenry, the key public service role for which the news media enjoy special protection. Unfortunately, the growing success of tabloids in several media markets is tempting serious newspapers to take the same down-market road."

He argued that news media "are not like any other business, and journalism is not simply another commodity on the market subject to all the dictates of the market place.

"The worldwide constitutional protections enjoyed by journalism are grounded in the public service role of the news media and not so much in the rights of media owners to make a profit, although there is nothing criminal or illegitimate about that too."

He argued that the survival of democracy depended on the "quality of information and communication" provided by the media, and sounded a warning on tabloidisation:

"In the name of giving the market what it wants, stories on fashion, local and international celebrities, company promotions, and society parties now compete with serious journalism in newspapers, while the radio stations are content with talk shows and news flashes to spice their music. Important subjects that are not interesting are often ignored, while journalists come under more pressure to cover interesting, but not necessarily important, subjects."

He saw market-driven journalism and tabloidisation as as much of a threat to democracy and quality journalism as were the corporatisation of the media, globalisation, stifling government legislation and policies, lack of resources and training in media houses.

The debate on the future of African journalism in the face of tabloidisation and new competition from new media such as Internet journalism is far from resolved as Africa searches for appropriate responses in a rapidly changing and globalising world.

The Nairobi summit also examined issues such as strategies of growing youth markets by Africa's print, online and broadcast media; how to build cross-border African media investment; how to integrate opportunities from new media and whether Kenya's multi-media giant Nation Group, owners of several newspapers and a radio and television station, is compromising, co-existing or confronting the government in its quest for survival. ■

The conference was hosted by the Sol Plaatje Media Leadership Institute and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

The papers

Rugyendo, A. 2006. "The impact of tabloidisation on the media, markets and society."
Mwesige, PG. 2006. "African quality journalism under siege: what's to be done?"

Peer review and the media

What South Africans really think of themselves

by Raymond Louw

South Africa is one of the first countries in Africa to undergo the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process under the African Union's ambitious Nepad (New Partnership for Africa's Development) initiative.

The review process is relatively simple in concept but it is time consuming and labour intensive in its implementation. The process is about halfway through in South Africa and should reach its final stages towards the end of this year or early next year.

But readers of South African newspapers would have only a vague impression of this activity, except for those who read the *Sunday Times* and *The Star* earlier in the year. For most of the SA media, the APRM appears to have become something of a non-subject and there is no good reason why. Perhaps editors were put off by the cynical comments of President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal at a sumptuous dinner in Sandton in October 2004, in the third year of Nepad, when he exclaimed in exasperation, "I'm disappointed... we've not had one project that has materialised. People ask me what progress has Nepad made and I can speak to them about good governance but I can't explain any more."

He was referring to a key feature of peer review, the assessment of a country's good political and democratic governance. Countries volunteer to take part in the APRM process, which is carried out under four headings, with good political and democratic governance being the most important. The remaining headings relate to the other basic structures of governance – the conduct of corporate governance, economic governance and management, and socio-economic development.

Original intention

The original intention was that the process would enable countries with favourable reports to gain greater access to European markets and donor aid, but this has now been dropped. The process is now regarded as an end in itself to improve African governance. The APRM provides for several stages in the review process culminating in a final report to African Union heads of state who then exercise peer review of the country being examined.

The process starts with a country conducting a self-assessment, while the regional APRM secretariat conducts an independent parallel review in the form of a background document. These two reviews are presented to a Country Review Mission which makes its assessment after conducting interviews with stakeholders, the business community, provincial governments and civil society in various parts of the country. In SA's case this mission, which in late July concluded a seven-province tour, is headed by Nigerian Professor Adebayo Adedeji, a member of an eminent persons group of seven – the great and the good chosen as respected African leaders in their fields from various countries – which oversees the APRM process. The eminent persons, in turn, hand the final report to the AU heads of state for final peer review.

But Wade was being over-optimistic when he implied there had been some progress in the good governance assessment. That subject has attracted the critical attention of some journalists in South Africa, others in the SADC region and many in such international fora as the Vienna-based International Press Institute and the Washington DC-based World Press Freedom Committee.

The journalists and institutions have protested to the Nepad and APRM secretariats that the criteria for assessing good governance is seriously deficient in that it fails to take any account of the important role, indeed the essential role, of a free and independent press in a country professing to be a democracy and to practise good governance.

The criteria outlined in the Nepad manual are that a country adopts clear codes and standards of good governance at all levels; runs an accountable, efficient and effective civil service; ensures the effective functioning of parliaments and accountability institutions, including parliamentary committees and anti-corruption bodies; and ensures the independence of the judicial system.

While these are all appropriate requirements, critical journalists say this is simply not good enough. A country cannot stand up as a democracy practising good political governance unless it provides the appropriate legislative framework for a free and independent media and ensures that the authorities do not interfere with, or restrict, the media.

It is true that Nepad deals with the promotion and protection of human rights by requiring countries to ensure "responsible free expression, inclusive of the freedom of the press". But, the International Press Institute, in its criticism of Nepad, dismissed this clause, noting that it was not specific to good governance and that the "responsible" constraint is "a term which is often used to limit media freedom".

Free media

A group of journalists from the Media Institute of Southern Africa (Misa) and the SA National Editors' Forum (Sanef) have been trying to persuade the African Union and the Nepad and APRM Secretariats, as well as Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique when he headed the AU, to include a requirement that countries foster a free and independent media. They have had no success.

That's not surprising when one learns that in the original drafting of the criteria there was a requirement for independent media. However, shortly before the documents were made public, a last-minute revision resulted in the reference to the media and some other issues being cut out – presumably to make the documentation more palatable to the heads of state, especially those who keep tight control over state broadcasters.

When Sanef and Misa were invited by Professor Adedeji to add questions about a media role to the questionnaire that forms the basis of self assessment, their proposals were ignored. Most of SA's editors have shown little interest in this argument, nor have they been attracted to the huge operation that the SA government assembled to conduct its self-assessment. The government set aside a R20-million budget which

Here was a nation baring its soul, inviting – and getting – very pertinent and unvarnished comments on its conduct of affairs from politicians, institutions, academics, observers and analysts, and the public.

Chris Kirchhoff

included R500 000 for a "jingle" to persuade people to give their comments. The jingle turned into a two-track CD and cassette album, with top artists including Yvonne Chaka Chaka.

The government set up a national governing council under Public Service and Administration Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi. There was no consultation in advance with civil society and no elected representatives. Four cabinet ministers, three deputy ministers and an official from the presidency augmented by 19 representatives of NGOs (non-governmental organisations) were appointed by the government. Those representatives are seen to be largely government-friendly. No academics were included. The top-heavy government component did attract attention from papers.

In Ghana, the self-assessment was conducted by civil society institutions and a strong body of academics, all independent of government, but the SA government simply brushed aside suggestions that it should follow the Ghana example.

The APRM process provides for the establishment of technical service agencies to draw up the self-assessment reports under the four headings and the council did enlist the services of credible independent agencies such as the SA Institute for International Affairs (SAIIA) and Idasa (Institute for a Democratic South Africa).

The council countered the negative impression it had created by setting up an elaborate consultation mechanism through which a huge response from civil society, interested people, parliament, provincial and local government councillors and officials as well as rural institutions was attracted.

Provinces replicated Fraser-Moleketi's governing council and held numerous meetings of their own to solicit comment. Scores of documents poured in and the technical agencies pulled them together into book-sized representations and summaries which together totalled some 2 000 pages.

Four seminars and workshops were held in Johannesburg to discuss the documents, to add material and to refine them. Later final public meetings were held at the Walter Sisulu Square in Kliptown, Soweto, where further consultations took place.

Raised voices

A serious flaw in all these elaborate arrangements and the flow of information was the fact that delegates to the discussions had first sight of the documentation when they arrived at the seminars and consultation conferences and had little time to read, let alone absorb, their content. Nevertheless, they were expected to discuss and endorse them.

Doubts about the integrity of the process, already aroused by a heavy-handed government, were increased by this consultation sham – which looked impressive but had little impact.

Some of those who attended felt that they had raised their voices but they had not been heard. Among the more frequent criticisms were:

- ineffective public participation in policy-making and parliamentary consultative practices;
- as proportional representation made parliamentarians beholden to party lists and party leaders rather than constituencies their oversight was increasingly ineffective; and
- over-centralisation of government giving excessive powers to the president.

But the government has ignored those criticisms. A few weeks later Cosatu (Congress of SA Trade Unions) General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi commented in similar vein by saying SA's democracy was under threat or sliding towards dictatorship.

On 31 May the then head of the Government Communication and Information System, Joel Netshitenzhe, said the cabinet had "rejected suggestions that our democracy was under threat from such hoary tendencies as `marginalisation of parliament', 'centralisation of power in the presidency' and `a slide towards dictatorship'".

He said "false assertions of this kind are not only fulminations of the imagination, but also do not reflect the views of the majority of South Africans, as shown during the peer review process..."

This is a remarkable assertion following the many criticisms of centralised government at the ARPM meetings and especially as it was made while the self-assessment report is still being written and the country is months away from a peer review finding. It is highly revealing not only of what the government thinks should be the outcome of peer review but what SA's self-assessment will actually contain. Quite understandable, because, through the government-loaded ARPM governing council, the government will have the final say on what that report will contain.

It is unlikely that the public will be able to dispute the final self-assessment report because Fraser-Moleketi has said that there is no provision for the document to be published before it goes to the Country Review Mission; ignoring the fact that there is no rule preventing it from being published.

Netshitenzhe's statement has added to fears that the report will be watered down. Fraser-Moleketi said the intention was to reduce the submissions to five pages under each heading and it can be imagined how much will be left out if this occurs. People close to the process, however, believe that the large volume of material sent will result in each submission being closer to 30 to 40 pages[1].

Media indifference

Media indifference to this elaborate exercise has been surprising. Apart from the *Sunday Times*' Brendan Boyle's comprehensive reports on the discussions, most SA media gave them passing attention. Yet, despite the reservations that have arisen about the government's usage or manipulation of the process, here was a nation baring its soul, inviting – and getting – very pertinent and unvarnished comments on its conduct of affairs from politicians, institutions, academics, observers and analysts, and the public. It was a huge public accounting largely untainted by the excesses and point scoring of electioneering or political engagement, as has never happened before in South Africa, yet, apart from isolated journalists, few in the media paid attention.

The material is still available. All the representations, the reports of the technical service agencies, the transcripts of the painstakingly-recorded, public discussions and ancillary documentation has been archived at the Department of Public Service and Administration and can be accessed.

Here's an opportunity for the SA press to exercise its watchdog function over what finally emerges from the APRM by delving through that documentation and publishing what South Africans really think of themselves. ■

1 Watering down and omissions of important criticisms did, indeed, occur in the self assessment report before it was handed over to the Country Review Mission on July 12. Among the omissions were references to the need to neutralise Section 205 (reveal your sources) legislation to protect journalists, the moratorium on crime statistics and indeed references to the extent of crime, the Oilgate scandal, etc.

A country cannot stand up as a democracy practising good political governance unless it provides the appropriate legislative framework for a free and independent media and ensures that the authorities do not interfere with, or restrict, the media.

Dewesternising media

by Maria Way

In 2004 a group of people from the Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI) at the University of Westminster (London) started to talk about the possibility of a conference that would take a step into a different direction – Africa.

In view of the situation in Zimbabwe, the first conference focused on the Media in Zimbabwe and was held in 2005. So successful was this conference that CAMRI decided to begin a series of conferences and events and so we met again in March this year to debate "The Media and Social Change in Africa".

Presenters and participants came from many countries in Africa, the US, Canada and Europe. As well as academics, there were publishers, broadcasters and journalists and representatives of NGOs, the BBC and government departments. There was an extraordinarily wide range of themes: African film and broadcasting; media coverage of the Aids crisis (both in and outside Africa); music and literature; media training and professional practice; textual and visual analysis; freedom of speech and human rights.

As might be expected, the same comments came up again and again. There was particular emphasis on the tendency of Western media only to consider Africa in terms of political, ecological or humanitarian crises and disasters. Other recurring topics were the urban/rural divide and also the tendency to infantilise the African in media reporting.

Some presenters brought attention to problematics that are often ignored in the West, such as the poor pay and resource poverty of African journalists. The good news came in papers that demonstrated the success of media that have become indigenised – such as "Nollywood", the Nigerian film industry, and innovative radio programming which, as a result of cheaper and more useable technologies, is becoming increasingly important as a medium.

Those who participated at the conference were an interesting mix of people who were seeking information in regard to this new, developing, exciting academic field of study, together with those already working, researching or studying the area from a variety of angles.

Since the team was told repeatedly that this conference was both timely and successful, it has agreed to host another conference in 2007. Its likely title is: "The Media and Democracy in Africa". Selected papers from the 2006 conference will, it is hoped, be published in an edited book for which a publisher is being sought. CAMRI also announced that it would be bringing a new journal to birth: *The Journal of African Media Studies*. The first issue of this journal will be published in September 2006 and will contain some of the papers from the 2006 conference. ■

- For more information about the *Journal of African Media Studies*, or about future conferences and events in this African Media series, contact Dr Winston Mano by mail at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, School of Media, Arts and Design, the Harrow Campus of the University of Westminster, Harrow, Middx. HA1 3TP, or by email on manow@wmin.ac.uk.
- The next CAMRI conference "Internationalising Media Studies" will be on the 15th and 16th September in London. To attend contact Dr Mano or Professor Daya Thussu (thussud@wmin.ac.uk).

World's editors to meet in Cape Town

The 60th World Newspaper Congress and the 14th World Editors' Forum will be held for the first time in Africa from 3 – 6 June 2007, in Cape Town. The annual summit of the world's press will be hosted by the Newspaper Association of South Africa. Issues to be addressed will include challenges to press freedom, the impact of electronic media on newspaper sales and new technologies that will shape the newspaper of the future.

www.capetown2007.co.za

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Looking for a cure

by Bram Posthumus

In November 2005, the journalist Franck Ngyke Kangundu was assassinated together with his wife Hélène, at his home in the Congolese capital Kinshasa. The reasons for his murder have not yet been established but there are strong suggestions that his death may have something to do with the rather unorthodox way in which he carried out his profession.

To understand his case (and others), we need to return briefly to the era of the late dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. Back then, politico-financial interference in the media was the norm. The president gave money to people who could be trusted to toe his political party line. The beneficiaries were basically hired hacks. When Laurent-Désiré Kabila's troops ousted Mobutu in May 1997, this system remained in place. Before he was murdered and his son Joseph took over, the elder Kabila distributed a million dollars among media people he considered politically trustworthy.

Today, there is a proliferation of political parties and politicians. All need a newspaper, TV or radio station to represent their points of view. This would not be a problem if they simply took out advertising space and paid for it. But they continue to use journalists to put stories in the press or produce documentaries that damage the adversarial party or candidate. Journalists and editors continue to piggyback on whatever political change is taking place. Yesterday Mobutu, tomorrow someone else.

This is the kind of environment Kangundu, himself an old Mobutu follower, understood perfectly. He was a player in the field of sensitive political information, using his own newspaper (*La Référence Plus*) and others to publish stories that could be damaging to one faction, party or candidate.

On 15 September 2005 – in the midst of a strike of education staff – a newspaper called *Pool Malebo* published a story about an alleged $30-million presidential gift to schools in Tanzania. Four days later, Kangundu's newspaper published an anonymous refutation of this claim.

In a toxic political system and a journalistic environment where information is never double-checked, these are extremely serious matters. Subsequent local and international research has shown that Kangundu planted both articles, in an attempt to retain the currency he had gained within Kabila's party (he had become their press man) while staying close to the Mobutists he still knew. In the process, he crucially overestimated his own invulnerability and paid for this mistake with his life.

Similar things are happening constantly. In the last few months there has been a scandal about a televised documentary, featuring crimes against humanity committed in the Central African Republic by (vice president and presidential candidate) Jean-Pierre Bemba and his armed group.

The maker of this film, Kabeya Pindi Pasi, also head of the national association of journalists, disappeared, claiming death threats, then reappeared again. The case is under investigation, amid strong suggestions that the ruling party paid for and facilitated this political hatchet job.

There is also real repression going on. Try, for instance, covering stories about the pillaging of the Congo's natural resources by foreign companies with the connivance of local officials and politicians.

Bapuwa Mwamba did just that for another newspaper, associated with the opposition, *Le Phare*. He was murdered in a similar fashion to Kangundu, on 8 July.

Still, one must be careful to distinguish between journalists who are being threatened because they have been engaged in serious investigative work and those who have become the victims of their own political and strategic machinations.

Congo has no shortage of journalists who are committed to getting as close to the truth as possible, which is how they define their work. They have played a vital role in a recent research project, which was occasioned by the Kangundu and Kabeya cases. In the course of this project it became clear that if these cases were the symptoms; attention had to be re-focused towards diagnosing the disease.

The Congolese media are used in the dance for politically-profitable positions. Journalists, their editors and media owners take politically-motivated handouts to perform hatchet jobs on ➠

There is a proliferation of political parties and politicians. All need a newspaper, TV or radio station to represent their points of view.

Looking for a cure

One must distinguish between journalists who are threatened because they do serious investigative work and those who are victims of their own political machinations

➡ political rivals because they have no money to run their businesses independently. The result is that the credibility of most media outlets among the Congolese is close to zero.

These insights were the results of a sensible pooling of committed local journalists and two international colleagues (Evelyn Groenink and this author). All are linked to the Forum for African Investigative Reporters (FAIR).

To conduct investigative journalism in this fashion carries important advantages. First, it creates better output. Views held by local reporters are routinely ignored or only used as soundbites in the "omniscient" BBC, CNN coverage of events; this is a way around these international filters. Second, working jointly on one or more dossiers creates a place where colleagues meet, not one where donors and recipients act out the misleading drama of their Western-African "partnerships". Finally, it means a boost for those colleagues in the Democratic Republic of Congo who want to engage in serious journalism without having to sell their souls.

The Congolese media need clean money to get rid of the politico-financial interference. This is not available in sufficient quantities.

Government support is provided for by law but is, given the recent history, highly problematic.

International interventions carry problems too. First, their (mostly Western) perspectives may range from a complete lack of knowledge about the situation on the ground to anti-government or even anti-African prejudice.

Second, international finance creates well-run and affluent, but potentially arrogant and unsustainable, enclaves of journalistic excellence. People who are used to getting a salary up to 12 times the "market rate" will not return to that market rate once the Western bosses or donors pack up and go.

The creation of economically-viable and editorially-independent media businesses is the ideal but in the current climate this would mean that the Congolese media landscape becomes littered with twin Berlusconis: the editors and journalists plus the politicians whose bidding they do. In the meantime, the journalists who are working according to the rules of the profession need all the support they can get. ■

To read Posthumus' DRC dossier in French, go to:

- *www.niza.nl*
- *www.fairreporters.org*
- *Journalistes en Danger www.jed-congo.org*
- *Reporters Sans Frontières www.rsf.org*


Radio Maendeleo


Radio Maendeleo

Radio Maendeleo


Jolien Schure

Jolien Schure


Jolien Schure

Journaliste en Danger

Fighting for press freedom

by Geoffrey Chan and Natasha Kanjee

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), this war-ravaged Central African country that recently held its first elections in more than 40 years, a small but influential press freedom group is slowly planting the seeds of a culture in which freedom of the press may one day thrive.

Journaliste en danger (Journalist in Danger, JED) is a Kinshasa-based NGO that has become a leading defender of media freedom in the DRC and Central Africa since its founding in 1998.

It acts mainly as a watchdog in the region through the Organisation of Central African Media (OMAC), a network of monitors in nine countries who file reports on attacks against journalists. These alerts are distributed globally through the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), a worldwide network that re-distributes the information to an international audience numbering tens of thousands.

Through its links to IFEX and groups like the France-based Reporters Without Borders (RSF), the watchdog has successfully used international pressure to effect political change.

It demonstrated this to remarkable effect in March 2006, when a JED-RSF delegation met with President Joseph Kabila and won a pledge from the government to re-open an investigation into the murders of Franck Ngyke and his wife Helène Mpaka. Ngyke, a columnist for the newspaper *La Référence Plus*, and Mpaka were gunned down in Kinshasa in November 2005. A recent report by the Forum for African Investigative Reporters implicated the Congolese secret service in the murders.

Kabila also promised to have the murder case brought to trial prior to the 30 July elections. So far, three soldiers have been arrested and charged with the crime. Their trial began on 12 July.

JED says its appeals sent through the IFEX network have led to improved prison conditions for Congolese journalists or helped win them an early release from jail. Now, says JED's secretary general Tshivis Tshivuadi, "no case of an attack on the press can go unnoticed. People will know as soon as a journalist is imprisoned. And that pressure contributes enormously to getting them released."

Journalists in the DRC are frequently arrested, intimidated and physically assaulted for reporting the news. In 2005, JED recorded 108 press freedom violations in the country, of which 58 involved the jailing of journalists.

Two journalists – Ngyke and Bapuwa Mwamba – have been murdered in the past year for writing articles critical of government officials. And in the lead-up to the July elections, a spate of attacks on journalists and radio stations raised fears that a climate of intimidation was preventing voters from being adequately informed about the issues.

Aside from monitoring attacks on journalists, JED has been playing a key role in helping improve the quality of journalism in the country. In March 2006, JED held a workshop (sponsored by the Netherlands Institute of Southern Africa) to provide safety and ethics training to journalists. Noting that at least 60% of attacks against journalists stem from inaccurate and unprofessional reporting, JED believes that promoting higher professional standards will help build the credibility of the news profession and hopefully lead to fewer violations against the press.

JED also actively campaigns for legal reform to better protect freedom of expression. JED has been lobbying for access to information legislation that would guarantee journalists and the public the right to obtain government records. For the past year, JED has also been campaigning to change the country's media law, under which journalists can be jailed for press offences. JED has won a commitment from President Kabila to review the law and eliminate criminal offences. The organisation has offered to help draft a new bill to replace the current "Loi sur la presse".

Promoting and defending press freedom in a country as politically unstable as the DRC does not come without great risks. JED has often been the target of death threats and harassment because of its work. On more than one occasion, JED's president, Donat M'Baya Tshimanga, has been forced to flee the country.

Despite the climate of uncertainty and instability, however, JED remains a tenacious advocate for journalists. Its continuing presence in the country and its connections to international networks are ensuring that press freedom is an issue no elected official can afford to ignore. ■

L'assaut de l'ignorance électorale

par Kizito Mushizi

Radio Maendeleo

C'est de Bukavu que s'est ébranlée la suite de cinq 4x4 transportant à leur bord 16 personnes (journalistes, techniciens et autres acteurs de la société civile Congolaise), du matériel radio et quelque 30 kilos de documentation pour Baraka au sud, à plus de 200km : première destination de la caravane.

«Donnez-nous des livres»

90km séparent la cité d'Uvira du centre de Baraka. Là, dans les rues, la population est en général masculine. Beaucoup d'adultes et beaucoup d'enfants également. La jeune fille en âge scolaire est rare. «Elles ont dû fuir les viols et les exactions de milices; elles sont partis soit à Uvira et Bukavu chez des parents, soit en exil en Tanzanie», nous confie un habitant. Bukavu, capitale de la province du Sud-Kivu est une ville sans journal, Uvira aussi. Et l'on se dispute les dizaines de documents que les caravaniers ont pris avec eux pour disséminer pendant la tournée. Impossible de satisfaire la demande: des copies de la loi électorale, de la nouvelle constitution et même de la liste officielle des partis politiques agréés…rien du tout. Cette population n'avait jamais vu ni entendu parler de ça. Partout, les mêmes cris, les mêmes demandes: «mutupatie bitabu, mutupatie bitabu…(donnez-nous des livres)…». Et on donnait…

A Baraka-centre, la caravane a sorti le grand arsenal. A la Grand-place, en plein air, le public a participé à un débat ouvert sur les élections. Les techniciens ont rapidement installé la radio de la caravane (studio et émetteur), les journalistes ont informé, au micro, sur l'état du processus électoral au pays et dans la province. Puis le débat a été ouvert au public retransmis en direct par la radio. Du jamais vu.

C'est fantastique : «on discute élections en plein air, sur une radio qui porte loin et dans notre propre langue… Vous ne repartirez pas avec cette radio», nous ont prévenus, souriant, plusieurs paysans, «elle restera ici, car nous n'en avons pas une et nous en avons besoin». Leur voeu n'a pas été exaucé car le l endemain il fallait partir, travailler à Uvira et poursuivre la route beaucoup plus loin à Beni, à plus de 600 km.

L'insécurité couplée a l'ignorance

Mais les Kivu c'est aussi l'insécurité. La sécurité est loin d'être rétablie au Nord et au Sud-Kivu. La question revient sans cesse dans les débats, comme une hantise. Il y a des éléments de réponse, mais il n'y a pas de solution.

Kanyabayonga brille la nuit de ses centaines d'ampoules alimentées par de petits groupes électrogènes privés ou collectifs. Dans cette cité vivent plus de 1500 déplacés de récents troubles armés orchestrés par un général dissident. La radio Rurale de Kanyabayonga est une radio complètement équipée par le RATECO. Pendant le travail d'installation des équipements par l'équipe technique, les journalistes font des interviews avec la population et les chefs locaux. La population est convaincue que cet outil sera un puissant allié pour dénoncer l'insécurité et combattre l'ignorance.

Le pari est la

Le Congo organise là ses premières véritables élections générales depuis plus 40 ans. Elections géantes: un budget éléphantesque (400 millions de dollars US), un pays sans infrastructures de transport viable, plus de 25 millions d'électeurs, plus de 9.000 candidats aux 500 sièges de députés, une classe politique atypique et sans réelles assises idéologiques et populaires, la carte d'électeur la plus grande du monde et une population à plus de 60% analphabète et des questions de sécurité des citoyens non résolues. Face à cela, les congolais n'alignent que leur détermination et leur bonne foi. ■

Le RATECO est un réseau inter-provincial regroupant 23 radios communautaires à l'est de la RDC dans les provinces de Maniema, Nord et Sud-Kivu et Province Orientale dont Bunia et Kisangani. Il existe depuis 2003 et a son siège à Bukavu au Sud-Kivu.

The community radio caravan

From Bukavu, a convoy of five 4x4s, with 16 people (journalists, technicians and civil society activists), radio equipment and more than 30kg of documents travelled more than 200km to inform people in the eastern parts of the DRC about the elections. Kizito Mushizi reports.

Ninety kilometres separates the city of Uvira from the centre of Baraka. There, in the streets, the population is mostly male. Adults and children alike. School-age girls are rare: "They have fled the rape and extortion of the militias, they are hiding with their parents, they are in exile in Tanzania," we are told. Uvira, like Bukavu, is a city without a newspaper. The documents the caravan have brought along, the copies of the electoral act, of the new constitution, lists of parties and candidates, have never been seen, never been heard of by the people of this town. Everywhere we hear the same cries, the same demands: "*Mutapatie bitabu, mutapatie bitabu* (give us books, give us books)". And we do.

In the centre of Baraka we unload the gear. In the square, in the open air, there is an open debate on the elections. The journalists listen to the debate, and then retransmit it to the public. It's fantastic: "People are discussing the elections freely, in public, in their own language, we're not going to let you leave with your radio." We are prevented, smilingly, from leaving: "The radio station is staying, we don't have one, and we need it." They don't get their way, the next day we have to leave, with all our entourage, on the 600km journey to Beni.

But Kivu is also unstable. Security is far from being returned to Kivu. The question is constantly discussed, debated, returned to obsessively. There are responses, but there is no solution. Kanyabayonga lights up the night with hundreds of light bulbs fed by generators owned by collectives or individuals. In this city there are more than 1 500 people displaced by the recent violence. Kanyabayonga Rural Radio is completely equipped by RATECO. During the installation of the radio station, journalists spoke to the local population and their leaders: they are now convinced that the radio station can be a powerful ally in the fight against ignorance and instability.

In July the Democratic Republic of the Congo held its first democratic election in more than 40 years. It was a massive task: a budget of more than $400 million dollars, a country without transport or communications infrastructure, more than 25 million voters, more than 9 000 candidates in 500 electoral districts, a political class out of touch with the voters and without an ideological basis, the largest ballot paper in the world, an electorate of whom more than 60% are illiterate, and with the stability of the country in doubt. In the face of this, the Congolese have only their determination and their good faith on their side.

RATECO is an inter-provincial network of 23 community radio stations in the eastern DRC. It has been active since 2003 from its base in Bukavu.

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Le rôle des médias dans l'exploitation des ressources naturelles

par Jean Claude Katende

La République Démocratique du Congo renferme 50% des réserves mondiales de cobalt, 10% de cuivre; 30% de diamants, un potentiel en or, uranium, germanium, coltan, manganèse etc. Malgré l'existence de toutes ces ressources minières, ce pays a une population classée parmi les plus pauvres du monde.

Cet état de pauvreté résulte notamment de la mauvaise gestion de ses ressources naturelles par les dirigeants politiques, du pillage, de la fraude et des conflits armés liés directement ou indirectement à leur exploitation ainsi que de la législation en la matière qui ne prend pas en compte les intérêts des communautés locales. Il y a lieu de signaler que cette situation a été aggravée par le fait que, durant plusieurs années, la Société Civile et les medias ne s'étaient pas intéresses a l'exploitation desdites ressources naturelles.

Mais après la publication deux rapports du panel des experts des Nations Unies sur le pillage des ressources naturelles de la République Démocratique du Congo, dans la période de 2001 à 2004, la société civile et les medias ont manifeste subitement un intérêt pour participer a la lutte contre ce pillage.

C'est ainsi qu'au niveau de la Société Civile un atelier regroupant les organisations non gouvernementales de Kinshasa été organise, en juillet 2002, pour analyser les deux rapports précités. A l'issue de cet atelier, il a été décidé de l'organisation d'un atelier national portant sur la même question de pillage des ressources naturelles. Cet atelier national a été organisé du 09 au 10 mars 2003 et l'une de ses conclusions était la constitution du Réseau Ressources Naturelles, RRN en sigle, chargé de coordonner les actions de lobbying pour l'arrêt du pillage des ressources naturelles.

A ce niveau certains medias ont joué un rôle important en informant et en vulgarisant les deux rapports des Nations Unies et les actions du RRN auprès de la population. Ils ont dénoncé l'opacité, le manque de transparence, la fraude et le pillage qui caractérisent ce secteur. Ils ont commencé à sensibiliser les citoyens et les autorités aux questions liées à la bonne gouvernance. Ils ont organisé des émissions spéciales avec les acteurs de la société civile pour vulgariser les nouveaux codes minier et forestier.

Aux mois d'avril et de juillet 2006, ces medias ont encore joué un rôle important dans la vulgarisation auprès de la population des rapports publiés par deux organisations internationales sur l'exploitation minières dans la province du Katanga. Il s'agit du rapport intitule «l'Etat contre le peuple» des Fatal Transactions et une «Corruption profonde» de Global witness.

A l'issue d'un atelier organisé du 18 au 19 avril 2006 à Lubumbashi, avec l'appui de NiZA, sur «le rôle de la Société civile et des medias dans la gestions des ressources naturelles de la RDCongo», les professionnels des medias et les autres acteurs de la Société civile avaient pris l'engagement de travailler en collaboration pour une large éducation des populations sur le danger lie à la présence des enfants dans les mines, la dégradation de l'environnement et la responsabilité sociale des entreprises.

Ils jouent ainsi depuis un certain temps le rôle de chien de garde dans ce secteur.

Cependant et malgré les efforts qu'ils fournissent pour informer, sensibiliser et conscientiser les citoyens en rapport avec les questions des ressources naturelles, ces medias rencontrent beaucoup de difficultés, liées notamment à l'accès a l'information et au déficit en capacités professionnelles, techniques et économiques de beaucoup de journalistes. Un renforcement des capacités dans ces domaines leur permettrait de contribuer de manière significative à une exploitation responsable des ressources naturelles en RDC. ■

Stopping the plunder in the DRC

by Jean Claude Katende

The Democratic Republic of Congo holds 50% of the world's cobalt world reserves, 10% of the copper; 30% of the diamonds. It is potentially rich in gold, uranium, germanium, coltan, manganese etc…

In spite of these huge mineral resources, the country has a population classified among the poorest in the world.

This poverty is a result of the mismanagement of natural resources and poor political leadership of the country, of plundering, of fraud, and of the armed conflicts linked directly or indirectly to these resources. It is also a result of the mining regulation that doesn't take local communities' interests into consideration.

It is necessary to underline that this situation was also worsened by that fact that for many years, the civil society and the media have not been interested in the natural resources plundering phenomenon.

However, after the two UN reports on natural resources pillaging in the DRC between 2001 and 2004, civil society and the media started suddenly being interested in the efforts to fight against this evil.

Civil society organised a workshop in Kinshasa where many NGOs were invited to participate in 2002. The goal of the workshop was to analyse the two UN reports. At the end of the workshop it was decided to organise another national one to further debate the same issue. The national workshop took place from 9 to 10 March 2003, and one of its decisions was to create a Natural Resources Network, RRN, in short, that would co-ordinate lobbying actions to stop natural resources pillaging.

At this level some media organisations played an important role in informing the people about the two UN resolutions and to let people know about the actions of the RRN (Reseau des Resources Naturelles). Journalists used the opportunity to denounce lack of transparency, fraud and pillaging in this field. They started making the people and the authorities aware of the issues in relation to good governance. Radio and TV programmes were organised by the civil society organisations to inform people about the new mining and the forest regulations.

In April and July 2006, journalists once again played another important role in explaining and informing the population about the contents of the reports published by two international organisations concerning plundering by mines in Katanga province. The two organisations are Global Witness and NiZA (Nederluike Instituut voor Zuidelike Afrika). NiZA produced the report "The state vs the people: fatal transactions" and Global Witness' report was called "Deep Corruption".

At the workshop on "The role of civil society and the media in managing the DRC's natural resources" in April this year in Lubumbashi, and sponsored by NiZA, media workers and civil society activists agreed to collaborate widely in educating people about the danger and risks involved in using children in the mines, destroying the environment, and in informing people about social responsibility of the mining firms.

Since then they been actively playing the role of watchdogs in this field.

But in spite of the efforts they have been making to inform and educate people about natural resources issues, the media workers encounter many difficulties, related especially to access to information, to lack of professional capacity and technology. Their economic situation hinders them from doing good work.

Empowering them with the capacity they need would enable them to contribute significantly on the matter of the exploitation of the Congo's natural resources.

Rich history, uncertain future

The colonialists and missionaries introduced writing and printing to Africa but they realised fairly quickly that effective communication with and among Africans meant using local languages. But, says ***Abiodun Salawu****, today's media in Africa don't promote the use of African languages as much as they could.*

The governments in Africa must be more serious about the enhancement of our cultural heritage, of which language is the single most important factor.

The indigenous language press in Africa has a rich history. *Iwe Irohin Fun Awon Ara Egba ati Yoruba* was the first newspaper in Nigeria and the first indigenous-language newspaper in Africa. It started in 1859. And, in South Africa, among the earliest papers were *Imvo Zabatsundu* (1884) and *UmAfrika* (1888). *Imvo Zabatsundu* (Native Opinion) was a Xhosa paper which existed for 113 years until 1997.

The colonialists and missionaries introduced writing and printing to Africa but they realised fairly quickly that effective communication with and among Africans meant using local languages. Reverend Henry Townsend of the Anglican mission started *Iwe Irohin fun awon Ara Egba ati Yoruba* in 1859 to encourage the Egba and the Yoruba people to cultivate the habit of reading for the purpose of information acquisition.

Mtenga Watu, the first indigenous language newspaper in Malawi was founded by the Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) in 1895.

But in Kenya, it was the nationalist struggle which was responsible for the development of the indigenous language press in the country, with the establishment of *Muigwithania* in 1928.

The indigenous language press in Nigeria has been categorised into five 'waves'. *Iwe Irohin* stood on its own in the first wave (1859-67) while the second wave covers the period 1885-92 and featured two Efik papers, *Unwana Efik* and *Obukpon Efik* as well as a Yoruba paper, *Iwe Irohin Eko*. The third wave started with the founding of *Eko Akete* in 1922 and ended with the second and final death of the paper in 1937. The fourth wave began with the entry of *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo* (1937/38) and went on till Nigeria attained independence and republic status in the 60s. The rest of the development till the present time may be conveniently subsumed in the fifth and the last 'wave'.

Of all the newspapers in the first to the fourth 'waves', only *Iwe Irohin* (said to have reincarnated in *Iroyin Yoruba* in 1945) and *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo* still exist till today. *Gaskiya Tafi kwabo* ("Truth is worth more than a penny") was established by the quasi-official Gaskiya Corporation, which had an objective of promoting the development of literature in the northern part of Nigeria. Even most other indigenous language newspapers which had come after *Gaskiya* and *Iroyin Yoruba* had ceased to exist.

In 1930 in South Africa, there were 19 registered, African-language newspapers. Today, most of these newspapers are non-existent. The multilingual (isiXhosa, isiZulu, seSotho and English) newspaper *Inkundla ya Bantu*, edited by President Thabo Mbeki's father, Govan Mbeki, only existed for six years (1939 to 1944).

Leapnews, the newsletter of the Language in Education in Africa Project, reported that there used to be newspapers in 15 Ghanaian languages as recently as 1990s. Today, none of them is in existence.

The power of English

Problems facing indigenous-language media in Africa are a reflection of problems facing the languages of the continent in general. In most parts of Africa communication in indigenous languages has been adversely affected by the choice of the colonial language as the official language.

Indigenous languages are not highly esteemed and – for example in Nigeria – English and western education remain the vehicles of power and progress in life.

Samuel Uzochukwu, a retired professor of Igbo language, told the Nigerian *Guardian (*27 August 2004) that in Igbo land, English was being used in 85% of transactions; in Yoruba land, 75%, and in Hausa land, 37.5%.

Broadcast media

The situation is much better in the broadcast media. Radio stations, across Nigeria, for instance, have contributed to the promotion of the nation's languages. But the FM stations are almost exclusively for the English language. Most private television stations are heavily guilty of this. The Nigerian Broadcasting Commission is also not helping matters. Even though the commission stipulated a 60:40 ratio for local and foreign content of broadcast stations, it does not stipulate what percentage of local content should be in indigenous languages. So, if a programme is produced in English, but by Nigerians, it is still considered local content. This stance is not helpful to the development of the local languages. The broadcast media in Cross River and Akwa Ibom states of the country are no longer giving prominence to the local language known with that area, Efik. In a 2002 survey, out of a total of 7 560 minutes expended in broadcasting in the week, only a total of 425 minutes was allocated to the indigenous language, leaving a total of 7 135 minutes for programmes in English. This translates to 5.6% for local language and 94.4% for English.

Generally, however, the fact still remains that indigenous languages fare better in the broadcast media than in the print media, indicating that African culture still remains, largely, an oral culture. An interesting feature is the programme *Koko inu iwe irohin* ("Major highlights in the newspapers") in Yoruba which tells audiences of the news in the English-language newspapers every morning on Bond FM, in Lagos. It also used to be on Metro FM and Radio Nigeria 2, both also in Lagos. On all the stations, the programme is anchored by the same set of presenters. There is no doubt that the programme is well received and has attracted advertisers.

The presentation of the programme is laced with a heavy dose of humour and classical (excellent) use of the Yoruba language. The newspaper headlines as read out by the presenters (in Yoruba language) sound screaming and sensational. The presenters have a good grasp of the lore and traditions of the people. They are a delight to listen to.

Similarly, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, indigenous languages do well in the broadcast media, as compared with the print media. This is a country that one account credited with having more than 150 periodicals in indigenous languages during the colonial era. Whereas the indigenous language newspapers in the country (*Kimpagi*, *Beto na Beto*) are either dead or comatose, there is a growth of community radio stations throughout most of the country. And in Uganda state radio is mandated to broadcast in as many of the indigenous languages of the nation as possible. Thus, on Radio Uganda you can hear 27 languages (including English and Kiswahili). A study done on Cameroon's indigenous language media also noted that there is hardly a remarkable indigenous language press in the country. There has, on the contrary, been a "medium-shift" from indigenous language press to indigenous language broadcasting.

Some print successes

Not all is gloomy in the arena of print media. There are some relative success stories. Ethiopia is a case in point. Of the 125 newspapers in the country, 108 are in Amharic, two in Oromo and one in Tigre. Ethiopia is one of the three countries in Africa (with Tanzania and Somalia) where a local language is used as a medium of instruction to a high level and for official and administrative purposes.

Another success story is the publication of a daily Zulu newspaper in South Africa. The report has it that *Isolezwe*, launched in 2002, has even lured readers away from established English newspapers.

The emergence of *Alaroye* in 1996 marked a milestone in the affairs of Yoruba and, indeed, indigenous language press in Nigeria. Within a short time this newspaper became popular because of its arresting cover design and styles of headline-casting and story presentation. It popularised reading of Yoruba. It is the largest local language newspaper with a circulation of 150 000 a week. It sells in Europe and other West African countries where Yoruba is spoken. Its publishers, World Information Agents, have also added other Yoruba publications to their stable. They include: *Alaroye Magasini*, *Atoka Alaroye, Iriri Aye Alaroye* and *Akede Agbaye*.

The success of *Alaroye* and the frenzied political situation in the country before the return of democracy in 1999 triggered the emergence of other Yoruba publications: *Ajoro, Alaye, Ofe* and *Olooto*, just to mention a few. A number of them, however, were short-lived. *Kwayedza* is another success story in Zimbabwe. It has an 80 000 circulation figure and a readership of 121.4 readers per copy.

Encouraging indigenous communication

In order to encourage communication in African languages, the first step is to promote, vigorously, these languages through educational policy. The governments in Africa must be more serious about the enhancement of our cultural heritage, of which language is the single most important factor. In fact the African situation is, no different from other countries which have been colonized. The story, for instance, is the same in India. The only grace that the Indian indigenous language press has is that it enjoys subsidy from government; and this is what has been keeping it vibrant.

The promotion of a reading culture in African languages is a programme that should be pursued vigorously. Media campaigns should be mounted, among other things, while encouragement should be given to creative writing and publishing in ➡

African languages.

Public and private sectors, including media operators, should also come together to organise seminars and workshops where there can be cross fertilisation of ideas on how to improve the lot of media using African languages.

African linguists have an urgent task in producing glossaries of scientific and technological terminologies in African languages. These will aid journalists handling stories in areas that are scientific and technological.

Publishers of African language newspapers – government and private – should strive to make the newspapers easily available and affordable. Through this, the newspapers can serve the information needs of the people and become a familiar part of their lives.

Proprietors of African language media should make deliberate efforts to popularise and educate the public about their operations while journalists working in the media should be more aggressive in their information gathering.

Public and private sectors should also encourage the existence of African language media through advertisements/commercials and supplements in these media.

The various institutes and departments of journalism and media studies in Africa should also help in this crusade through admission policies and curricula. They should make a pass in an African language compulsory for candidates seeking admission into their programmes. And, in their curricula, they should make compulsory the taking of courses in an African language. ■

Abiodun Salawu is the editor of the recently-published book ***Indigenous Language Media in Africa.***

Cultivating a culture of reading

by Dumisani Ntshentshe

Bona is a uniquely South African magazine with a wide reach in all senses – it's distributed nationally (we have about two million readers) and it's also sold in Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mauritius.

It's celebrating its 50th birthday this year. It was founded in 1956 by the Hyman family and in 1964 incorporated South Africa's first black magazine, *Zonk!* founded in 1949.

We've stayed in touch with our readers and continued to flourish in the new, democratic South Africa. Our chief editor, Force Kashane, was a soccer player for Orlando Pirates and he is now a practising sangoma and the writer of our *muthi* column.

At first, *Bona* was published only in English, but a gap in the market was spotted so it was decided that the magazine would be translated into three major indigenous languages, isiXhosa, isiZulu and seSotho.

Bona was, and still is, a family magazine. This is a wide-ranging category that no longer exists in many overseas markets such as the UK, US and Australia. To produce the magazine successfully we must know who our readers are and we have to keep updating this by finding out where they stay, their incomes, their education, their hobbies, likes and dislikes. Readership surveys, letters from readers and readers' events such as our highly-successful *Bona* Empowerment Project all help us stay in touch, and this also helps us understand the type of language that our reader is most comfortable reading.

Our readership is fairly evenly split between males and females and most of our readers fall into the age group 16 to 35. Even at this age, the values and the environments they've grown up in make *Bona* readers highly family-orientated. They often have children of their own and their values are generally a bit more conservative. Often they've moved from rural areas into urban areas and they usually value their cultures and traditions highly.

They have lots of aspirations, especially for their children. The readers themselves may think some of their options are limited because often they aren't highly educated, but they like *Bona* because our articles are about people like them who have achieved great things, or they get advice on how to empower themselves.

Our readers' average income is about R3 500 a month but a fair proportion are not formally employed. This is another reason why articles on business opportunities and empowerment are so important to them. From the feedback we get they are also keen to know as much as possible about consumer rights and managing their finances.

They make time for fun in their lives too, so we make space for it as well. Both male and female readers are keen and well-informed sports fans. Popular music (kwaito, R&B, gospel, jazz and hiphop), watching TV, radio and, of course, churchgoing, are other important interests.

To keep costs low we keep the cover price low by not using full-colour except on the cover. We also use exactly the same layouts for every different language edition. The type is run in black – called a black plate exchange – and so, for example, to change from the isiXhosa run to the seSotho run, the printers swop only one of the three-range cylinders on which the magazine is printed. This means instead of using up to 40 cylinders per section, we only use a grand total of 56.

There are many challenges in the production of *Bona* in four languages. Everything we do in production as translators depends on the fact that articles must fit into the same space in each language, giving the same information with the same impact. Once the editor has chosen the themes for new articles, whether they're assigned to staff or freelancers, they all start where *Bona* itself started – in English. That is the base working language of most of our texts (although letters, the legal advice column and the *muthi* column are in vernacular).

We also have to remember that many of our second-language English speaker readers prefer to buy the English-language edition in order to improve their English. That means the English must be clear and our contributing writers are instructed to write without frills and word play.

In translation, of the three vernacular languages, isiXhosa poses the biggest problem in terms of space. This causes frustration for our translators as they feel their creativity is hampered because they cannot play around with words. There are two of us in each language department, so of course, we check each other's translations. Especially when dealing with technical matters, such as medical or financial ssues, writers and subeditors work to make sure the language is as clear and simple as possible while still being enjoyable to read. Our translators must also ensure that the translated text has the same impact as the original English text, and must be accurate and precise. Sometimes they work together with the writer and subeditor to achieve this.

Translators have to be widely knowledgeable and culturally-aware. In general, *Bona* is careful to cover issues of interest to all our cultures and tries to avoid favouring one more than others. We also have to work with an awareness of dialects and township lingo, keeping up with the times is important, and not only technologically. African languages are developing new terminology and we keep ourselves abreast of these developments by sending our translators to workshops.

Translators and interpreters of various languages of this country are the wheels of development and proper presentation of our languages. Their involvement in renaming and new terminology is crucial if it is to get to the people it is designed for. Our Sotho department particularly battles to find good working dictionaries, especially in spheres of terminology relating to technology, medicine and politics. At times we are forced to use words borrowed from other languages.

We are still fighting against the odds, even in this post-apartheid era where previously marginalised languages are now accorded the same status as English and Afrikaans. One of the biggest challenges that needs urgent attention is instilling a sense of pride in our languages among our youth.

The next challenge is cultivating the culture of reading in indigenous languages in these young people, which seems to be fading with the school system and TV. School children converse and play in English to the detriment of their mother tongues. When we interact with them in workshops and forums organised by *Bona* they tell us they prefer the English edition because the other versions are difficult to understand and "boring".

Despite these challenges we are interested in the possibility of adding more languages to our publication range. We are also looking at introducing short stories as a platform for aspiring young writers. ■

The diaspora to the

The Post's collaboration between the hard copy as content provider and its US-based site owners as administrator, demonstrates an alternative (even if unconventional) model of publishing online.

by Lilian Ndangam

Despite the proliferation of African newspapers online, many newsrooms around the continent still grapple with some difficult questions: How does a newspaper with no access to a computer linked to a modem create and maintain a website? Why and how do you start publishing online when the print run of your hard copy ranges between 3 000 and 4 000, and your target audience is an urban-based, literate minority? In fact, why bother with online publishing in a country where computer ownership is very low and few people have regular access to the Internet?

Enthusiastic about going online, yet challenged by these questions, Cameroon's *The Post* – a private bi-weekly, English-language newspaper with a print run of 4 000, found one answer: the Cameroonian Diaspora.

Says Charlie Ndi Chia, editor-in-chief: "All along we knew about the necessity of going online. But, somehow, we were criminally reluctant. We were dragging our feet. We got accosted by Cameroonians especially those of them in the diaspora. They were asking 'every now and again, we get to pick up one copy of *The Post* or the other. Why don't you go online so that we can, through you, know what is happening back home. Somewhere along the line some Samaritans came to the rescue and set up this website for us. I think before they did it, we set up one which failed. Somewhere along the line these guys came and we had free lunch more or less."

The Post has a staff of 20 and 18 stringers around the country. Its head office in Buea is equipped with four computers which are not connected to the Internet: two in the production room, and one each in the newsroom and the managing editor's office. However, the newspaper shares its offices with a cyber café and this enables staff to access the Internet frequently.

The paper's first venture into online publishing with www.thepostnewspaper.org in early 2004 was short-lived. The site hosted by a Paris-based Internet service provider was designed and edited by Clovis Atatah, a staff reporter with basic skills in website design and based in Yaounde, the nation's capital. Design flaws such as inconsistent colour and navigational schemes, the use of large graphic files that took long to load, a lack of consistency between pages, and a poor mixture of graphics and text, as well as the difficulty of coordinating between the newspaper's head office and the web editor in Yaounde, meant the site was updated irregularly. As a result, the site closed down. However, in its short lifespan, it had developed a loyal audience among Anglophone Cameroonian emigrants.

Enter the diasporans

Later in 2004, two US-based Cameroonians in the process of creating a multimedia and publishing company for Cameroonian artists and authors who have little or no opportunity to expose their works to a global audience, came to the rescue. Dibussi Tande, who with Emil Mondoa founded Jimbi Media, says: "We realised that we could use weblog technology to quickly create websites that could easily be updated even by people with absolutely no knowledge of web design. We therefore decided that the first phase of the project would be the creation of professionally designed weblogs for selected members of our target audience. Since we happen to be news junkies and were thoroughly disappointed with the initial *Post* website, our first target was *The Post*."

After contacting the paper with their proposal, www.postnewsline.com was launched in August 2004 as 'an interactive feature of *The Post* newspaper' with Chicago-based information systems analyst Tande and Delaware-based medical doctor Mondoa serving as site administrator and designer respectively.

The website uses TypePad – a technically unsophisticated weblog software that facilitates interactivity between the site and its users. The simplicity of the software means anyone with basic computer literacy skills can use it. Thus, staff at the paper are able to load content on the site easily.

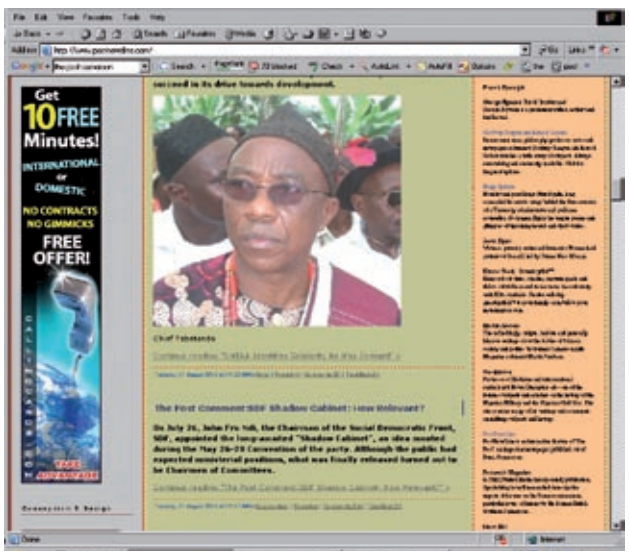
The result is a relationship of mutual dependency where the newspaper benefits from the expertise of its audience to maintain an online presence, while the ready availability of news online ensures that the diasporic audience has frequent access to news from home. Indeed, a visitor locator map introduced on the www.postnewsline.com in January 2006 to track and cluster its users' geographic location based on ISP addresses, points to a significantly large amount of traffic from North America, Europe and Asia.

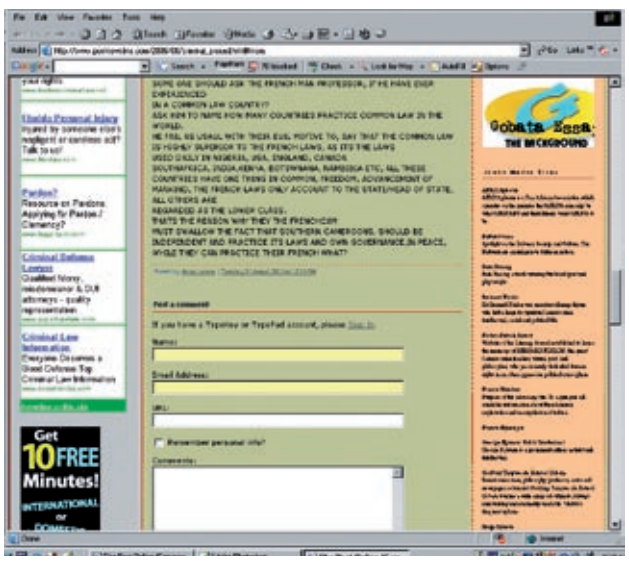
Further examination of aspects of this model of online publishing illustrates how the decision to go online, and the online target audience, are respectively transforming the news production process and the organisation of the newsroom.

Organisation

The website functions through a co-ordination between the newspaper's website co-ordinator (a staff reporter) in Cameroon and the website owners in the US. The website co-ordinator uploads stories on the website the evening the paper goes to print or on the morning the paper is available on news stands. Once news stories are loaded they are ready for public consumption. Despite the six- to seven-hour time differences between Cameroon and the US, the site's Chicago-based owner accesses the site almost daily to "perform routine administrative, technical and other tasks" such as rearranging pictures, checking layouts on stories and updating the site with other relevant stories culled from the Internet. Significant news events are sometimes published and updated online before the print edition. For example, the strike by students at the University of Buea (April/May 2005), the death of a prominent Anglophone politician and human rights activist, Albert Mukong (August 2004), the collapse of the Mungo Bridge (August 2004) and the cabinet reshuffle of December 2004. Having an online

rescue





The skills of the Cameroonian diasporic community are being appropriated towards the homeland particularly in the face of poor infrastructure and a lack of skills in website development.

presence has also enhanced the paper's visibility through news exchange and distribution mechanisms such as *allafrica.com*.

Editorial decision making

The hardcopy of the paper remains the focus of editorial decisions. However, with the website managed externally, lines of authority in the editorial decision-making process can easily become blurred: "Being print media guys who are working for a bi-weekly paper, *The Post* team is having a hard time grasping the concept of real time news. Thus, even when a major event (eg a cabinet reshuffle) happens a day or two before the print issue comes out, they sit on that story until after the print issue hits the street, before updating the site. In such situations, therefore, Dr Mondoa or I usually update the site with the breaking news in real time," says Tande.

In January 2005 one of the site's owners uploaded a story on the website which had not been commissioned or written by anyone at *The Post*. Two stories (one with no byline and another with the author's name withheld) on corruption at the Douala seaport were loaded on the site – an action which was explained by Tande as follows: "In December/January, 2004/5, the entire *Post* staff took its end-of-year vacation and the site was not updated from Cameroon for about five weeks. While it was not obvious to the team back in Cameroon, we realised that such long silence had the potential of creating a disgruntled readership in the long run. So we did what we could during that period to post relevant Cameroonian stories from news agencies such as AFP and Reuters, including a special report on corruption at the Douala Port which originated on Camnet."

Gatekeeping and the use of feedback

Targeting the Cameroonian diasporic audience has introduced an additional level of gatekeeping at the newspaper. Stories for the paper's website are specifically selected for their quality and edited before being loaded on the site. "We do the normal edition and then we pick up strong, relevant information – relevant to the taste of our online audience – and reduce it to the stories. It is the same menu. The only thing that we might do slightly is to clean up, the sheet, as it were from the typos," says editor-in-chief Ndi Chia.

Like most weblogs, a comments section accompanies each story on www.postnewsline.com. Readers' comments are valued by the newspaper and are frequently published in the hard copy even though letters sent to the hard copy are not featured on the website. However, the use of anonymity by most users of the website and the inability to monitor comments before they appear on the site (ie: in a similar way in which 'letters to the editor' are edited before appearing in the hard copy of the newspaper), presents a challenge to the current model. During the 2005 university student strike, *The Post's* coverage elicited an unusually high amount of feedback from its online readers. The US-based administrators temporarily suspended the comments feature after the volume of comments and the increasing resort to personal attacks and insults by some users overwhelmed it. The feature was subsequently restored with additional security measures requiring readers to register through an online authentication service before posting comments.

Advertising revenue

The site owners introduced advertising in October 2004. The advertisements dominantly target a North American-based readership. Products advertised range from phone cards to diet pills and include American service companies. In addition, readers are encouraged to make voluntary contributions to sustain the site. The newspaper's own attempt to generate income through advertising has so far been unsuccessful owing to inadequate expertise in advertising sales and the absence of credit business in the country. Given the target audience of the online edition, Ndi Chia concludes that "the volume of advertisement on that site is very likely for a long time to be dependent on the diaspora, ie: foreign advertisers. Cameroonian advertisers? I do not know how many people in this country go on that website".

Diaspora and the digital divide

Anthony Olorunnisola has proposed that African media and content providers can enhance their presence online by targeting a ready audience of African emigrant communities in the diaspora. Considering the growing size of the African diaspora in North America and Europe, Olorunnisola's proposal seems reasonable. The number of Africans who emigrated from the continent increased dramatically in the 1990s. In 2000, the US Census Bureau's statistics on the country's foreign-born population indicated that there were close to one million African immigrants in the United States. More than half of these arrived between 1990 and 2000.

To meet their various information needs, diasporic communities have operated small newspapers, magazines and broadcast media. Internet radio stations such as www.radiopalmwine.com and the UK-licensed www.voiceofafricaradio.com provide news and entertainment to African diasporic communities in the US and UK respectively. Besides, the ready access to personal computers and connection to the Internet among migrant communities has facilitated the establishment of what researchers describe as "virtual national communities" and "online social networks" within the African diaspora. Listservs, and electronic discussions groups such as *Naijanet* (Nigerians) *Naijapolitics* (Nigerians) *Camnetwork* (Cameroonians), *AfricaPolitics* (Africans in general) and other interactive websites, serve as a means of engaging with compatriots living in the same country or elsewhere.

The Post's collaboration between the hard copy as content provider and its US-based site owners as administrator, demonstrates an alternative (even if unconventional) model of publishing online. It simultaneously illustrates how the skills of the Cameroonian diasporic community are being appropriated towards the homeland particularly in the face of poor infrastructure and a lack of skills in website development. Certainly, the constitution of the Digital Diaspora Network for Africa (DDN-A) during the WSIS process as a platform to mobilise the African diaspora's technological, entrepreneurial and professional expertise and resources in bridging the digital divide epitomises recognition for this form of engagement between the African diasporic community and the homeland. ■

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What was at stake in the

Succession secrecy

by Anton Harber

A year ago, it seemed as if the presidential succession would be decided in smoke-filled rooms behind closed doors by the party elders, much the way the ANC had previously done it, particularly in the choice of a successor to Mandela. There would be no popular expression, little public debate about the kind of leader wanted and needed. What would emerge would likely be a compromise between competing factions within the party, someone whose first role was to keep the different elements of this broad church singing together, and it would be played out by and large, away from the public eye. It was the way of a secure and comfortable broad-based liberation movement, relatively immune from popular and populist pressures outside of election time.

Essentially, President Mbeki would anoint a successor and, unless someone had the nerve to stand up to this process, which seemed most unlikely, that chosen successor would assume office smoothly and be forever in hock to a relatively young and active ex-president who would no doubt play a crucial behind-the-scenes role. It was not a healthy or desirable scenario but political and media critics could do little more than murmur about it.

Largely, as a result of the Zuma trial and the events around it, that scenario has fallen away with unexpected speed. The succession battle, and all the critical issues which surround it, has been thrown wide open to public debate and is no longer under the strict and easy control of the party bosses. Most importantly, the ideological issues which lurk beneath the surface of this battle, the fight for control of the party between the conservative centre and the populist left, is being canvassed in our media on a daily basis, with Cosatu (Congress of SA Trade Unions) and the SACP (SA Communist Party) leading a charge to ensure that the ANC does not slip back into its old ways.

A year ago, we were securely on a journey towards an imperial presidency, with more and more power influence residing in that office at the expense of Parliament, the Section 9 institutions, the judiciary and others. That seemed immutable. Today, Mbeki has significantly less authority than he had even a few months ago (such as when he dismissed Zuma from his cabinet, to national and international acclaim) and there is growing suspicion that to be anointed his choice of successor is one way to ensure that you do not get the job.

This does not mean one can write off Mbeki, as he still has the power of his office, and a formidable political wiliness, but it does mean that he is on the back foot, probably for the first time in his presidency.

The Zuma trial tested all sorts of important South African institutions, the presidency, the courts, the police and the prosecuting authorities – and no less the media. Of course, it did this in the way any such court case would – testing the capacity of the media to cover the case consistently and accurately, trying to treat both the complainant and the accused with fairness, and conveying a complex story in a few hundred words or a few minutes of airtime a day. Court cases are always difficult, as they swing one way today and another tomorrow – a good witness today is torn apart the next day. So much more so when one has to cover the outside of the court, and a case with such wide-ranging implications.

What was at stake for the media in this case was, however, much wider than this. And I would define it this way: could the media play its role in throwing open to the wider public the debates which emerged from the trial: issues of justice, of gender and of leadership. A critical factor in the shift which I have described towards an open, competitive, public succession process is the role the media has played in prising open these doors, throwing the gallery open to the public, and ignoring the attempts by the ANC to close them again.

I am on record as saying that I do not believe the media as a whole did as badly as some people have suggested. I think, in fact, that though there were lapses, there were reasonable pockets of coverage that were good at giving us a feeling for what was going on in court and outside it, and, particularly towards the end of the trial, teasing out the implications for gender, ethnic and national politics. This, I think, improved considerably towards the end of the trial, as one might expect it to.

If there is a debate now around these critical issues, it is because the media has thrust them forward in the coverage of the trial and thereafter.

It is true that most newspapers, given the interests they represent, are ranged against Zuma. An interesting aspect of our media coverage is that the new tabloids – given as they are to naked and ruthless populism in their news choices – have not tuned into the political populism of a Zuma. They remain largely away from the political fray, arguing that their readers are interested in more immediate issues than Zuma's fate. But watch this space – a critical moment in our media and in our national politics, will come when the tabloids discover the political element in their current brand of populism.

One notable exception to the quality of coverage, I think, was the SABC. The SABC kept to the strictest and narrowest parameters of dry, daily reporting, failing to break news stories, or, by and large, to take the major issues forward in discussions, features, analysis or any of the other techniques open to broadcasters. I think the thinness of their coverage, and the more recent controversy over the failure to run a two-part series on Mbeki, is less a sign of outright evil, or political control, as some are suggesting, and more a sign of incompetence, lack of direction and failure of leadership – they don't know how to deal with difficult political issues and keep getting themselves into trouble as a result. I don't see crude political control, but I do see a broadcaster flailing around, uncertain of its role and its identity. ■

Masimba Sasa: Market Photo Workshop

Lerato Maduna: Market Photo Workshop

Zuma trial?

The Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research held a debate on the wider implications of the Zuma rape trial, here are three points of view...

Tradition/modernity

by Irma du Plessis

In the last couple of months we have seen frank, exciting and vibrant public debate in the country. From the gravity of the crisis, beyond the important personal tragedies and injustices suffered, was born also a new sense of political engagement and energy. It has become a moment for advocacy, strategy, and intervention in which a need for some form of partisanship seemed central.

But I think this has proved to be a risky enterprise indeed. And, ironically, I see this risk as emanating from the very conditions that made it possible for such a large number of voices to speak truth to power, that is, the immediate political crisis. The focus on facing up to the real possibility of Zuma in power, and considerations about how best to partake in and shape current debates, may have the unintended consequence of limiting the way in which we imagine the future and make sense of the challenges we're facing, by locking us into a false opposition.

I am referring here to a debate broadly set up around the tradition/modernity divide. Simply put, I'm talking about a dominant account about Zuma's backwardness. The content being: Zuma is a polygamist, a loose cannon, he didn't finish school, he is a sexist, if not a rapist, he is avowedly patriarchal, he is charismatic; he is also uninformed, ignorant or plain stupid, he appeals to deep rural sensibilities, he is superstitious, he is someone who dares to speak Zulu in public; he flaunts Zuluness and he is not afraid to play the ethnic card. This figure is then contrasted with the sophisticated, market-savvy, British-trained, urbane, worldly and cosmopolitan leader found in the persona of Thabo Mbeki.

Framing this analysis is a question about the presidency: what kind of person should become the next president of the ANC and the country. Backward or sophisticated? But this kind of analysis is also invested in a specific political outcome. It is an intervention, a normative judgement, that provides part of the answer as it states the question: Zuma it cannot be!

The problem is that the debate capitalises notions of Culture, Tradition and Ethnicity. We are safest, it seems, if culture, ethnicity, language, and tradition are kept in Pandora's box. But this kind of binary thinking does not differentiate between softer and harder practices of tradition and culture. It does not recognise that many of the characteristics pinned to Zuma and his supporters are in fact far more widely shared across class and social location. It does not recognise that more than a decade after democracy there must be a space in this society for speaking languages other than English without that amounting to playing up ethnicity, buying into a discourse of victimhood or demonstrating anti-modern sentiments. It does not take account of the fact that ordinary South Africans want to recognise themselves in the state.

In the process, the tradition/modernity divide shifts the debate away from issues critical to our political future. It leaves little room for challenging, productive and important discussions about culture, ethnicity, and tradition and their role and place in the society we are making and shaping.

The strong affirmation of ethnicity is a spectre that haunts us. We do not want to become a Rwanda. But the Zuma trial has produced a false opposition: a choice between modernity and tradition, between being cosmopolitan or parochial. It is a false opposition on two counts: both in terms of what choices we have for president and the kinds of sensibilities and debates required to mend the social fabric and produce a society that is both outward looking and locally grounded. ■

Shabba Kgotlaetsho: Market Photo Workshop

Gender sensitivity

by Tawana Kupe

In their reporting, the media that reaches the large majority of ordinary people feed into and feed out of interpretative frameworks about everyday life, which are deeply disturbing in that they do not necessarily question gender-based violence and sexual stereotypes and representations.

Some sections of the media, which reach the elites, framed the trial in a restrained, dignified and ethical manner which, while revealing the essence of the claims of the accused and the accuser, did not emphasise sordid details which do not help the public understand the evidence.

The public interest in this trial is that the media, through balanced information and analysis, help the public to understand the evidence of these serious allegations. What some sections of the public might be interested in is graphic details of sexual acts. It is not the news media's business to indulge such interest and especially if it is at the expense of failing to focus on the core of what is a most serious matter.

The ANC needs to ask itself why supporters of its deputy president – some of whom are party members – still exhibit publicly attitudes and prejudices that are inimical to the party's progressive views of gender equality and the treatment of women. Has the party done enough to ensure that its members actually believe in gender equality and will defend it in all circumstances, even if they might hold a view that one of their own has been falsely accused? What are its gender-sensitisation programmes and how effective are they?

It is not enough for the party to say that it has strongly condemned and censured those supporters who behaved violently outside the court.

The media need to be asking the ANC these questions and not just focusing on "MaMkhize", the apparent leader of the Zuma supporters outside the court. Further, the media need to be asking questions about why women would be at the forefront of victimising an alleged victim who is also a woman. It would appear, at least in this case, that some women are the 'patriarchal policemen' on behalf of men.

If the media asked these questions and probed these issues it would reveal the extent to which a gender-sensitive consciousness has not developed among our people.

The question also arises whether the media has done enough to probe whether the constitutional values of gender equality guide the actions of ordinary people and are not just lofty principles without a relationship to everyday life.

Gender-conscious parliamentarians need to account for why they have not taken the route of a private member's bill or fast tracked the Sexual Offences Bill to ensure that the courts try rape cases in ways that are consistent with constitutional values of gender equality and sensitivity.

As some have noted, if the Sexual Offences Bill had been passed, Zuma's lawyer would have been prevented from using retrogressive patriarchal ideas about consent in sexual matters and dress codes as a defence, and from questioning the accuser in ways that suggest she was asking for it.

The more all these institutions delay the changes to the law the longer women will take to enjoy hard-won benefits flowing from decades of struggle. ■

Taking children seriously

by Firdoze Bulbulia

International festivals, conferences and other events for children's television and other media have emerged as powerful sites of social activism, raising the visibility of media for and by children, and generating global networks of producers with a shared commitment to quality programming that reflects and responds to children's lives. In recent years these international events have become much more than a showcase of fine work. The committees that determine their agendas have shifted their focus towards global exchange, local empowerment and children's participation, encouraging dialogue between policy-makers, television producers, researchers, and children themselves.

In March 2007, South Africa will host the 5th World Summit on Media for Children around the theme "Media as a Tool for Global Peace and Democracy".

To mark the summit's debut in Africa, it will showcase the diversity of Africa's media environment, but will also highlight global interconnectedness, relying on the South African concept *ubuntu* – "I am because you are" – to feature global needs, and to collectively explore possibilities. The summit's objective is to ensure that the multiplicity of children's voices are heard.

The agenda for the 2007 summit will include round tables, workshops, panels, master classes, plenary sessions, exhibitions and an international children's summit, building on the lessons learned from the adolescent's forum held at the 2004 summit in Brazil. Issues will be raised such as: the globalisation of children's media, children's access in the information society, children's media rights, investing in children's media, comparative regulatory approaches, the role of content providers, children and media in war and conflict, health, HIV/Aids and its impact on children's media, south-south partnerships, training for adult and youth producers of children's media, and how children participate meaningfully in the creation of their own media.

The expected outcomes will include research initiatives and production projects designed to amplify unique children's voices and cultures, through media created locally and shared globally.

The manifold issues to be discussed call for a varied and professional attendance including policy makers, regulators, children's rights organizations, producers, film makers, radio specialists, researchers, academics, Internet service providers, web designers, new technology specialists, content developers of traditional and new media platforms, cultural studies specialists, commercial as well as public broadcasters, and children from around the world.

The world summit movement was initiated by Dr Patricia Edgar in May 1993 when she presented the idea to a meeting hosted by the Prix Jeunesse festival in Munich. It was clear at that time that children's programming was rapidly changing, and that the increasingly globalised nature of broadcasting meant that children's programming considerations could not remain a purely domestic issue.

World summits have been held every three years and bring together producers, broadcasters, researchers, and regulators of media for children and other professionals and community leaders.

Unlike the Prix Jeunesse Festival and Japan Prize (started in 1965 by NHK, the Japanese public broadcaster), each summit is hosted by a different country. Regional and world summits have continued since the first world summit in Australia (1995), including world summits in England (1998), Greece (2001), and Brazil (2004), and regional summits in Asia (1996), and Africa (1997, 2000).

The multiple global perspectives and the three-year break between summits allow for a flexible and open perspective on central media outlets and topics that are relevant to children. While the first summit focused primarily on television, subsequent summits have included radio, Internet content, and youth-produced video.

The summit movement's goals are: to raise the status of children's programming; to emphasise to key players in broadcasting the importance of issues relating to children; to achieve a greater understanding of developments in children's television around the world; to promote a charter of guiding principles in children's television; to ensure that the provision of programmes for children will be guaranteed as the communications revolution proceeds; and to assist the developing world by providing opportunities for quality children's programming in the future. ■

International events dealing with children's media

- ED-MEDIA: World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia, and Telecommunications
  www.aace.org/conf/edmedia/default.htm
- Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) National Conference
  e-Merging Realities: Youth/Media/Education
  www.atomconference2006.com
- International Communications Association (ICA) division on instructional and developmental communication
  www.icahdq.org
- International Conference for Interaction Design and Children
  www.cs.uta.fi/idc2006/index.html
- International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television (IZI)
  www.br-online.de/jugend/izi/english/home.htm
- Japan Prize International Educational Program Contest
  www.nhk.or.jp/jp-prize/index_e.html
- Kidscreen Summit
  www.kidscreensummit.com
- Prix Jeunesse International
  www.prixjeunesse.de
- World Summit on Media for Children
  www.childrensmediasummit.com
- Youth Media Development Forum
  www.plan-international.org/wherewework/westafrica/youthforum/

by Maimouna Mills

Blowing a trumpet

If it weren't for former US Vice-President Al Gore or my Senegalese cousin who claims to have invented the Internet, I wouldn't know that SA's former Vice President Zuma was charged with rape, that Nigerian Vice President Atiku was about to be evicted from his party, that former Prime Minister Seck was still in jail in Senegal. Yet, these and a host of untold stories are shaping and defining the history of our continent, the lives of our people.

I wouldn't know any of that because from where I stand – or sit – (in Washington DC) there is absolutely no network which encapsulates the richness, the diversity, the amazing evolution and revolutions and the trials, miseries and triumphs of Africa. If I were to sit or stand on African shores, I could get more information, bits and pieces of it, that is, culling different sources. But I couldn't, with a click of a button, and within half an hour (as I could on CNN, the BBC or Al Jazeera), get constant updates of news across this vast motherland.

And yet, since the heady days of Amadou Mactar Mbow at the helm of Unesco, Africans have dreamt, debated, devised and attempted to implement a New World Information Order. A brave new world which would end the Western monopoly on information gathering and distribution, a brave new world in which the news would no longer be filtered in the North and trickle back to the South, a brave new world in which Africans would tell their stories, frame them with their own voices, their own lenses, their own sensitivities, their own experiences and their own knowledge.

At a time when the concept of globalisation is expanding without defined parameters, this decades' long struggle should not be viewed as African militant fervour. It should be reaffirmed with a keen understanding of the same political and economic consequences of the ever-growing power of the media. I always like to tell people in Washington – and frankly anyone who cares to listen – that Africa is the last frontier when it comes to economic development, business and investments. On average, Africa yields 46% return on investment. With all the real and exaggerated risks of doing business in Nigeria – the stock exchange there (I did a story on the floor of the Lagos Stock Exchange and an interview with its head in 2002) at that time yielded more than a 120% return. And its director general is a woman, I think only one of three in the world. For African people in the diaspora who are either seeking to return home, invest back, lure investors, serve as advisors to Western firms or as lobbyists for African governments, these stories are news to share. These are trumpets to be blown around the continent. These will help debunk the myths of the hopeless continent, the heart of darkness, the proverbial black hole. It will restore the confidence of not just foreign investors, but of the throngs of African investors, bankers, equity analysts, economists, lawyers, doctors, scientists and engineers who work and live outside Africa, but want to go back or at least contribute to the continent's progress from wherever they are.

Concerning the latter groups – scientists and engineers – again in 2002, when researching a story on reversing the brain drain, I came across a *Financial Times* article which stated that there are more African scientists and engineers working in Western countries than in Africa. Not only do they work, they excel. Examples abound like that of Malian Modibo Keita at Nasa. And they have stories to tell, expertise to share.

Before coming to Nairobi, I spoke to a number of Africans in the United States about the concept of an African Television Network. They were unanimous in applauding the initiative, supporting it and yearning to share their knowledge-based skills with the vast audience which the network would provide. Economists at the World Bank and the IMF want to explain macro-economic policies and structural adjustment reforms. Agricultural and rural experts want to develop the rationale for boreholes, catchment areas, dams and agricultural extension projects. High-level diplomats at the UN Department of Political Affairs want to shed light on MONUC operations in Congo and the UN's overall engagement just a few months before historic elections in the DRC. They all understand that such a platform doesn't come cheap. It necessitates political will, but without political interference from our governments. It necessitates corporate engagement and commitment, but without corporations dictating content or withdrawing support at whim. It necessitates openness and constructive, healthy dialogues with the journalists when the story is fully told, all aspects covered, even those which are not flattering to the individual profiled or the institution represented.

They understand, Africa and Africans need a new paradigm in journalism. One totally devoid of sensationalism and parachute reporting but also one freed of polyannish idealism and romanticism. They understand, and I hope the new network will fully and immediately embrace the new technologies so that whether they are travelling in Africa, or sitting in their offices or homes in Washington, New York, Atlanta or Los Angeles, they can watch, access comprehensive news, factual data, stock quotes, newsmakers interviews and all of the trustworthy and convincing information to be featured in our new network.

On the purely political level, Africa has had more than 50 democratic elections in the last four years – these were possible in part because African people are more engaged in their civic duties; they stay alert and informed, they are tuned to what unfolds in other countries, and they understand the power of their vote. The African diaspora is keenly aware that political stability is the beacon for progress and opportunities, that beyond the "negative image", political repression touches each and every aspect of their lives, even if they are thousands of miles away. The recent separate demonstrations in Washington by thousands of members of the Ethiopian and Gambian diaspora exemplify a number of things, among which the power of information and the Internet, which enabled them to remain connected to events on the ground, their commitment to impact those events, and the realisation that even when you are called Ethiopian-American or Gambian-American and your kids barely speak Amharic or Ouoloff, images of riots, beatings and detentions in your homeland elicit the same reactions as in those who never left Addis or Banjul.

Let's just imagine the full, comprehensive coverage the African Television Network would have given to those who were beaten and in jail, those who marched to defend them, and those who decided the course of action. ■

This speech was given to the ATV Forum in Nairobi in December.

A24

In March and April, an informal steering committee – a group of interested people and organisations – met in London to establish a framework for fundraising and interim steps to establish a TV channel to be called A24. Now, a legal entity (A24 Media) needs to be established as an off-shore company based in Mauritius so that it can raise money.

Committee member Salim Amin says A24 has been approached by at least two companies to start producing reports for satellite or Internet distribution. To ensure that the momentum of the project is not lost, A24 is thinking of training journalists and beginning with small-scale productions so that it can generate television material and cash flow. "The goal is to raise substantial funds based on a viable and realistic plan to create a pan-African, multi-platform news and information channel."

Chris Kirchhoff

MAKING A FUSS ABOUT FREEDOM: the

Chris Kirchhoff

Talking and listening

Why do South Africans subject their public broadcaster to endless scrutiny? And why do journalists, media players and various other civil society experts debate its structures, staffing and practices intently? Because, according to Zohra Dawood, executive director of the Open Society Foundation in South Africa: "Debate on the public broadcaster is good for the functioning of South Africa's democracy and freedom of speech."

In July the OSF hosted just such a debate which involved about 30 of the country's freedom of expression experts, media theorists, teachers, and senior journalists.

The intention was to hear from and talk to the current chair of the board and executive editor Dali Mpofu. Dawood set the scene by saying that the Open Society Foundation "believes in the value of divergent opinions and not in consensus" and therefore the value of the day was in the expression of points of view and in listening.

Here are the inputs made by the four panellists: Dali Mpofu, SABC Chief Executive Officer, Prof Tawana Kupe, media theorist from the University of the Witwatersrand, Karima Brown, *Business Day* Political Editor and former executive produce for SABC radio, and Prof Anton Harber, head of the Wits University journalism programme.

At the end of a session of tough give and take, Dawood then asked the panellists to each dream of a "blue skies" scenario for the SABC. ■

Striving to serve the entire population

The SABC executive team and board have set themselves the goal of "broadcasting for total citizen empowerment", a strategic outlook which will be developed over a period of five years.

In order to situate the discussion on the SABC let's look at the context of the SABC's mandate as the public broadcaster. The SABC has its foundations in:

1. The Constitution of the country – which has a large bearing on even current controversies.
2. The Broadcasting Act – the founding law, which circumscribes and defines public broadcasting.
3. The SABC's corporate goals – 12 broad statements formulated by the current board (and available on the website www.sabc.co.za).
4. The strategic outlook of the current leadership.

"Total citizen empowerment" are the three words adopted by the board to capture the SABC's aims. The SABC is a cultural, educational, economic and political phenomenon, all these components must interact dynamically.

"Total" means that the SABC has a universal mandate – it must serve the entire population in all its diversity – race, religion, language, sex and age. This is the first distinction that sets it apart from its competitors. They have a choice of market, we don't have that luxury. Impossible as it seems, we have to strive to serve the entire population.

"Citizen" symbolises the public we seek to serve; unlike the commercial media, we look at our audience as citizens. And this word is used by the SABC in a sense beyond merely the legal one. It is a lens through which to view the public as people with inherent human rights and intrinsic worth which is the same and is an equaliser. The broadcaster is accountable to this citizenry.

"Empowerment" is taken to mean acting on many fronts: social, cultural and political.

Broadcasting is an "interventionist institutional practice" (MP McCauley) and to understand the SABC's mandate one needs to take the historical approach that situates the broadcaster in current day South Africa. We cannot use values, etc, from other jurisdictions without being mindful of this context.

On recent public debate about editorial decisions made at the broadcaster [including the pulling of the "Mbeki: Unauthorised" documentary and the investigation into a possible "blacklist" of certain experts] the statements being made have their ideological aspects and in some cases they were made without establishing the facts.

Debate itself is important and good, but the notion of shutting people up in the debate is disrespectful for the public itself, people can see through these things.

I have an acute awareness that public participation in debates around the public broadcaster is very important and necessary in order to achieve democracy. I tell people, "Be activists, participate, don't watch from the sidelines". I advise everyone to choose two causes for activism – one of which should always be the role of the media in a democracy – it is of such central importance. ■

Dali Mpofu, Group Chief Executive of the SABC

Chris Kirchhoff

OSF roundtable on public broadcasting

The gap between values and practice

Public broadcasting is a value and a practice.

As a value:

1. In the Constitution freedom of expression is unequivocal and freedom of the media is beyond argument – this is strongest in the wording of Section 16.
2. The Broadcasting Act then takes it cue from the Constitution (for instance when a previous Minister of Communication wanted to set editorial policy for the SABC this was struck down by the Constitutional Court).
3. SABC editorial policies themselves then attest to these values.

Now, do the practices at the SABC live up to these values? There are lots of debates in South Africa now on this very issue. But this can be somewhat hypocritical when only the SABC has to live up to these values and only one institution is tested when others are let off the hook. This is fundamentally contradictory.

But in practice:

1. Are the structures – governing and managing – at the SABC such that they enable journalists to work in the public interest? Do they constrain or enable? Is there stability in management? What we have seen at the SABC is that people are not in their jobs long enough to have this effect.
2. The funding mix is critical. The SABC does not have a secure form of funding. "Public" is a contested term and the SABC depends on commercial funding which means they, in their programming, must seek out sections of the public which appeal to advertisers. Commercial pressures weaken political control and editorial control.

The SABC is between a rock and a hard place: trying to actualise the values of freedom of expression and of the media; putting the Constitution into practice is a very difficult matter.

The public broadcaster's only reason for existing is public service, it must speak to everyone as a citizen, it must broaden their horizons and enable them to understand themselves. When I travel I make a habit of watching the public broadcasting service because it enables me to meet my fellow citizens in other countries.

Because of its history the SABC had a monopoly on broadcasting, now it is the largest media organisation in the country with the greatest reach – it broadcasts in 13 languages and does not depend on literacy. With this power it could: 1. tell advertisers where to get off and, 2. tell politicians where to get off! It has intrinsic and explicit power, why is it therefore in a crisis?

My questions therefore are about accountability, whether the SABC understands its value and whether its practices go against its values. I think the news bulletins are lacking in confidence and independence. I think the President is too absent, he should show up more and liven the debate about what he is doing, I think the range of analysts who appear on TV should be increased. ■

Prof Tawana Kupe, media theorist and head of the School of Languages and Literature at Wits

Norms and news culture

The question I wish to ask is this: why is that while the SABC may have put in place appropriate structures and policies and widely accepted editorial charters and codes, yet it continues to run into controversy over its editorial practices and output?

I would say it's because of the news values and the news culture that permeates the organisation, which has to make the toughest decisions under the greatest pressures. Decisions which run the full range of the news process.

The culture of a newsroom is best demonstrated by the questions editors ask when presented with decisions. These decisions are answered very differently by the *Mail&Guardian*, *Business Day* or the *Daily Sun*. Each newsroom has different practices and norms, and different values.

The impression I have of the SABC's operations is that despite its documents and policies the culture is one of trepidation, nervousness and a bureaucratic watch-your-back.

Editors ask: "Will this offend anyone in authority, within the SABC and beyond?" For example the coverage of the Zuma court case was a mere account, it was bland, dull and inadequate when all sorts of very important themes and issues were being raised by the trial. It is the nature of organisations to have an overriding respect for the party in government, and to have to ask how critical to be on national issues. Public broadcasters all over the world grapple with the state's power. There are very few success stories here.

But the SABC culture doesn't nurture good, creative and bold journalism. You can judge the culture of a media organisation by its relationship with lawyers. In the alternative journalism of the 1980s, journalists changed this relationship from one of self-censorship when the primary question posed to lawyers was "is this defamation?", to asking two different questions:

1. "if it is defamatory is it defendable?" and;
2. "if not, how do we fix it so that we can use it?"

There are two stages in dealing with something potentially defamatory, the one is to take legal advice and the second is to make an editorial decision based on the public interest – this decision must be made by an editor, not a lawyer.

Narrowly focusing the debate on the "blacklist" and phone calls from the presidency does not concern me. I am more concerned with what may fall outside the scope of the commission to investigate the "blacklist"—values, culture, routine practices and procedures of the newsroom. ■

Anton Harber, Caxton Professor of Journalism at Wits University

The price of freedom

I want to focus on the gap between values and practice and locate the debate [about whether certain commentators have been 'banned' from talking on the SABC] in the wider debate within broader society – in which factions within the ANC have fallen out thus making this debate possible.

Business Day columnist Steven Friedman says we must care about the SABC because it belongs to all of us. It has an obligation to field a wide range of opinions even if the news executives don't want to hear them. As he says, the price of freedom is constantly making a fuss. If we don't, our freedom is eroded slowly, through insignificant acts.

If there is a ban it shows that there is a range of black commentators independent and critical enough, who are not praise-singers , who insist on holding the powerful to account. But the organisational culture of the SABC promotes self-censorship, and journalists try to second-guess themselves. ■

Karima Brown, Political Editor of Business Day and a former Executive Producer of AM Live

Blue skies

In response to Zohra Dawood's question posed to the whole panel: What would you want to see if there were a "blue skies" scenario for the SABC?

Dali Mpofu
The SABC should:

- produce quality programming (at the moment there are only 16 minutes of news in a 30-minute broadcast because of the adverts, we need a new funding model)
- not be in competition with other media
- promote a culture of deep, vigorous, informed debate

Tawana Kupe
The SABC is a South African and an African broadcaster, the only one on the continent to take up this role:

- in theory and in practice the public broadcaster should set the standards
- it must open up the public sphere for all
- it needs a mixed, long-term, assured funding model.

Karima Brown
The SABC should:

- be the desired platform for all of us to be on
- give access to all
- show respect for different views
- be a melting pot of ideas, and;
- in the wider media landscape it should not be separate and in competition.

Anton Harber
The SABC should:

- nurture talent
- be a rich place for debate and discussion and new ideas
- be subject to less commercial pressure

Almost there in Namibia

by Robin Tyson

With the appointment of a director general, there comes an opportunity for new and fresh thinking about the future of the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation. It has, in recent years, been beset by staff shortages, lack of skills training, financial issues, a decline in advertising, and, perhaps most ominously, an increased perception by the public and even politicians, that the corporation, rather than providing a much-needed public service, is becoming a drain on the state coffers.

The debate about what a public broadcaster is, and what the justification for its existence might be, is not confined to Namibia. Across the globe, there is increasingly a rethink about the role, funding and justification for public broadcasting.

In South Africa, the SABC (in many ways the birth mother for the SWABC, now the NBC), has swung full circle away from a reliance on state funding, something which numerous Namibian ministers have also encouraged for the NBC, although with little effect.

The issue of funding is core to the future of the NBC. There has been talk in the past of establishing a commercial radio station, the creation of a second (commercial) television channel (NBC 2), allowing NBC 1 to focus more on public service issues, and a move away from programme production (something which the SABC, for example, has almost entirely outsourced to private production companies) and instead reaping financial benefits by hiring out existing broadcasting infrastructure and technical expertise.

Linked to funding, of course, is credibility and editorial independence. The manner in which the NBC board is appointed should be a matter of public involvement, and not left in the hands of one person (the minister) as is the case at present.

If information is indeed the most valuable quantity in this 21st century, then the NBC is standing in a unique and extremely powerful position to gather and distribute that information, not only for its own benefit, but for the benefit of the entire Namibian nation.

New technologies (Internet, SMS, cellphone) now allow broadcasters to distribute information in local languages at very low cost to subscribers. It fulfils a public need and thus tallies with the public broadcasting mandate, yet also becomes an increasing source of revenue.

With the myriad languages in Namibia, the NBC's ability to source content from throughout the country is a strategic strength, but more importantly it also has the staff and resources to translate that information and distribute it via these new technologies in a manner few other organisations in Namibia can manage.

Indeed, the NBC needs to look at such strengths as these, and focus on what it is uniquely able to do. This focus on local languages is perhaps the NBC's greatest strength, and few would begrudge funding, even state funding, to continue the operations of NBC radio language services (although a repositioning of these stations to move away from the old apartheid labels that still exist today is urgently needed).

Even with new technologies, radio remains the staple medium for most Namibians, and radio in local languages is listened to with an unrivalled intensity. That captive audience, of course, is also a unique attraction for advertisers, who will pay considerable premiums to have access to such a diverse, yet passionate listenership.

Where NBC faces most criticism is in its most costly area of operation – television. When SWABC established television in the early 1980s, there were clear political, even military objectives. But with the establishment of new broadcasters (One Africa TV, TBN), and pay narrowcasters (DSTV) many viewers are now questioning the necessity of an NBC TV channel. Many of the programmes which were traditionally the strength of NBC TV (sport, soap operas, the Miss Namibia pageant, local music, etc) are now shown on One Africa TV, and the station is able to do this at absolutely no cost to the taxpayer and without demanding TV licence fees from their viewers.

The only area where they are yet to have local content is in the area of news, but even that is soon to change with the appointment of a team that has been tasked with establishing independent commercial Namibian news broadcasts on the channel.

Increasingly, therefore, NBC TV is going to find the reasons for its existence drying up, and the new DG will have to carefully re-examine the future role and existence of NBC TV. Is it necessary for us to have that channel at all? Would it not make more sense to use NBC production facilities and equipment to help other broadcasters making local productions?

The result, for the viewer, would be little different from what they are watching at the moment, presuming that the NBC could assist One Africa TV and TBN with a vigorous expansion of coverage using the existing transmitter and relay network (which would also be yet another stream of revenue for the NBC, and could also be commercialised).

Even with new technologies, radio remains the staple medium for most Namibians, and radio in local languages is listened to with an unrivalled intensity.

In addition, Namibian owners of television sets would be relieved of the burden of an annual licence fee, and the NBC would become less reliant on state funding, possibly even self-supporting.

Indeed, with the money saved, more focus could be put on radio, and, for instance, the establishment of that commercial radio station to create revenue for the corporation, and a change in focus of NBC National Radio towards relays of parliamentary activities, debates and other matters of national importance.

In redefining the role of the public broadcaster, the new director general will no doubt face battles. Government has, in the past, been reluctant to relinquish control over what they obviously see as their property.

However, the days of the propaganda war are now over, and we have moved into a new age of democracy, choice and openness. That must now also be reflected in the structure of media institutions in our country, offering listeners and viewers a wide range of opinions and thoughts, thus following the SADC guidelines agreed upon in the Windhoek Declaration.

As Namibians we are almost there, and serve as an inspiration for many media practitioners on the continent. With clear direction and bold moves, the NBC will be able to grasp this changed media environment and exploit it to the benefit not only of the corporation and its staff, but also the country as a whole. ■

News for Africa

70 years of broadcasting

World cup x 2

Covering the DRC election

Rising stars

She was recently named The Media/MTN "Rising Star". She is under 30 and co-hosts one of the country's most influential current affairs shows. Matabello Motlaung chats to Nikiwe Bikitsha, presenter of AM Live on radio and Interface on TV.

I used to watch reporters on CNN and BBC and say 'that's what I want to do'", says the co-presenter of morning news show *AM Live* on SAfm.

"But the first thing you have to remember is that it's not about you," adds Bikitsha. When it comes to interviewing, she says: "The trick is to keep on pushing and pushing and you will get more out of a person that way than when shouting at them and getting embroiled in a screaming match."

Bikitsha (28) broke into broadcasting when she joined commercial radio station Cape Talk in 1997.

She was one of the first journalists on the scene at the Planet Hollywood bombing in 1998 and covered the incident for international networks such as BBC and CNN.

In 2002, she was approached to co-host *AM Live*, arguably the most influential current affairs programme in the country, with veteran John Perlman.

"I have learnt a lot from working with John," she says. "He has been my mentor for the past two years."

Bikitsha, who also hosts SABC3's current affairs programme *Interface*, says one of the joys of her job is being part of history when reporting on major stories such as the rape trial of Jacob Zuma.

Bikitsha says she sorely misses field reporting and being the first to break a story. "I miss the adrenaline that comes with being the first person at a scene, the thrill of being able to tell people what has just happened. I think my passion for breaking stories has grown over the years," she says.

Bikitsha would above all like to interview President Thabo Mbeki, who she describes as intriguing.

"Of course I would ask him about the challenges he faces, but what I am most interested in is him as a person. Not much is known about that."

Commenting on the recent attacks on the media by Zuma and his supporters, Bikitsha says it is unfortunate that the role of political journalists is often misunderstood.

"I don't think journalists should shy away from commenting on things, but all the time remembering that it's not about them."

This article reprinted with kind permission from The Media.

Siki Mgabadeli presents a business programme on TV every week day during the 1pm bulletin and she then goes on to do the Market Update on SAfm from 6 to 6.30pm on radio. Then on Saturdays she hosts AM Live, the current affairs programme.

Her days must be very long and full of hard work? She laughs: "I'm doing what I love doing and it doesn't feel like work. I get to talk to people I would never meet otherwise."

Mgabadeli did her degree in journalism at Rhodes and it was in her final year when she took the course in economics journalism, that she realised she had hit on the subject that really interested her. An internship that year (2001) with the Summit TV business desk confirmed this.

Then Summit offered her a job and she moved to Johannesburg to work there for two years.

Moving to the SABC and taking up radio journalism as well came with ease as she had been head of talk radio for the student station RMR in Grahamstown.

Mgabadeli has been noticed for her work recently. She has won the broadcast TV category award in both the Telkom ICT Journalist of the Year 2005 awards and the Sanlam Excellence in Financial Journalism Awards 2005.

"It's a fascinating field," she says of economics journalism.

A day in the life of a news bulletin


1

SABC News has a hectic daily schedule. Every day on weekdays the radio service produces 253 bulletins in 13 languages. And on weekends they do another 233. Then add to that 32 current affairs shows across five public broadcast stations. Meanwhile TV produces 19 news bulletins on terrestrial channels daily and three on SABC Africa.

Pictures by Shaun Harris. www.africamoves.co.za


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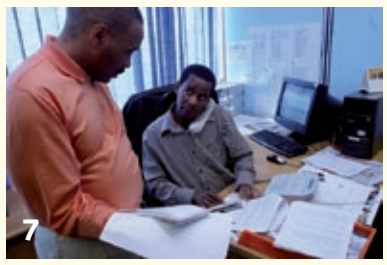
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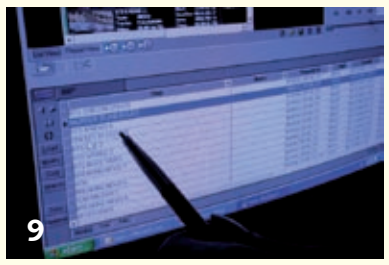
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1. The first briefing starts on the previous day, when stories are identified. Research gets involved in sourcing the information plus issues to be reported on, and they identify news makers and news angles with journalists involved.
   1.1. 8:30: Second briefing, on the following day, involves the executive editors deciding on that day's stories.
2. 8.30: radio editors convene to compile a list of the day's stories.
3. The journalist is assigned a story and given all the necessary details.
4. 9:30: the journalist arrives at the scene and begins gathering the facts of the story.
5. 9:45: SABC cameraman takes external shots of the scene.
6. 10:00: the reporter and cameraman do interior shots at the crime scene and interview the victim.
7. 11:00: the journalist briefs the television editor on the story he has covered.
8. 11:10: the tape is delivered to the line record operator who makes three copies of the master tape.
9. 11:20: one copy of the master tape is transferred to the digital server.
10. 11:30: copies of the master tapes are put into boxes for collection by the different news departments within the SABC.
11. 11:10: at the same time as process number 8 happens, the journalist writes his full story.
12. 11:30: the journalist transfers the story to assignment intro ready for the editors.
13. 11:50: the journalist translates the interview from IsiZulu into English and transfers his story written in green to the server.
14. 3:00pm: the television editors meet again to decide on what is to be aired on the early evening Johannesburg news bulletins.
15. 3:00: radio regional editors meet to gather and follow up on news stories from all the regions.
16. 3:00: television regional editors meet to gather and follow up on news stories from all the regions.
17. Final control room where the news story is queued for the news anchor to present the television news (at 1:00pm, 2:00pm, 5.30pm, 7:00pm, 7.30pm and 8.30pm).
18. Television news anchor presents the day's stories.
19. Radio news presenter reads the news (hourly).
20. People get the news in their homes.

SABC NEWS
Africa's News Leader

Chris Kirchhoff

Chris Kirchhoff

Chris Kirchhoff

Chris Kirchhoff

World cup x 2

The SABC has been awarded official Fifa World Cup broadcaster status for the 2010 and 2014 world cup tournaments. The deal includes free-to-air and pay-TV rights for all Fifa events during both periods.

The tournaments will be held in South Africa (2010) and a South American country still to be named (2014). This follows six months of intense negotiations in Zurich and Johannesburg led by Dali Mpofu, Group Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer Solly Mokoetle and Group Executive of Content Enterprises Mvuzo Mbebe.

Fifa President Sepp Blatter said: "Our dream of an African World Cup is now a reality. Fifa, like the SABC, is totally committed to empowering the people of South Africa and the continent in staging what promises to a spectacular world cup."

In the public interest

In the Public Interest airs on SABC 3 every Sunday at 9.30am, hosted by Lerato Mbele. The programme critically debates issues which are central to the performance of the media, such as ethics and the commercial pressures that journalists face.

Panel experts include different media stakeholders from TV, radio, Internet and newspapers. The programme also aims to also unpack and provide analysis of weekly top and breaking stories.

The programme incorporates an interactive element, with viewers' contributions in the form of views, opinions and analysis of media stories through sms, faxes and emails.

The media is essential to the functioning of an effective democracy, yet very little information is delivered in terms of the way in which they operate – such as the selection of stories, the way in which stories are constructed and the constraints under which they work.

Eight weeks, eight values, one national conversation

Heartlines, a series of eight prime-time one-hour films, kicked off across three SABC TV channels recently in an unprecedented campaign aimed at capturing the heart of the nation under the rallying cry: "Eight weeks, eight values, one national conversation".

The films each focus on one of eight key values: grace, responsibility, forgiveness, perseverance, self-control, acceptance of diversity, compassion and honesty. This series aims to harness the power of telling stories that emphasise the core values that connect all South Africans. It is hoped a national conversation will be sparked on values, the aim of which is to move people from professed values to lived values, as a way of addressing some of the key issues South African society faces – HIV/Aids, racism, corruption, violence and greed.

"We hope *Heartlines* will generate a national conversation that involves community leaders, teachers, students and South Africans from all walks of life. We are positive that it will influence the way South Africans talk, think and address issues in our society. Through *Heartlines* we are fulfilling one of our goals as a bank and that is to be a great company helping to create a better South Africa," says Michael Jordaan, CEO of FNB, which has sponsored the making of the films.

SABC CEO Dali Mpofu says: "Part of the public broadcaster's role is to spark, promote and facilitate public discourse on issues of national and public importance."

"If we believe that changed hearts can lead to changed behaviours, then such a vision is not only worth striving for, but becomes imperative. One intervention can inspire change in a nation," says Rev Mvume Dandala, who heads the All Africa Conference of Churches, who is the patron of *Heartlines*.

The series has been endorsed by the Moral Regeneration Movement, the National Religious Leader's Forum, the Religious Broadcasting Panel of the SABC, the South African Council of Churches, the All African Conference of Churches, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein.

70 years of broadcasting

In 1936 an Act of Parliament created the South African Broadcasting Corporation. Radio was first revealed to the public at the Great Empire exhibition and radio was first broadcast from Johannesburg on 1 July 1924. Later that same year two radio stations were established in Cape Town and Durban. The three stations formed the African Broadcasting Corporation.

This entity was dissolved in 1936 to create the South African Broadcasting Corporation. By December 1937 there were 209 people working for the new corporation.

The first commercial station – Springbok radio – was started in the early 1950s and radio entertainment was aired through shows, dramas and comedies.

The 60s saw the establishment of regional stations in the Cape and Natal, Radio RSA began to broadcast as an official world service; Radio LM in Mozambique was taken over and renamed Radio 5 (now 5fm); and three language-based stations were created (isiSwazi, isiNdebele and Radio Lotus).

On 5 January 1976 the country got TV: no adverts and 37 hours a week of programming in English and Afrikaans. The first advert was screened on 1 January 1978. In protest against apartheid the British Actors' Guild banned broadcast material from Britain on South African screens, a ban which lasted until November 1993.

In 1982 TV programmes were broadcast in isiZulu and seSotho for the first time and Radio Metro (now Metro FM), aimed at the black middle classes, was established.

The 90s saw great political upheaval and the SABC got its first democratically-elected board in 1994 with Zwelakhe Sisulu as its first group chief executive.

Today the SABC consists of a public broadcasting service (in nine indigenous languages) and a public commercial service mainly in English, catering for urban and up-market audiences. Radio, the leading source of information, reaches 90% of South Africans. But four million South Africans do not have access to broadcasting.

The SABC is planning to flight two new regional stations and eight new radio stations by 2008.

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SAfm sent a small team to cover the DRC elections – Tsepiso Makwetla (presenter) and Thandanani Dlamini (executive producer). On election day, 30 July, they did a dual broadcast on the weekend *AM Live* programme from 6am to 9am. Steve Lang, head of current affairs for radio, anchored the show in Auckland Park and Makwetla operated as Kinshasa anchor. "It worked rather well," said Lang.

The team in Kinshasa was photographed by Jenine Coetzer of Channel Africa.

Reporting on the D

by Rapitse Montsho
General Manager of News Resources

Heart of Africa

Formerly known as Zaire, the Democratic Republic of Congo is Africa's third largest country and covers more than 2.3-million km². The Congo got its independence from Belgium in 1960 but its first democratically-elected president Patrice Lumumba was murdered. Army chief Mobutu Sese Seko seized power in a 1965 coup and ruled until 1997. After war and unrest wracked the DRC, Laurent Kabila ousted Mobutu and changed the country's name from Zaire to the DRC. Kabila was shot dead by one of his bodyguards in 2001 and succeded by his son Joseph.

The SABC's reporting on the elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo needs to be understood in the context of the evolution of Africa's foreign relations, and in particular, the role that South Africa has been tasked to play within the framework of Nepad.

For the first time in 40 years, the peoples of the Democratic Republic of Congo participated in landmark elections to choose who their president and parliamentary representatives would be.

Thirty-three presidential candidates and 9 000 parliamentary candidates stood for election.

This new beginning in the DRC unpacked the great challenges of choice between honest autocracy and corrupt politics.

The murder of Patrice Lumumba and the rule of Mobutu Sese Seko coupled with the long absence of elections in the DRC and the exclusion of the population from decision-making processes, resulted in decades of maladministration and mismanagement of the resources that could have added value to the Great Lakes region.

Logistics

For 10 days several teams consisting of 68 SABC journalists and technicians were based in the DRC to focus on the elections.

The SABC deployed the largest contingency of its staff and technology in the three main provinces of the DRC. Journalists and technical staff were sent to Lubumbashi and Goma and the main broadcast centre was based in the capital city Kinshasa.

A French news team consisted of three journalists in all three cities feeding three programmes with panel discussions, news bulletins and reviews eight times a day.

Channel Africa sent three journalists: Jenine Coetzer, reporting in English and based in Kinshasa, Amos Phago, reporting in English in Lubumbashi and Kiswahili-speaker Maximillan Bushoke in Goma.

Licences to broadcast had to be sought and paid for from the Congolese authorities.

Technology

Radio and TV-gathering capacity was via cutting-edge technology, with portable satellite contribution systems recently purchased to enable more "live" streaming of bulletins. This IPT suitcase also offered the opportunity for journalists to log onto the Newstar for their scripts from a remote location. The Swe-Dish also provided the ability to communicate into MCR from a remote location while at the same time backhauling video and audio into South Africa via the satellite.

The general list of requirements looked like this: Newstar workstations; satellite phones, cellphones with roaming capabilities; faxes; printers and boxes of paper; cars and furniture.

The reporting

Radio reporting – reaching 22 million South Africans – was able to cross every hour with the latest Marantz recorders and used the B-Gen for streaming the audio from all the locations in the DRC.

Television had a make-shift studio that was specially branded for the DRC elections. This infrastructure provided the immediacy we needed to give reporting which sought to get all stakeholders in the election to participate and present their views.

The Internet service, SABC.com, was able to attract over one million hits during the elections, enabling users to obtain up-to-date information from anywhere in the world. The website was fed with regular updates from radio and TV reporters in the DRC with additional sources.

On News Break 082 152, breaking news updates as they came in from SABC reporters in the DRC, were available.

Stories

Key commentators such as the head of the South African delegation to the DRC, Deputy Minister

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RC's first elections in 40 years

Staff logistics

Location	No of staff
Kinshasha	**46**
French	1
News Resources	12
Radio	4
Channel Africa	1
TV	7
Air Time	21
Goma	**13**
News Resources	4
Radio	4
Channel Africa	1
TV	2
Air Time	2
Lubumbashi	**14**
News Resources	5
Radio	2
Channel Africa	1
TV	2
Air Time	2

Mluleki George, gave us the opportunity to present the current status of the elections from time to time.

The use of French in the DRC became one of the important factors our journalists had to deal with. As well as the usual range of stories (history and context, SA-Congo relations, parties contesting, economic issues, tensions, hotspots and security) the team also looked at the readiness of the peoples of the Congo for the elections, the situation the Independent Electoral Commission came into, to hold and adjudicate the elections, and the ever-daunting question of the role of the media during the election.

Provision had to be made in case breaking news events interrupted the planned programming – in this case SABC Africa was used to cope with this.

On election day – 31 July – all news bulletins were extended to an hour with special focus on the DRC.

The majority of the staff departed on 2 August by chartered plane, leaving Njanji Chauke and Miranda Strydom and camera operator Thabo Modise (TV) and Adele van Niekerk and Dumisani Nkwamba (radio) to continue to cover the vote counting process. Journalists and infrastructure were committed to the Congo until 25 August.

Group Executive of News, Snuki Zikalala, was also involved with the team during the reporting on this historic occasion for the people of the DRC.

SABC NEWS
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SABC NEWS IS AFRICA'S NEWS LEADER. ASK CNN.

This year the CNN Multichoice African Journalists Awards attracted 1500 entries from 43 countries throughout Africa, and two SABC News journalists each received an award. Independent proof that SABC News has the will and the talent to bring you credible, quality news.

Congratulations Sandy McCowen, SABC TV News Reporter.
Winner of TV General News Award for her piece on male-rape.

Congratulations Jacques Pauw, Special Assignment Producer.
Winner of TV Features Award for his feature on illegal immigrants and their bribery of corrupt South African Police officials.

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