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Intermediating Africa

In July, *Vanity Fair*, based in New York, did a unique special edition. Editor Graydon Carter explained how it came about: "Earlier this year, Mark Dowley, a marketing polymath at the Endeavour talent agency who has been involved with Bono's (Red) campaign from the start, called to inquire if I would be interested in having him guest edit an issue of the magazine. Interested? I'll say!" And the subject chosen? Africa.

The resulting 172 glossy-page sweep of our continent had Annie Leibowitz produce 20 different cover photographs for the magazine, Brad Pitt interview Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Bill Clinton reminisce about his good friend Nelson Mandela, Tom Freston, CEO of Viacom, go to Mali to report on the Festival of the Desert, Youssou N'Dour talk about West African music, Christopher Hitchens examine the aftermath of Al

Qaeda attacks in Tunis, and a host of donors, do-gooders and philanthropists (Bono, Oprah, the Gates', Jeffrey Sachs) speak about their efforts to save the poor, the sick and the Aids-ridden.

It's not that it wasn't a fascinating read or that some really important issues weren't surfaced. They were. (And if you take a look at the website edition you see some strong attempts to get away from treating the entire continent as one country and links that will "help you dig deeper".)

But I still found it galling to have Condoleezza Rice (left) staring up at me from the front cover when I took

my copy out of the postbox. And I wonder why a magazine with such mighty resources has to marshal a phalanx of intermediaries (almost all of them celebrities – see the selection we've reprinted from the story VF ran about their 20 covers) to interpret Africa to their readers. Why not go directly to source and let people here speak for themselves?

Turn to this *Review's* special section on Angola. The intention: source the journalists actually working in the country, let them speak about their own experiences and talk to our readers about the things that bother and inspire them. Let them speak in Portuguese.

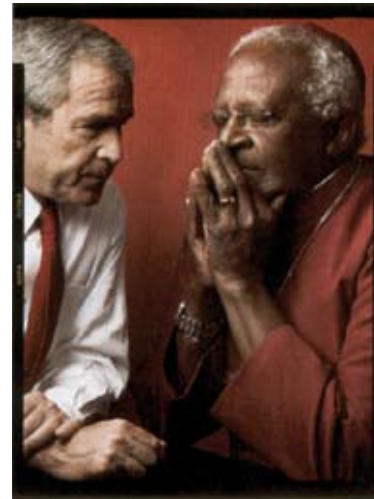
It was immensely difficult. Knowing who to find took a lot of questioning, figuring out how to find them took a lot of international phone calls (I've since given up the false idea that email is magical and fast and sure), and dealing with my own lack of Portuguese was very frustrating. At points I despaired that the pages NiZA had sponsored would see publication.

But they have. Those dedicated people you'll encounter in the pages (44-49), and some invisible ones like the translators and photographers, helped source and translate and pull strings to get stories and pictures that give a sense of just how determined journalists in Angola are to craft strong, healthy, free media.

Also in this edition

We bring you reports from the World Newspapers' Association/World Editors' Forum Congress in Cape Town, the World Journalism Education Conference in Singapore and the World Summit on Children and Media in Johannesburg; the furious debate on user-generated content, global warming as interpreted by African photographers, six pages on education and training, and research into the SABC "blacklist" controversy. We visit Western Sahara, Rwanda and Zimbabwe, revisit the copyright issue, bring back an old friend (Mario Garcia) and talk about correcting our mistakes gracefully.

Anthea Garman, Editor.



GEORGE BUSH AND ARCHBISHOP TUTU



BILL & MELINDA GATES AND OPRAH WINFREY



DJIMON HOUNSOU AND BRAD PITT



MAYA ANGELOU AND MADONNA



Rodger Bosch

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Africa at the World

The 60th World Association of Newspapers Congress and the 14th World Editors' Forum came to Africa for the very first time. The steep conference fee was going to exclude many senior journalists until the SA National Editors' Forum and The African Editors' Forum stepped in and negotiated a rate for their members and the educators more suitable for southern pockets. The African Editors' Forum chair Mathatha Tsedu and secretary general Elizabeth Barratt then did some very hard work organising sponsorship and travel so that a significant 202 African editors could make it to Cape Town. The South African delegation was by far the largest contingent (375 out of 1 600 people from 109 countries) with editors and educators joining media managers and owners. Most of the sessions at both sections of the overall event (WAN and WEF) were geared towards educating and conscientising editors and owners about the threats and values of digital and mobile technologies and about how to run multi-platform newsrooms. There was also a great deal of pumping-up talk about the growth, value and future of newspapers. Africa did get a slight look in at the round table session dedicated to the issue of press freedom and a focused session on reporting Africa on the World Editors' Forum agenda.

Information in se

What dominates the treatment of African subjects by the Western media and the international news services? War, endemic disease, poverty and misery, corruption and political conflict. It is as if there is a standardised format for the information coming out of this continent.

Ignacio Ramonet, director of *Monde Diplomatique*, commented: "...information was a rare good – thus expensive. Today, it is superabundant, and tends to be free. At the same time, it is regarded more and more as goods, so that its value does not depend any more on the criteria which traditionally gave it value – the truth and the lie – but the number of people likely to be interested by it. Information thus is primarily subjected to the laws of supply and demand."

Information is thus, actually a product. And like any goods, it is in search of a market that enables it to find purchasers. Where is this profitable market? Not in Africa where there is an insufficient number of consumers of information ready to pay the price. In the West? Certainly. When journalism is not creative any more but becomes a simple provision of services which breaks the impartial duty of information, one will search in vain for professional rigour without any chance of finding its traces.

But is that a reason for Africa to remain an object rather than a subject of western journalists' coverage? Often to counteract this Africans call for "African reporting".

One should not speak about reporting which is typically African, European, American or Asian. As a profession which requires internationally-recognised universal standards, the manner of practising journalism should not vary according to continent and country, at least in form. It is as ridiculous to speak about African, American or Arab literature; one should indeed speak only about "literature" or "journalism".

Pictures to tell African Stories

text and photos by Finbarr O'Reilly

What is Africa? Is this a continent of:

- chronic hunger
- war
- poverty
- misery
- disease, and
- death

Or is that colourful place we see in the pages of *National Geographic*, tourism brochures and coffee table books? All beautiful landscapes, colourful tribes and exotic wildlife?

Africa is both, but the reality of most people's daily lives exists somewhere between these two extremes, one predominantly negative, the other overly-sanitised.

For better or for worse, this is how Africa looks to much of the outside world.

African stories can often seem complicated or incomprehensible to an audience unfamiliar with the continent, and the bad news tends to dominate. It sometimes seems overwhelming.

Our job as journalists, whether as writers, photographers or in TV, is to show the nuances of life, the depth and diversity of life in Africa. To provide stories that go beyond the stereotypical images.

I began working in Africa six years ago in Congo as a text correspondent covering the deadliest conflict since World War 2. I was always astounded that so few people were aware that millions of people had died and continued to die in a regional war

Editors' Forum

arch of a market

by Cheriff Moumina Sy

However, a report cannot be dissociated from its author; it is indeed about a point of view. No matter how objective or impartial it aims to be, it conveys (even unconsciously) the cultural, social, economic and political background of the journalist, all the experiential landscape which marked out the life of the journalist.

It is this socio-cultural background which determines the appreciation that journalists have made of events of which they are the direct witness or simply the relay, placed in a privileged position between a source and a receiving public. This is why a report on a given event will not be the same when treated by journalists coming from different countries and especially from different cultures.

The relations between Africa and the rest of the world show that, in spite of the fantastic progress made on the continent since the '60s, the way westerners, in particular, see Africa remains characterised by economic misery and cultural backwardness.

How to improve the coverage of Africa? Africa must become an information provider for itself and the rest of the world. It is necessary to support the growth of African journalism made by African journalists on subjects of which they have a better reading culturally and socially. What is needed? To do an audit of news agencies on Africa and to set up credible agencies to cover Africa for Africans and the rest of the world, and to reinforce the media's institutional capacities and their human resources. If Africa does not want to remain an outfall of information, it is necessary that it obtains a powerful means of communicating to an international audience. The Arab world has given us just such an example with the TV channel Al Jazeera.

that engulfed much of central Africa. And I was frustrated too that nobody seemed too interested in what was happening.

The same was true when I spent a month in Darfur in 2004. But what was different for me on that assignment is that I turned to photography to tell my stories. Pictures can have an immediate emotional impact that words cannot. A successful image can make people pause in the midst of their busy day to reflect on what is shown, perhaps prompting them to find out more about what is happening and why. Photographs have the ability to connect people on a human level, even though the events they depict can be worlds away.

Coming from a background as a writer, I still value the importance of words, but I now rely on photographs to tell African stories, hoping that if an image is successful, the viewer will seek out more information about the stories we're covering. At best, it will prompt people to do something.

All too aware of the cliché of starving children with flies in their eyes, I focus on portraying people not as helpless victims, even if that's what they are, but rather as almost heroic figures coping under some of the most difficult conditions on the planet.

This to me is the essence of reporting from Africa. Illustrating that people are not nameless victims, but individuals

whose lives and stories matter as much as anyone else's. The strength of character and the dignity of people living and surviving under such difficult conditions is humbling to anyone who experiences it. As journalists, we can convey that aspect of life to the outside world and to other Africans.

Sure we need to cover the news. But there are other stories that need to be told too, to show that Africa is not just about war, famine and disease. It is about hope and struggling to make a better future in a challenging world.

Finbarr O'Reilly works for Reuters and is based in Senegal.

Improving reporting

"The unfair coverage debate has a long history," said Azubuike Isheikwene, executive director of *Punch* in Nigeria. And this debate often focuses on how the West sees Africa as "death, disease, destruction and despair".

But in the spirit of the focused session on Africa which the chair Mathatha Tsedu steered away from bemoaning the situation and towards solutions, Isheikwene then made the following points about how to improve the reporting:

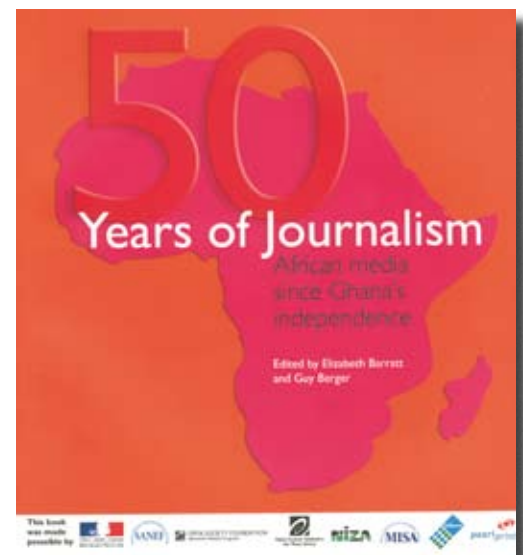
1. Journalists covering Africa need to be familiar with its histories, cultures and peoples.
2. They need to understand context.
3. They should realise that their journalism must give voice to the weak, the vulnerable and minorities.
4. They should be aware the African landscape is changing rapidly (citing the Chinese investment into the continent of \$40-billion).

"Journalists need: specialisation, numeracy, fluency in other languages, extensive contacts and sources and analytical ability," he concluded.

Good governance

According to the Economic Commission for Africa good governance survey of 2005 of 28 African countries, while corruption, the bane of good economic management, continues to be found:

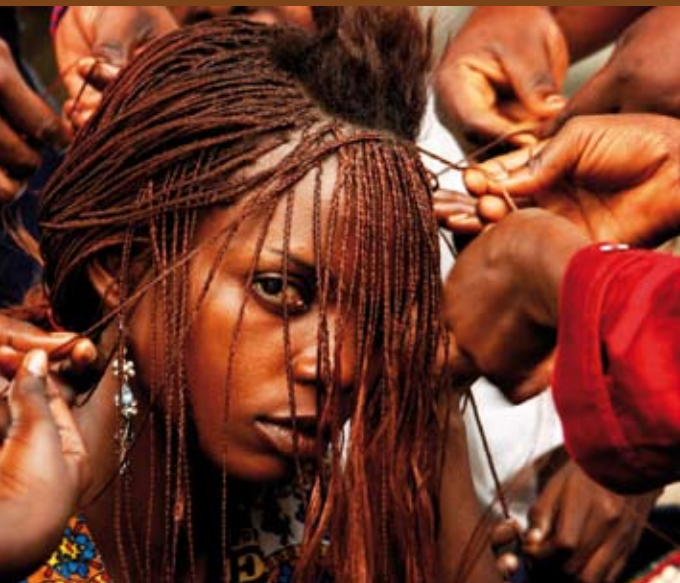
- respect for human rights is on the rise (with some glaring exceptions),
- adherence to constitutions is getting stronger,
- legislatures and judiciaries are asserting their independence,
- the legitimacy and credibility of the electoral process have increased,
- voter turnouts are on the increase,
- the political space is more inclusive, and
- economic management is getting better.



50 Years of Journalism: African Media since Ghana's Independence by Elizabeth Barratt and Guy Berger, promotes independent African journalism and takes stock of the situation on the continent, five decades after the first colony became free. The book is no dry overview. While it does an audit of the regions of the continent (using geography and language) it also contains some of the liveliest stories about the "characters, cases and causes", displaying the unique and clever ways journalists have made stories, issues and their outlets an indispensable part of African life and history.



The African Forum for Media Development is a "well co-ordinated media assistance programme," according to Jeanette Minnie, a media consultant and activist, "and a network of African freedom of expression organisations." One of the tactics now being worked on by those searching for the best way to secure the freedom of African media is to make viable and sustainable the many media businesses and ISPs on the continent and to spawn new businesses, because a proliferation of functional businesses is very difficult to control and shut down for repressive regimes. "A great plurality is required," says Minnie, and "tremendous capacity building." And to this end energy is being put into training in "the art" of how to run sustainable media and into sourcing venture capital which Minnie calls "a whole new entrepreneurial approach". This is being done through Samdef, a small development bank for media, which is to both "inspire and fund" media development.



Anti-‘insult’ laws campaign

The Declaration of Table Mountain, which calls for the abolition of ‘insult’ and criminal defamation laws throughout Africa and which was launched during the annual congress of the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) in Cape Town on 3 June has been sent to the United Nations, Unesco and the African Union.

All three bodies have been requested to bring the document before their general assemblies and to adopt it as a document specific to Africa where ‘insult’ laws and criminal defamation are the scourge of African journalists.

These laws, which restrict journalists from criticising heads of state for their corruption, malpractice, human rights abuses and other misdeemeanours and which protect heads of police and defence forces in some countries as well as other civil servants and foreign

diplomats, are in use in 48 of the 53 countries that make up Africa.

In the first five months of this year until the end of May, 229 editors, journalists, radio presenters, bloggers and those who have online publications or maintain websites were arrested, imprisoned, beaten or harassed under these or similar laws in 27 countries.

South Africa is one of the few countries in Africa that does not have ‘insult’ laws though it does have the common law crime of criminal defamation which, however, it has not used for some 30 years.

International PEN and the Media Institute of Southern

Africa have been quick to endorse the declaration.

The Declaration was the brainchild of Raymond Louw, chairman of the Media Freedom Committee of the SA National Editors’ Forum and the Africa representative of the World Press Freedom Committee.

Louw approached WAN’s Timothy Balding last December, outlined the concept and how it could be furthered and was invited to draw up the Declaration which he did with Professor Guy Berger, head of the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

Louw also drew up a list of cases of attacks on journalists in the first five months of this year, which with the declaration have been drawn to the attention of the UN, Unesco and the AU.



Declaration of Table Mountain

The World Association of Newspapers and the World Editors’ Forum, meeting at the 60th World Newspaper Congress and 14th World Editors’ Forum Conference in Cape Town, South Africa, from 3 to 6 June 2007:

Note that in country after country the African press is crippled by a panoply of repressive measures, from the jailing and persecution of journalists to the widespread scourge of ‘insult’ laws and criminal defamation which are used, ruthlessly, by government to prevent critical appraisal of their performance and to deprive the public from information about their misdemeanours;

State their conviction that Africa urgently needs a strong, free and independent press to act as a watchdog over public institutions;

Consider that press freedom remains a key to the establishment of good governance and durable economic, political, social and cultural development, prosperity and peace in Africa, and to the fight against corruption, famine, poverty, violent conflict, disease and lack of education;

Reaffirm our responsibility as the global representative organisations of the owners, publishers and editors of the world’s press to conduct ‘aggressive and persistent campaigning against press freedom violation and restrictions’;

Reaffirm our commitment to freedom of the press as a basic human right as well as an indispensable constituent of democracy in every country, including those in Africa;

Note that Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees freedom of expression as a fundamental right, and emphasise that freedom of expression is essential to the realisation of other rights set forth in international human rights instruments;

Recall that those principles have been restated and endorsed in the 2002 Declaration on Principles of Freedom of Expression in Africa, adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the African Union, thus requiring member states of the African Union to uphold and maintain press freedom;

Recall also the 1991 Windhoek Declaration on Promoting

an Independent and Pluralistic African Press;

Observe that despite numerous opportunities for a free press to emerge from national independence, fully-fledged press freedom still does not exist in many African countries and that murder, imprisonment, torture, banning, censorship and legislative edict are the norm in many countries;

Recognise that these crude forms of repression are bolstered by the deliberate exclusion of certain newspapers from state advertising placement, the burden of high import taxes on equipment and newsprint and unfair competition from state-owned media;

Note that despite the adoption of press freedom protocols and the repression of that freedom on a wide scale in Africa, the African Union in instituting its Peer Review Mechanism under the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (Nepad) programme has excluded the fostering of a free and independent press as a key requirement in the assessment of good governance in the countries of the continent; and

Identify the greatest scourge of press freedom on the continent the continued implementation of ‘insult’ laws, which outlaw criticism of politicians and those in authority, and criminal defamation legislation, both of which are used indiscriminately in the vast majority of African states that maintain them and which have as their prime motive the ‘locking up of information’;

Declare that:

African states must recognise the indivisibility of press freedom and their responsibility to respect their commitments to African and international protocols upholding the freedom, independence and safety of the press; and

To further that aim by, as a matter of urgency, abolishing ‘insult’ and criminal defamation laws which in the five months of this year have caused the harassment, arrest and/or imprisonment of 103 editors, reporters, broadcasters and online journalists in 26 countries;

Call on African governments as a matter of urgency to

review and abolish all other laws that restrict press freedom;

Call on African governments that have jailed journalists for their professional activities to free them immediately and to allow the return to their countries of journalists who have been forced into exile;

Condemn all forms of repression of African media that allows for banning of newspapers and the use of other devices such as levying import duties on newsprint and printing materials and withholding advertising;

Call on African states to promote the highest standards of press freedom in furtherance of the principles proclaimed in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other protocols and to provide constitutional guarantees of freedom of the press;

Call on the African Union immediately to include in the criteria for ‘good governance’ in the African Peer Review Mechanism the vital requirement that a country promotes free and independent media;

Call on international institutions to promote progress in press freedom in Africa in the next decade, through such steps as assisting newspapers in the areas of legal defence, skills development and access to capital and equipment;

Welcome moves towards a global fund for African media development and recommends that such an initiative gives priority attention to media legal reform and in particular the campaign to rid the continent of ‘insult’ and criminal defamation laws;

Commit WAN and WEF to expand their existing activities in regard to press freedom and development in Africa in the coming decade.

WAN and WEF make this declaration from Table Mountain at the southern tip of Africa as an earnest appeal to all Africans to recognise that the political and economic progress they seek flourishes in a climate of freedom and where the press is free and independent of governmental, political or economic control.

Cape Town 3 June 2007.

The Wild Wild Web

The impact of the digital world on mainstream media is an ongoing concern among editors, as reflected by discussions at the World Editors' Forum (WEF) hosted in Cape Town in June. Kim Gurney takes a wider look at the debate over user-generated content and the mainstream media's approaches to this new phenomenon.

David Schlesinger, editor-in-chief of Reuters, told delegates that a defining aspect of the changing media landscape was the advancement of new forms of online community and communications. If a portent were needed, it came during the presentation of his colleague, London-based Reuters reporter Adam Pasick. He has embedded a digital avatar, Adam Reuters, inside the online world called *Second Life* where over seven million users create their own 3D community. Pasick has in his virtual guise even interviewed Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu.

Such attempts to reach a new techno-savvy audience are part of a broader dynamic impacting upon journalistic practices in newsrooms around the world. Digital advances have enabled audiences to increasingly assume the role of reporter through posting online articles, weblogs (blogs), feedback commentaries and video clips. The trend has earned itself a label: "user-generated content" (UGC), also referred to as "citizen journalism". Opinion on whether UGC is a threat or a boon to mainstream media is less tidy.

The debate has broadly polarised between two positions, as so-called Web 2.0 flourishes. Traditionalists argue that journalists occupy a unique space in the public sphere; that along with the obligation of covering events in a fair and balanced manner come particular responsibilities and obligations skilled journalists best fulfill. Advocates for digital media's rejuvenation generally laud the possibility of new voices and local, accessible content driven by consumers tired of a passive role.

Indeed, globalisation aided by new technologies has paradoxically whetted the appetite for hyper-local content in an apparent knee-jerk response to increased connectivity. Added to this is a postmodern proclivity for pastiche: we live in a "remix, mash-up" world, according to Richard Sambrook, director of Global News

at the BBC, speaking at the *We Media Global Forum* in London last year. Vincent Maher, a strategist at the Mail&Guardian Online, responds: "On the one hand, I think UGC, Web 2.0 and the whole blogging phenomenon is the cultural crystallisation of the change in capabilities that the physical media infrastructure offers. On the other, the uses of the technology remain highly unpredictable and the way they are taken up is a form of expression that will keep anthropologists interested for a long time."

The phenomenon certainly has interesting ideological undertones – a kind of metaphorical battle between the hallowed *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the constantly morphed online *Wikipedia*, where web users revise existing entries as part of a constantly changing public consensus about "the truth". *Britannica versus Wiki* pits professional arbiters of knowledge against "the cult of the amateur", the title of author Andrew Keen's recently published book. As Américo Martins Dos Santos, head of the Brazilian section of the BBC World Service, puts it: some journalists still see their profession as "a lecture rather than a conversation".

So what has shifted the balance of power? Dos Santos says the July 2005 London bombings was a turning point because of the scale of the response – 20 000 messages were sent to the BBC within 12 hours. "That just highlighted the importance of having a better structure to deal with this kind of content ... the BBC recognises that it must open its airwaves for a bigger dialogue with the audience. UGC is a tremendous tool to do it and to keep the BBC relevant to an audience that wants to be really engaged with news."

Dos Santos reflects the view of many other editors when he declares citizen journalism as merely complementary. He concedes there are attendant challenges, in particular keeping consistent editorial values. "The UGC broadcast or published by media companies must still have the same editorial standards. At the end of the day, it is the responsibility of those media companies that are using the material to check if it

is correct, relevant and how best to use it in editorial terms."

Editors and their publishers are nervous of landing on the wrong side of media law. And rightly so: the majority of bloggers who also identify themselves as journalists do not abide by some common journalistic practices, according to the Pew Centre. Its survey with the American Life Project on bloggers, published in July 2006, found 34% considered their writing a form of journalism. However, only 56% "sometimes or often" spent extra time trying to verify facts; 54% hardly ever or never quoted people directly; 61% hardly ever or never got permission to post copyrighted material and 59% hardly ever or never posted corrections. Such flouting of journalistic convention has landed some American bloggers in lawsuits. This has not stopped bloggers getting more official recognition, however: they have been assigned media seats in high-profile trials. Most recently, two former sex trade workers who knew the dead women in a serial murder case in Vancouver covered the trial for citizen media website www.orato.com.

There have been calls to create a bloggers' code of conduct, including one earlier this year by Tim O'Reilly. But blogger "Karl" wrote on O'Reilly's site that taking responsibility for content could only be a good intention: "...to accept full responsibility would mean that those of us without resources would have to shut down the conversations that take place on our pages to avoid liability. And that will create a stratified web where only those with money and time will be able to provide places to converse".

Mainstream editors of web content are facing a similar dilemma. Frits van Exter, former editor-in-chief of *Trouw* newspaper in the Netherlands, told WEF delegates that interactivity actually means you run "an open sewer system". He said: "The readers, your audience... are using it to throw all their garbage through your lines 24/7." Van Exter questioned the rush for new website traffic at the expense of active moderation, arguing that old values in a new game

Citizen contributions are incredibly important. But journalists perform a different function. And we professionals should be the ones to make the distinction

could be an asset. He stressed the need for engaged debate on ethics: "Make clear what your ethics are, stick to them and be as transparent as possible about them."

Kelly McBride, ethics group leader at Poynter Institute in the US, says ethics for a journalist are very important because every decision has ethical implications; however, she does not see any lack of grounding in media ethics as a major disadvantage of citizen journalism. The problem is actually with the description itself – "citizen journalism". She states: "Citizen contributions are incredibly important to journalism. Their voices are crucial. But journalists perform a different function. And we professionals should be the ones to make that distinction."

Maher at the M&G concurs: he does not consider most blogs to be citizen journalism anymore: "The blogosphere will continue to be the Wild West of publishing but one has a different set of expectations of it." Maher thinks in future citizen journalism will mostly be created in conjunction with media companies that protect themselves and their contributors from legal exposure. "I don't think there is a big future for citizen journalism that is not edited in some way or another," he adds. "One of the primary reasons for the gatekeeping, other than social responsibility, is the limitation of legal risk and exposure for the media company. This will not go away unless people suddenly stop caring about defamation."

Maher's observations are borne out by research on how the British media are struggling with UGC, conducted by City University journalism lecturer Neil Thurman. He says his findings also have relevance to other news organisations because journalists tend to share similar norms and values. Thurman's paper, presented in March 2007, concluded that reputation, trust and legal concerns suggest news organisations have too much at stake to just open the doors to UGC. He found an opportunity existed to facilitate user media by filtering and aggregating it in ways useful and valuable to audiences. The M&G has recently done just that by launching an "aggregator" Amatomu.com, which effectively provides a one-stop, searchable blog interface.

One recurring gripe among editors in Thurman's first round of interviews in 2004 was the drain on resources to monitor UGC. Interestingly, attitudes had shifted markedly from fear to enthusiasm by a second round of interviews in 2006. Thurman said this was partly driven by Rupert Murdoch's speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors in April 2005 where he warned against complacency about the digital revolution. Thurman said technology also helped: content management systems became more flexible and affordable, which lessened the burden of moderation.

What is clear is UGC is taking off, according to online audience measurement firm Nielsen/NetRatings. It found in an August 2006 report that half of the top web brands in the US were driven by UGC and the media was a big part of this trend: Associated Press scored a high rating on the back of a new video offering to complement online and print news. Others are following suit: Sky News has built a virtual replica of its Twickenham News Centre in cyberspace and BBC News 24 last year launched a new TV programme based entirely on UGC. It also broadcast a series of reports motivated, produced and presented by listeners about major issues in Africa.

There has not been a watershed event spurring citizen journalism in South Africa but the established players are not sleeping: the *Sunday Times* recently launched a UGC website under the masthead 'For the people By the people'.

It is partly the fear of being marginalised that is driving the adoption of UGC initiatives – at least in the UK newspaper world, according to Thurman.

But as the BBC's Sambrook told WEF delegates, there is nothing new in terms of editorial principles about the UGC dynamic. He said: "We've always interviewed the public, we've always interviewed experts, we've always taken contributions from the public but the technology is such that it allows this to happen on an unprecedented scale. And it's much more one of quantity rather than qualitative difference in terms of the editorial principles that lie behind it." McBride at Poynter agrees: "It's merely possible now. That's the only thing that's changed. But that's everything. Many people want interactivity. Now that they can have it, they refuse to live without it."

Maher points out that the old one-to-many mass media model seems incongruent with the way digital culture expresses itself today. Most media companies are embracing UGC more than convergence; it has "immediate and obvious benefits when you consider that introducing UGC onto news sites along with other Web 2.0 functionality... dramatically increases the volume of ad inventory available for sale." He says most news companies are capitalising on the input they get from their audience by monetising the content: "It is therefore inevitable that elements of the audience are going to become a paid resource, especially as quality becomes increasingly of concern." This is already evident in the US where some newspaper sites syndicate content from bloggers. Others, like associatedcontent.com, offer cash for stories that range from the serious to a miracle photo of Jesus Christ in the Korean mountains.

In the end, the battle might be over-hyped. As Steven Johnson points out in *Time* magazine's January 2007 cover story, most UGC is working in a zone where there are no experts or where the users themselves are experts rather than challenging the authority of a traditional expert: "The overwhelming majority of photographers at flickr [a photo-sharing website] harbour no dream of becoming the next Annie Leibovitz. They just want to share with their extended family the pics they snapped over the holidays." His observations are supported by Nielsen/Netratings, which found that overwhelmingly most bloggers were motivated by creative expression.

Thurman at City University says UGC has already had an impact on established newsroom models. He concluded: "Whether it is boon or a threat depends on your point of view and is difficult to unpick from the other changes that are happening – convergence, mergers and acquisitions, globalisation and consumer preferences. UGC can be a positive influence on the mainstream media and its journalists but only in properly resourced and managed newsrooms."

I don't think that there is a big future for citizen journalism that is not edited... this will not go away unless people suddenly stop caring about defamation

Mario Vargas Llosa

At the World Editors' Forum in conversation with Alejandro Miró Quesada, from *El Comercio*, Peru

AMQ: What is good journalism for Mario Vargas Llosa and what is bad journalism?

MVL: I think that good journalism is decent, trustful journalism, journalism that conveys an objective vision of what is going on in the world, and bad journalism is journalism that lies, that distorts the real world, that disseminates confusion. I think the basic problem is that in our times, journalism has been becoming more and more a form of entertainment. Many people read papers, weeklies, or watch television, looking for entertainment much more than for true information about what is going on, and this has provoked the degradation of journalism.

AMQ: Should well-made journalism get involved in this discussion and criticise this journalism? Should it get involved in all this debate?

MVL: Debate can be useful. But the best way to fight against bad journalism, against yellow journalism, journalism that is entertainment, is by a good example, doing exactly what good newspapers, radio, or TV programmes have been doing; telling the truth, trying to convey good information in order to be able to take a position about what is going on. This is what has been the fantastic service that journalism has provided since the beginning. I am not against entertainment, of course not, I think that entertainment is perfectly licit, but I think that it is very dangerous to think that it is the most important goal of journalism. I think that if you believe this, distortion is inevitable.

AMQ: Anyone can claim to be a journalist and act as one. For you, who is really a journalist?

MVL: Well, I think a journalist now is a professional. As in all professions there are different

kinds of specialists. Because knowledge has become so vast, so complex, so diversified that not even the most talented and well-trained journalist can write about everything, it is absolutely impossible. Specialisation is indispensable among journalists and I think also very serious training. When I started it was considered that a journalist was someone who became a professional by working as a journalist. I don't think this is true anymore. I think a journalist needs, like an architect or a lawyer, very serious training, not only of the techniques but also the historical, civic and moral dimension of the profession.

AMQ: What are the professional and intellectual skills that modern journalism must have to be capable of properly observing and analysing this globalised world of today?

MVL: You should write with a serious knowledge of what you are writing about. This is a basic requirement. But also you need to have instincts and creativity. A good journalist is also a kind of creator, someone that uses language. And for that you need skills. And for these skills you need first, training, culture, but also flair and instinct. It is something that is very difficult to define.

AMQ: Many people talk with nostalgia about the good old quality journalism. Have journalistic values changed through the years?

MVL: It is true that in the past there were great newspapers and magazines. But there were also many very bad newspapers and magazines. It is true that now, as the world has become much more complex and there are so many different techniques and means of information, the challenges for journalists are enormous and the

adaptation has not been easy. But I wouldn't be so pessimistic as those people who believe that journalism in the past was a model and that this model has disappeared. I think this is a romantic prejudice.

AMQ: In many developing countries, readership and even credibility are suffering. Is it because of the competition from the Internet and all the new media, or is it because of the press not fulfilling its job?

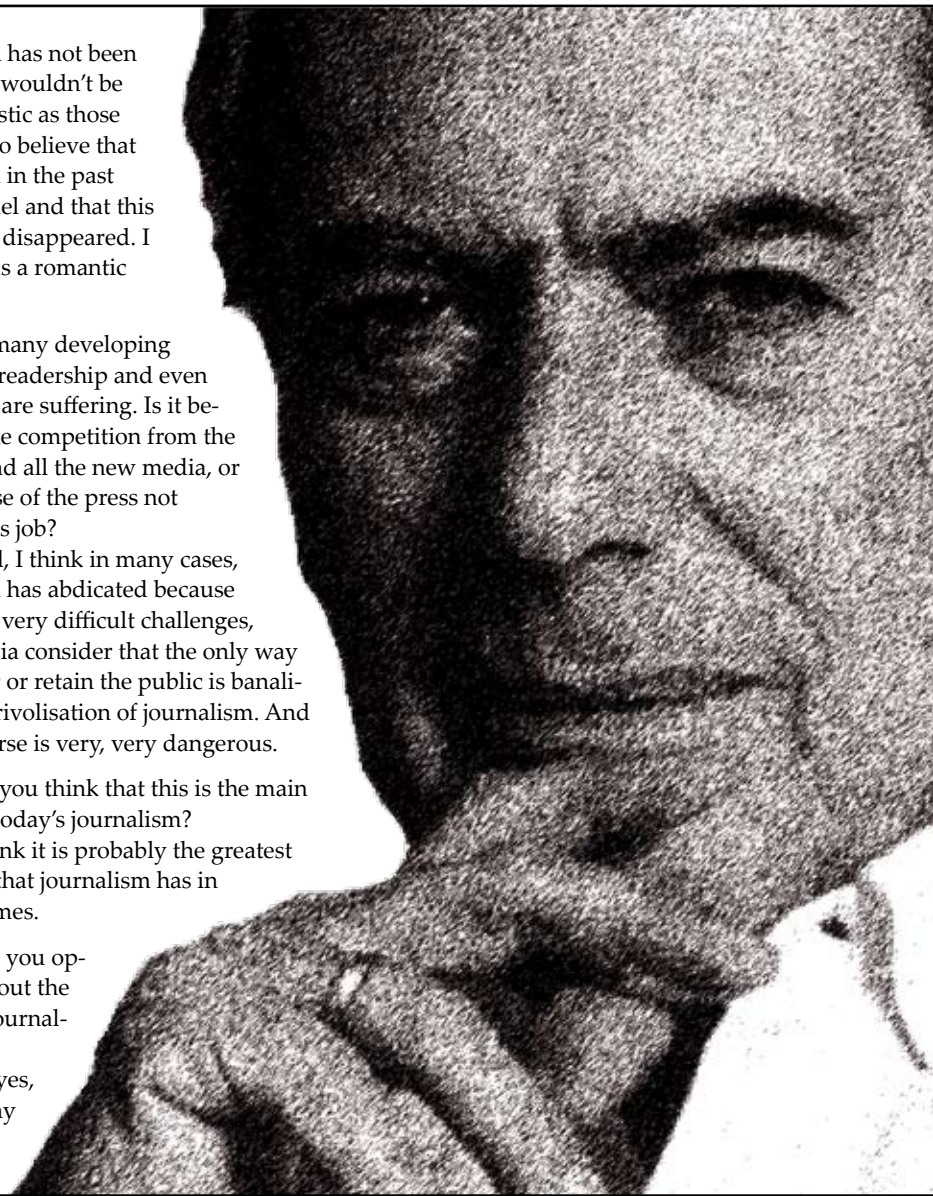
MVL: Well, I think in many cases, journalism has abdicated because it is facing very difficult challenges, many media consider that the only way to conquer or retain the public is banalisation or frivolisation of journalism. And this of course is very, very dangerous.

AMQ: Do you think that this is the main threat for today's journalism?

MVL: I think it is probably the greatest challenge that journalism has in modern times.

AMQ: Are you optimistic about the future of journalism?

MVL: Oh yes, without any doubt.



Avatar Adam helps Reuters get a (second) life

by Anne Taylor

Reuters, the world's biggest financial news service and data provider, has a virtual agency in a virtual world, headed by a virtual bureau chief known as Adam Reuters, who reports on news in the virtual world.

You can find Adam Reuters (Adam Pasick in real life) heading up the virtual Reuters bureau on an island inside Second Life – an online world that has more than eight million registered users and an economy worth the equivalent of \$500-million.

Adam Pasick introduced his Second Life alter-ego at a Reuters masterclass at this year's WAN/WEF in Cape Town.

Describing Second Life as "the most talked about and most exciting thing in the media world", Pasick said Reuters had signed up in October last year to "get experience of the virtual world".

Although many independent journalists and bloggers have joined such virtual worlds, Reuters was the first established news agency to dispatch a full-time reporter. In fact, Reuters invested enough money to buy an island, which is modelled on its head-



Adam Pasick works for Reuters in the real world; avatar Adam Reuters works for the Reuters bureau in Second Life.

quarters in Times Square, New York. On the island, visitors can access a Reuters news-feed, which is a streaming video that users can activate. "We wanted people to know the Reuters brand. This is a bit of an experiment for us," Pasick said.

After all, joining Second Life is a sure-fire way for a traditional media company to create virtual credibility. This is important for an industry unquestionably in flux.

As David Schlesinger, Reuters UK editor-in-chief, told the masterclass, the era of

one-way journalism is over:

"After the London bombing, we received a flood of images and videos from citizen journalists. Since then our engagement with bloggers and informal journalists has exploded."

The agency works on a collaborative model that brings audience, subject and journalist together – and their involvement in Second Life is key to that. "People are participating and making their voices heard in a new and innovative way,"

says Pasick.

For those of you in the real world who haven't heard about Second Life yet, it's a virtual community, which has its own economy, businesses and currency, known as Linden dollars. Its growth in the past year has been dramatic, with about 25 000 new residents every day. Created by US firm Linden Labs, it has a registered membership of over 8.6-million users (up from 2.4-million in January). It's big. And it is only going to get bigger. According to Gartner Research, quoted in a

recent *Newsweek* article, four out of every five people who use the Internet will actively participate in Second Life or a similar medium by 2011. "If Gartner is to be believed (and it is one of the most respected research firms in the field) this means that 1.6-billion – out of the total two-billion Internet users – will have found new lives online," says *Newsweek*.

At this stage, South African participation is quite limited. To make the experience pleasant, you need a high-speed connection, and Second Life is broadband intensive.

Other media in Second Life: UK pay-TV company SkyNews, with a virtual replica of its newsroom and presenter Adam Boulton, plans to become the first 24-hour news channel in Second Life by giving away virtual TV sets so that Second Life residents can watch SkyNews in their virtual lounges. Go figure.

German publisher Axel Springer, which owns Germany's top-selling newspaper *Bild*, has a tabloid called the *Avastar*, which carries news that happens in Second Life.

Channel 4 offers some of its TV programming on a virtual TV network. It recently launched 4Radio, which offers podcasts of programmes from music to speech.

Mario Garcia, the great guru of newspaper redesigns worldwide and exponent of WED (writing-editing-design) as a newspaper construction philosophy, was at the World Newspaper Congress and World Editors' Forum in Cape Town, to tell both sets of participants just how online media is being used by tech-savvy users. His conclusion – for those who may be worried –

We do read!



In 1990 Garcia, now a professor at Syracuse University, and Dr Peggy Starke Adam, who were both working at the Poynter Institute in Florida, came up with a method to figure out how people read newspapers called Eyetrac. By attaching small cameras which look into the eyes of readers and recall their eye movements, they could tell what readers were attracted to, how long they would read

and how they navigated information.

This method has been repeated with online readers in a new survey this year. Part of the driving thought behind the research was the hunch that because of the speed of delivery of breaking news by digital and broadcast media, many people already know the news before they come to read it in their newspapers. A recent survey he did of *Wall St Jour-*

nal readers showed that 60% of them know the news before they pick it up in this paper.

The survey involved 600 print and online readers in four US cities, Minneapolis, St Petersburg, Philadelphia and Denver, reading dailies and news websites on "ordinary days" involving no extraordinary news events. 100 people read the *StarTribune* and 100 the *StarTribune.com*; 100 read



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*Sherwin Bryce-Pease
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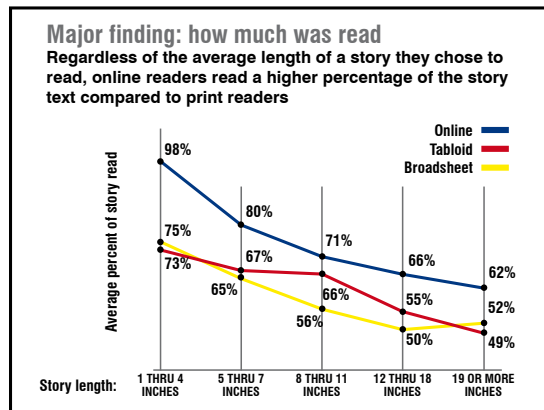
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1. These 600 guinea pigs are “choosing what to read and then reading it a lot”. Conclusion: “The long form is not dead.”



When figures were compared: 57% of stories in tabloids which readers chose to read were read in their entirety; and the figures were 62% for broadsheet stories and 77% for online stories. For online stories overall two-thirds were read entirely. The most text that was read was in the news section, and it seems that when a newspaper's brand is trusted, so is their online version.



4. In terms of design and navigation of text, Garcia says "online and print are two worlds apart". He still believes that design is aesthetically important for print media but "not so critical" for online reading. Online readers, he believes, are "not into beauty, but utility".

Garcia now has a new philosophy he punts for how to deal with breaking news: begin online and on mobile technology with the first version of the story, then move it to print, then move it back online with more details. He calls the first version “the report”, the print version “the story 1” and the fuller online version – with interactive possibilities – “the story 2”. The rationale is “assume the reader knows more than you do” and certainly that by the time the breaking news story reaches the print pages it is already known to readers. The idea of the “newspaper of record” is no longer sustainable in a new technology regime, you have to “begin the record in some other medium” and Garcia says “online is now where the story begins and the story ends”. To make this “fusion of print and online” Garcia advocates appointing a “fusion editor, someone who can keep a foot on the printed edition, one on the online edition” or “naming a ‘storytelling sheriff’ to decide on and to patrol the path of the story throughout an entire cycle”.

Has the newspaper habit disappeared from most people's lives? "For an increasing number, the

And for those who continue to worry about reading as an issue: "We have not lost our ability to read in depth, and, in fact, reader attention spans have not shortened dramatically or irreversibly. But we do have more highly selective readers who choose what they want to read, and then read a lot. Even more than we thought they would."



AFRICA =HOT!

South African photographer Guy Tillim and Nicole Aeby, head of the photography department at the Swiss School of Journalism in Zurich, worked with the World Press Photo organisation to run workshops for African photographers which produced the Africa Hot! pictures and exhibition.

Eight photographers from the continent met in Addis Ababa to work on this project with Tillim and Aeby and then they returned to their countries to implement the ideas and to continue to receive tutoring via the Internet. George Manful, a UN Environment Programme expert on climate change gave the participants insight into the subject.

Tillim said the theme of climate change was deliberately chosen because of the need to think hard and carefully about how to translate something so elusive into images. "The concept is difficult to figure out and photograph: is a drought just a drought, or is it the effect of global warming?" Those were the kinds of assessments the photographers had to make as a result of choosing to document this particular issue.

And also, scientists are saying that the coming effects of climate change will affect Africa most severely, so it seemed opportune to focus on this particular issue. "We will experience it more acutely than others," Tillim said.

The project set out to look at "people on the margins" and to aim not to be didactic about the subject or to thrust the issue into people's faces. There were lots of discussions which involved looking, questioning and relooking. "A humanistic approach leads to greater imagination," Tillim said, "it affects the interaction with people and the representation of them."

The resulting photos, he feels, are deliberately not dealing with climate change directly or simplistically. "Conventional iconography is a dead-end," Tillim says.

After having done their own research, the eight students chose their own angles and got to work in their own countries. Geographically, they covered much of the African continent. They were:

- Akintunde Akinleye, Nigeria
- Emmanuel Daou, Mali
- Osama Dawod, Egypt
- Carlos Litulo, Mozambique
- Mohamed Mambo, Tanzania
- Felix Masi, Kenya
- Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi, Zimbabwe
- Michael Tsegaye, Ethiopia

Some of the photographers went for subjects like the consequences of oil production in the Niger delta and logging in Mozambique, while others looked beyond the problems for solutions. Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi, for example, focused on a farmer in Zimbabwe who catches rainwater to irrigate his and his neighbours' land in times of drought. Mohamed Mambo showed how mangrove trees are used to fight erosion.

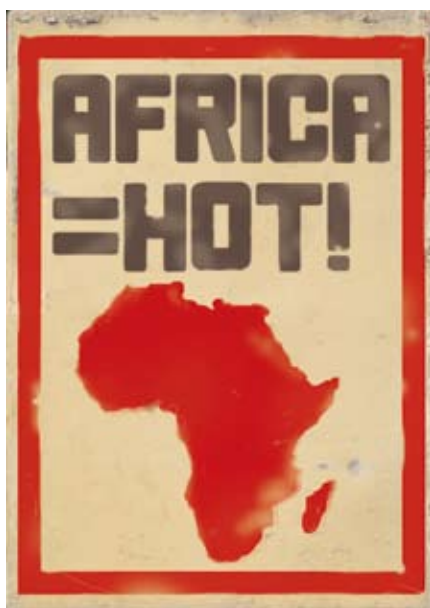
The exhibition was displayed in the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam in June, alongside the World Press Photo exhibition and an overview of the work of the 2006 winning photographer Spencer Platt. It involved eight picture stories and was connected to the Dutch climate change awareness campaign "Hier" (Here). The campaign consists of projects in the Netherlands, Africa and South America.



Emmanuel Daou, Mali

Increased motorcycle traffic is polluting the air of Bamako and Mali's desert has been steadily advancing south in recent years. Desertification occurs when desert spreads and takes over fertile farmland. Some farmers have decided to leave the north of the country to search for work in the cities of the south. The large number of people resettling in these areas has led to additional environmental problems, such as increased pollution and overpopulation, and many have been unable to find work.





Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi, Zimbabwe

As rain begins to fall, farmers in Kadoma put buckets in position to harvest it for later use. Corn is the most widely grown crop in Zimbabwe. Recent periods of high temperatures and low rainfall have had a dramatic negative effect on crop growth and yields.



Osama Dawod, Egypt

Although he has considered moving away, Hani has decided to try to make a living in Rosetta. The northern coast of Egypt has seen rising sea levels in recent years. The effects of this have been closely felt in the town of Rosetta, where for generations residents have depended upon the sea for their livelihoods. The environmental changes have hurt the fishing and farming industries, forcing many unemployed villagers to consider emigrating to other countries in search of work.



Mohamed Mambo, Tanzania

Tanzania's Kilwa coastal belt is fringed by mangrove forests, which have an important role in controlling the effects of ocean currents. The trees act as a buffer between land and water, helping to protect against storm surges and rising tides. The mangrove forests are being felled at an alarming rate, greatly reducing the protective effect they have on the region's coast. Saplings from a mangrove nursery project are now being planted in areas where mangroves were destroyed.



Michael Tsegaye, Ethiopia

Ethiopia's Konso people practice a traditional form of terraced agriculture on their hilly terrain. In recent years drought conditions in the area and soil erosion have caused their farming system to break down. Some of the vulnerable farmers in Gemole village are adapting to these conditions by agreeing to resettle in new areas. Others have chosen to stay on their own land and cope with the changing circumstances.



Akintunde Akinleye, Nigeria

Children mend fishing nets in a muddy river near Iko village. Crude oil remains the lifeblood of major world economies and Nigeria is the eighth largest crude oil producer in the world. As a result of high oil prices, its earnings have soared in recent years. But the social, economic and environmental costs of oil exploration in Nigeria have been extensive.





Felix Masi, Kenya

Many children in northern Kenya have stopped attending school in order to help search for water.

In 2006 Kenya experienced prolonged drought and famine, forcing the government to declare the crisis a national disaster. Worst affected was the northern region of the country, where lack of food and water threatened the health of residents and led to widespread livestock losses. The famine aggravated an already dire situation caused by poverty in the region.



Carlos Litulo, Mozambique

In Mozambique, wood from deforestation is being used in the production of charcoal. Tropical deforestation is one of the most critical environmental problems facing developing countries today. It is believed to contribute to global climate change by increasing carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, let alone the long-term, potentially catastrophic impacts on biodiversity.





Spinning straw men when science writing goes wrong

*Media have been complicit in spreading dissident views around climate change, a movement which has set global efforts to address the problem back by two decades. **Leonie Joubert**, author of *Scorched: South Africa's changing climate*, considers whether all facts should be considered equal.*

The story was to science journalism what the marmalade-dropper is to hard news: so astonishing that it pauses the reader's breakfast toast mid-air, long enough for the marmalade to slide right off. A KwaZulu-Natal newspaper stated that a retired scientist in the Midlands could show that shifting climate patterns are not manmade and that his groundbreaking work could earn him a Nobel Prize. The scientist claimed that only the northern hemisphere was warming, for natural reasons, in a rhythm that was consistent with the "golden ratio" of 0.618.

Penning the story was the editor of a small-town rag who failed his professional obligations on two counts: firstly, he didn't check whether the scientist's work had been subjected to basic peer review required of the academic process; and he swallowed whole a gimmicky pseudo-scientific notion which has been convincingly debunked by mathematicians years ago.

The golden ratio is a description of a geometric relationship between parts of a line that has been divided in a specific way: divide a line so that the full length of the line (A+B) relates to the longer segment (A) just as (A) relates to the shorter segment (B).

Since the Greeks, many have claimed to see this 0.618 ratio in the spiral of shells, plant shapes and population dynamics. It supposedly informed the architecture of the Egyptian pyramids and is evident in art, literature and even music.

Mathematician George Markowsky in his paper *Misconceptions about the Golden Ratio* dismissed these ideas, writing that while the "mathematical properties are correctly stated, (its presence) in art, architecture, literature and aesthetics is false or seriously misleading".

Fortunately the newspaper's readership is small enough for the article not to cause too much damage, but this case is a caricature of the larger problem of the media's complicity in spreading dissident and often scientifically false views regarding global warming.

Dr Guy Midgley, a key South African author on the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) *Fourth Assessment Report* released earlier this year, said denialism around climate change has set world efforts to curb global warming pollution back by 20 years.

The problem runs deep into the bedrock of journalistic objectivity. In order to appear fair and balanced, journalists must present both sides of an issue. When that issue is, for example, the national utility's plan to roll out several nuclear power stations as part of the country's "energy mix", then it is responsible to quote the original source of the information as well as seek comment from opposition parties and civil society organisations.

However when the story addresses the latest climate change predictions as presented by the IPCC earlier this year, seeking objectivity is then often

interpreted as finding a climate change dissident and quoting this contradictory voice. Doing so reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of where the scientific community is at – because it has moved beyond asking *if* climate change is happening and is now probing *how fast* it is happening. The scientific community is 90% certain that half of all warming witnessed in recent decades is due to human activities on the planet. Scientific language allows for a margin of error, so to claim 90% certainty means the community speaks with a high degree of confidence.

Quoting a dissident in this case, as one 702 reporter did by “balancing” comment from Dr Guy Midgley with contradictory views of outspoken sceptic and energy expert Andrew Kenny, is like rounding off a story on the calculation of the Earth’s girth by quoting a Flat Earth-er.

News convention is also partly at fault. “News” is inherently something that is new and possibly out of the ordinary. A journalist will look for a new angle to a tired old story of climate change. The dissident movement, whether organised or not, has survived by perpetuating the notion that the scientific community is not in agreement about climate change science. A few mavericks, having cherry-picked the facts they need to support their alternative views, emerge from the background noise of consensus on the subject. And the media – always on the lookout for a fresh or alternative spin on things – might be tempted to latch onto this apparent story.

A 2004 article in the journal *Science* stated that an examination of nearly 1 000 scientific papers showed that “none disagreed with the science of global climate change – but in a similar sample group of newspaper articles, over 50% showed that there was some doubt about whether climate change is caused by us”.

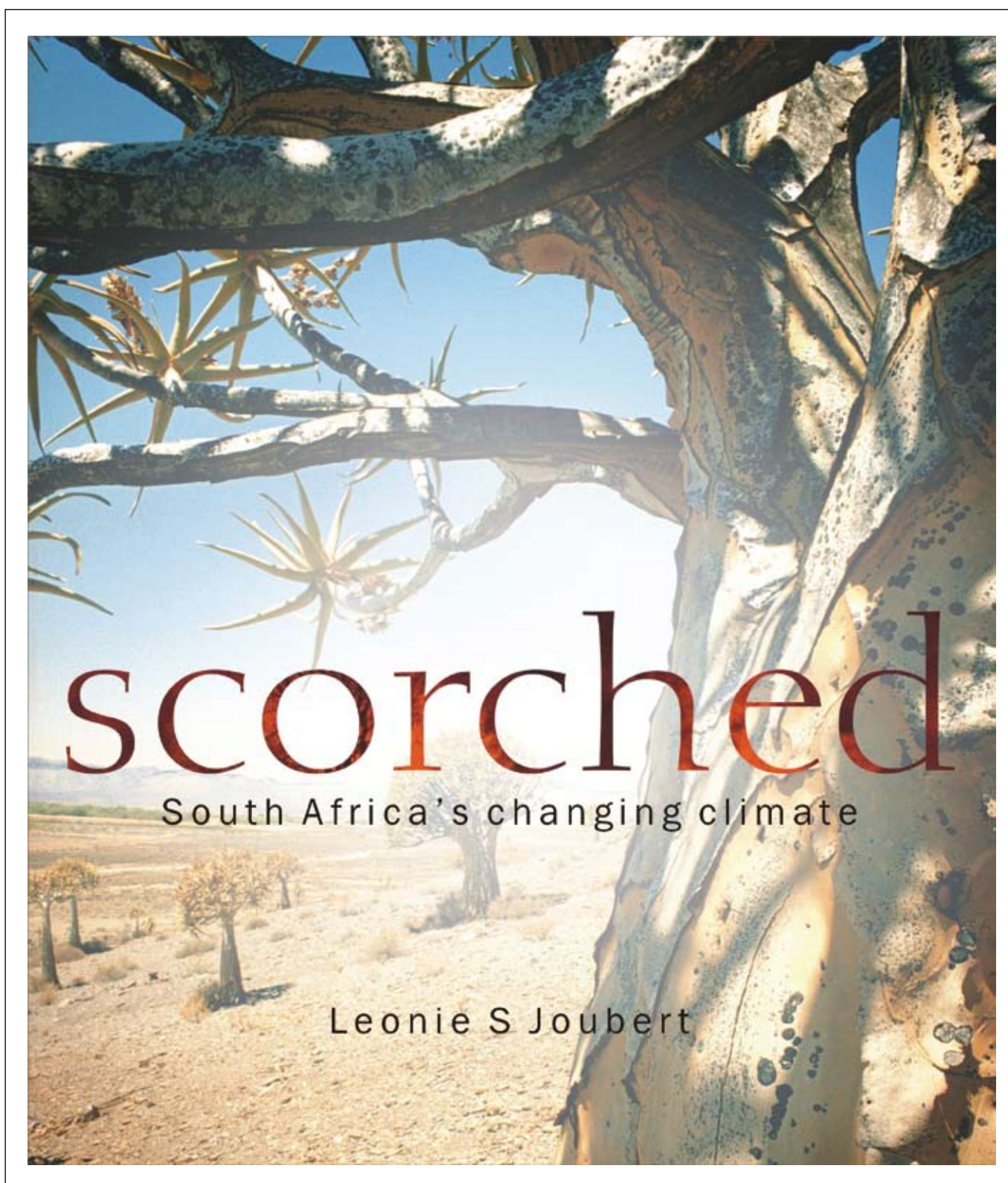
Journalists find themselves in something of a quandary here, since their obligation is to give space to legitimate ideas in order to fulfil the role of informing the public. Meanwhile they must remain the critical gatekeeper, vetting information so that some semblance of truthfulness is achieved.

In the case of the dissident spin on climate change facts, one can borrow rather crudely from George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*: all facts are equal but some facts are more equal than others.

In a world where science becomes increasingly specialised and complex, the need for skills development is clear so that journalists are able to separate the legitimate facts from those which have been corrupted by agendas.

Sociologist Massimiano Bucchi speaks of the widening “knowledge gap” between the public and science over the past three centuries. The professionalising and disentanglement of science from the public and general culture, he said, has been “accompanied by the creation of new channels of communication between specialists and non-specialists”. Science writers therefore must be able to invest time in deepening their understanding of the subject so they can become more than manipulated observers of the apparent “he said, she said” debate as dissidents and the consensus view scramble for column inches.

Science is not democratic – the existing consensus view does not deserve more media coverage because more people agree with it but rather because evidence-based science supports it. In light of this, journalists must decide whether a handful of maverick voices deserve the airtime, simply because they disagree with the thousands of other scientists worldwide who are convinced by the existing evidence.



Denialism around climate change has set world efforts to curb global warming pollution back by 20 years... and the problem runs deep into the bedrock of journalistic objectivity

Leonie Joubert’s book, *Scorched: South Africa’s changing climate*, received an honorary award from the 2007 *Sunday Times* Alan Paton Non-Fiction Judges. Travel writer Don Pinnock describes *Scorched* as “a wonderful, stimulating read... mostly because of Leonie’s puckish, metaphoric and often poetic style of writing”. Duncan Butchart of *WildWatch* remarked that *Scorched* is engaging and quirky. “Meticulous in its research, the information is presented in a refreshing and surprisingly humorous style – better, even, than Tim Flannery (author of *The Weather Makers*) or Al Gore.” Joubert has been published in the *Sunday Independent*, *African Decisions*, *Africa Geographic*, *Getaway*, *Progress*, *EarthYear*, *Farmers Weekly*, *Engineering News*, *Cape Times*, *SA4x4*, *Xplore* and the *Mail&Guardian*.

In 2005 she co-authored the new Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the Prince Edward Islands Special Nature Reserve.

Her regular science column for *Wine News* earned a Merit Award in the SAB Environmental Journalists of the Year Awards 2006, Print Media category, “in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the field of environmental journalism”.

She has a Bachelor of Journalism and Media Studies from Rhodes University and a Masters in Journalism from Stellenbosch University.

She has been appointed the 2007 Ruth First Fellow at Wits University for which she is working on an investigation into climate change and vulnerable communities in South Africa.

Of big pharmaceuticals, preventable deaths, and wonder pills

Evelyn Groenink writes about Africa's first trans-national investigation

This year, the Forum for African Investigative Reporters (Fair) embarked on a trans-national pan-African investigation conducted by 10 Fair members in five African countries. The topic – “the pharmaceutical industry in Africa” – is certain to result in interesting, perhaps even shocking, findings by the team. The results of the investigation will be announced at the Fair pan-African Investigative Journalism summit to be held at the University of the Witwatersrand in September. Fair will also publish a hard copy dossier of the trans-national investigation report.

The team consists of investigative reporters of repute in their countries, Zambia, Kenya, Malawi, the DRC and South Africa.

Together, they are digging into such questions as:

- Why are much-needed medicines still too expensive for Africans?
- Why are cheaper medicines often blocked from reaching the African public?
- What medicines have been tested in Africa by the pharmaceutical companies but have not become available to the African public?
- Who are the peddlers selling quack remedies for real diseases and why are they free to do what they do in many African countries?
- Which anti-Aids programmes focus on abstinence-only and does this help?

There have been diverse reports on and complaints about the current practice of pharmaceutical companies, which conduct more and more of their clinical trials in Africa, because volunteers are easily found and medical staff salaries are cheaper, while simultaneously pricing the resulting medicines so high that they can never be accessed by most Africans, not even those guinea pigs who helped develop them.

This situation has left the African market wide open to “wonder pill” peddlers of the type of Dr Matthias Rath in South Africa, who claim that their concoctions can cure Aids and other diseases. The Fair team is looking into these reports and conducting its own surveys, interviews and data search to investigate the actual situation and its consequences. In addition it is investigating whether the efforts of African governments, foreign donor organisations and local NGOs help counter this situation.

The investigation follows a collaborative format that has been tried and tested by the US-based International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (leading to trailblazing international investigations into such issues as the international arms trade and water privatisation), and has been adapted and modified by Fair to suit African circumstances.

The undertaking is project-managed by renowned Dutch investigative author Eveline

Lubbers, who led team-based investigations into multinationals and the arms trade in Europe. This is Lubbers’ first investigative foray into Africa. “It is a challenge,” she says.

“There is so little information and expertise available locally in the participating countries that background data from international sources often needs to be fed back to the local team members, so that they get to know under which rocks to look. There is also a lot of misinformation distributed by traders of untested drugs as well as by some religious groups, that our teams have to wade through with the people they interview. At the same time, as the central co-ordinator who is not on the ground at the level where people are dying, I am often shocked by the reports that reach me. Jointly, we are unearthing important stuff.”

It is indeed a challenge – and one of Fair’s *raison d’être* – that little news and information reaches African countries to begin with. That is, not information that one can work with. The flood of disjointed data that one accesses through the Internet is of little use without the institutional capacity and the expertise to sieve this flood for local priority issues.

As a result, media workers in Africa often see their efforts channelled, filtered and sometimes dictated by the international headlines from big press agencies, government propaganda, corporate advertising, the odd NGO publication and local political news – often concerning political rivals accusing each other of such things as corruption and mismanagement.

Even if one were to search, pro-actively, through databases (like the company registry, or tenders that are on offer in a government department), archives are very often in disarray and information is regularly simply refused when asked for. There is still no proper access to information legislation in any African country outside South Africa.

Interestingly, in the months that Fair conceptualised this cross-border investigation, this disadvantage in a certain respect became an advantage. If the people on the street are all one has to go on, the people on the street have great influence in what one prioritises as a topic! Fair members, in website correspondence that took months, and in which many possible subjects were considered, finally decided on the topic of accessible medication because “people participate in medical experiments in pharmaceutical clinical trials but they don’t get the medication when they need it – people are dying”, as Malawi Fair team member Mabvuto Banda put it.

According to international news reports about Africa, the news on this continent seems to be all about corruption accusations, but the Fair team opted for the very simple question: where are the medicines?

The answer to this question, of course, will touch on corruption, as well as on the practices by “big pharma”. But by tackling the consequences of the lack of affordable medicine in Africa on a grass-roots level, the various powers to be held responsible will each have to answer as to their role in the problem, and conclusions will be drawn regarding the capacity and political and corporate will of each of these, in the face of tens (or hundreds) of thousands of unnecessary deaths of mothers, fathers and children in Africa.

A consequence of the lack of real medicines is, of course, the avalanche of wonder pill peddlers who exploit an already desperate public even further. On the streets of Africa, the Fair team members have encountered a sizeable number of such unscrupulous people and their often damaging, even poisonous, products.

Half-way through, without much local access to state and corporate information, the Fair team has already succeeded in building and tapping sources, and a picture is starting to emerge. Deeply hidden and sometimes astonishing examples of injustice, wrongdoing and bad faith have been uncovered in all five participating countries.

The team members have supported one another by making their interim results available to the rest of the team, so that issues they came across could be checked in the other team member countries. Lubbers has consistently helped search through relevant international expertise, channelled helpful data from there back to the team members and has kept everyone in their respective countries focused and on track.

As Fair co-ordinator, I am certainly looking forward to the headlines when the investigation is complete.

The Fair Pan-African Investigative Journalism Summit will take place in conjunction with the Power Reporting Conference 2007, organised by the University of Witwatersrand’s Investigative Journalism Workshop in Johannesburg.

HOW WE MAKE THE NEWS

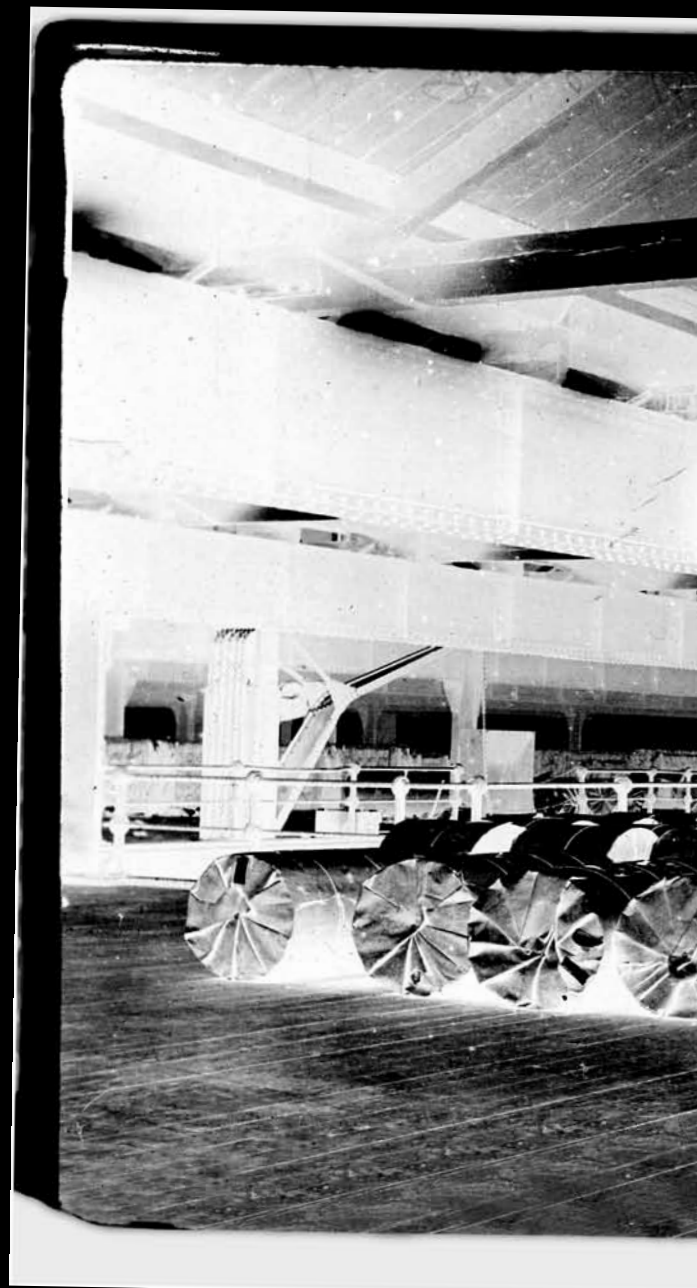
The Wake-Up Call

It starts early.

Really early.

Sparrows-aren't-even-awake-let-alone-passing-wind early.

The presses start to grind into life, the lights of Independent newspaper offices slice through the pre-dawn gloom and the caffeine starts to kick in, as reporters and photographers on the streets, and editors in their well-worn chairs, seek out what's making the world tick on any given day.



The News Rules

It's a routine that's anything but routine. Because the news doesn't stick to the rules. It does what it does, it happens when it happens and the trick is to grab the tiger by the tail and hold on for dear life.

The People Behind The Press

There are 2100 people who grab that swishing tail every day. 2100 Editors, journalists, photographers, printers, designers and marketers. 2100

Independent staff who do it, time and time again,

for one simple reason.

They love it.

The Daily Rush

Every one is, in the words of one journalist, "a news junkie."

And news junkies live for their fix. They look further, push harder and work more just to give the 5 million South Africans who read an Independent newspaper every week the best possible window on the world. As one reporter says, "8 Years in, it still feels like the first week. And I still get that thrill if I spy someone reading something I wrote".



KING JAMES / 1155

The Final Proof

And it's in the way we make the news, day after day, night after night, dawn 'til dawn, that the secret of our success lies.

We're proud to say that in bringing you the news, we've made a little news of our own. Our myriad awards and kudos are nice, but what really counts – appropriately enough - are the hard facts:



- Independent publishes more daily newspapers than any other publisher in South Africa.
- Independent distributes over 4 million newspapers weekly.
- Independent is the largest gatherer of information and supplier of news in the English language in South Africa.
- Independent's papers dominate the major metropolitan areas.
- Independent has launched two successful daily newspapers since 2000.

The Credits

In short, we must be doing something right.

So to the brave 2100, news junkies all, thank you – without you, South Africa would be a far poorer, less visible and less comprehensible place.

May your addiction never be overcome.

And to the millions of South Africans who trust us and count on us day in and day out to bring them the world – may your thirst for knowledge never be quenched, and your trust in us never be questioned.

The Early Edition

Rest assured that tomorrow, just like today, we'll be getting up before the sparrows, hitting the coffee and then the streets, and putting the world on paper just for you.



INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERS

Learning about learning

Young journalists are emerging from learnership programmes with exactly the mix of practical skills and knowledge their newsrooms need; they are employable and – budgets permitting – are employed.

... by Gwen Ansell

It's hard to believe that the National Certificate in Journalism has been on the books since December 2004 – or, indeed, that some of the earlier-registered Unit Standards are already up for revision. But in what seems that short time, all the major media houses in South Africa, and some of the independents, have begun to run learnerships or work skills programmes related to the qualification; the first learners have graduated; and we are beginning to see what works (actually, a great deal) – and what does not (unfortunately, almost as much).

When the qualification was first mooted, fears were expressed that the supposed behaviourism of an “outcomes-based” journalism training programme would narrow and dull those undergoing it. That certainly hasn't happened. The portfolios of stories I've looked at as an assessor have had all the vividness, variety and risk-taking anyone could hope for from beginner journalists. But the massive subjectivity that used to be employed deciding whether a trainee was the “right stuff” for newsroom employment has gone. Instead, learners are evaluated on the work they produce and the thinking behind that work. Assessment is transparent and must prove it was fairly applied; there are no secret reports. All of this is fairer and far more consistent than previous practice, and may even force a crack or two in the glass ceiling the SA National Editors' Forum is so concerned about.

It is far harder than it used to be for young journalists to enter a newsroom still credulous enough to swallow one of those recurring, alarmist, “airborne Aids” rumours. Now the qualification requires all learners to understand the basic science of Aids and the best ways to communicate it to readers. The same is true for the basics of how our democracy is supposed to work. Not all previous cadet programmes and college courses covered such topics; many young journalists are now better informed, with a bedrock of vital, relevant general knowledge, because of the new curriculum.

In the media houses for which I have assessed, they are emerging from the programme with exactly the mix of practical skills and knowledge their newsrooms need; they are employable and – budgets permitting – are employed.

There's a very healthy focus in the qualification on self and time management, and on understanding and dealing with the stresses of the job. Individual work records and tutorial profiling offer the potential for genuine equality of opportunity, by identifying and supporting learners' weak areas and letting them forge ahead on their strengths. Where newsroom mentoring supports this focus, I'm seeing learners who are far more self-aware about their problems and coping strategies than were the old cadets (in some newsrooms deliberately left to sink or swim as a test of “toughness”). Perhaps in the future that might remedy the unacknowledged epidemic of alcoholism our newsrooms swim in.

But that points to the first problem. The curriculum works best in a newsroom that supports and respects it. It entails a planned progression of learning and experience,

so that learners can consolidate and build on basics as the amount and level of practical newsroom work they do grows. Yet I've seen and heard of some newsroom seniors growling that “journalists don't learn from workbooks”, dragging learners out of training sessions to do reporting, and trapping beginners in onerous roles they're clearly not ready for.

So there's a need for better communication in newsrooms generally about the scheme, and for the designated mentor – whatever his or her title – to have sufficient authority to intervene and make changes when things go wrong. There's a need for more designated mentors, and for those mentors to be helped to understand better how adults learn, and how to document the process. A model set of tutorial record documents from the Seta (written in plain language, not opaque SAQA-speak) would help support this process.

What the Seta has provided is a set of curriculum documents comprising self-study texts, exercises and workbooks for learners, with helpful additional commentary for mentors. Some newsroom mentors have ignored these; others have insisted that learners work through them religiously; yet others have used only the relevant parts, to plug gaps in learners' previous knowledge or the formal training available via the newsroom.

... *It is far harder than it used to be for young journalists to enter a newsroom still credulous enough to swallow one of those recurring, alarmist, “airborne Aids” rumours. Now the qualification requires all learners to understand the basic science of Aids and the best ways to communicate it to readers. The same is true for the basics of how our democracy is supposed to work.*

The last approach is the best. The curriculum materials were designed as models. Perhaps over-optimistically, it was hoped that mentors would adapt them to context, for one size definitely does not fit all.

At present, the curriculum materials have two major flaws and two weak areas.

The first flaw is that they are oriented largely towards newspapers, ignoring the fast-growing magazine and multimedia sectors. The second is that they are unilingual, when half our media environment uses Afrikaans and a significant proportion IsiZulu. Particularly in relation to the grammar and usage knowledge sub-editors must have, this short-changes learners. The basic English language section in Skills Programme Two (writing) is a ragbag of random schoolbook grammar drills based on no recognised instructional approach to language teaching and unrelated to the commonest writing problems or needs encountered in newsrooms. Finally, the stress man-

agement section, while useful, is too generic to handle the two key newsroom stressors: reporting on traumatic situations and handling fierce deadlines.

The shortage of materials on journalism beyond newspapers is also reflected in the structure of the qualification and its options. There is a shortage of multimedia options: while “other medium” is a recognised elective path, so far only radio unit standards exist to assess it (although a photojournalism unit standard is on the way).

Other structural issues need resolving too, particularly around Skills Programme Nine (small business topics designed to support independent local newspapers), which assumes experience, authority and information no media house cadet or intern would have. There's also a mismatch between the rules of combination (the way electives can be combined) as set down in SAQA regulations, and the far more rigid rules applied by the Mapppp-Seta for approving learnerships.

But the major problems are not in content or learning, they are in the bureaucracy that is supposed to support them. A ridiculously-weighty imported terminology and a Byzantine labyrinth of regulations and requirements deter smaller media houses from even trying to board the train. Some of the resource agencies and experts contracted by the Seta seem to understand the spirit

of the SDA and the principles of integrated assessment at Level Five far less clearly than those of us doing the work. And as my colleague Paddi Clay points out in her article here, these bureaucratic problems continually stall implementation.

That's the bad news. For facilitation and curriculum, the problems can be resolved with only a little more discussion, communication and, of course, resources. It is not only junior journalists who are “on learnership”. Those of us involved in implementation and assessment are also learning as we go. When I reflect on the portfolios from young writers I have just assessed – lively stories; intelligent commentary; acute self-criticism and spot-on summaries of “how I'd do it differently next time” – I still think it remains a journey worth taking.

Whether the same is true of battling the bureaucracy (in a cliché that no journalism learner should ever be allowed to employ), only time will tell.

Q&A

Media24 is now in the second year of running full-scale learnership programmes under the Level 5 National Certificate in Journalism. The company runs a certificate in journalism learnership over one year for 25 learners. Dolf Els and Tobie Wiese of Media 24 offer the following reflections on their experience of the programme.

Q Have you used the curriculum workbooks provided by the Mapp-Seta? Do you have any comments on these?

A Yes. The workbook is useful and promotes self-study and the material is generally good and relevant. However, non-English speaking learners do not get as much value because some language-specific skills programmes (eg Skills Programmes 2 and 4) focus on English only. The examples and tasks are of no use to those who work in languages other than English. It means that a lot of time needs to be spent on translating and substituting materials. Some modules need to be re-named or expanded, eg the Production Process module which has little to do with production; and Reporting Government, which also deals with reporting on democracy and the role the media can play in inculcating democratic values. Skills Programme 9 (Managing in the Workplace) should be included in the new management elective and not in sub-editing. It does not fit in with the sub-editing skills programme. The required outcomes are also unrealistically high for a Level 5 qualification; one can't expect junior/learner journalists to function in a managerial role at this level.

Q Does your newsroom have designated mentors/coaches to tutor learners? Describe how day-to-day support for the programme is provided.

A We have a designated mentor/coach in each newsroom who works with the learners on a daily basis. The mentor/coach also completes a monthly progress report on each learner (after discussing it with the learner) and submits it to the head of the programme. The head of the programme has one-on-one interviews with each learner approximately every two months (sooner, if the monthly reports indicates a problem).

Q How are the coaches and mentors supported?

A They've done mentoring/coaching courses. They also enlist senior journalists in the various news departments to help with the daily coaching. We rotate the learners through the various news departments and senior staff there also lend a hand. They also have the full backing of their editors.

Q Does the content of the curriculum (the skills and knowledge detailed) meet your newsroom needs?

A Mostly, except for the language-specific modules (Skills Programmes 2 and 4) referred to above. It might be a bit over-ambitious in some respects, requiring learners at entry-level to master two specialist beats in a relatively short period of time. Also, the competency required in Skills Programme 9 (Managing in the Workplace) is beyond the reach of most learners at this level. The module on media law is also on the thin side. This section's materials could be expanded.

Q What are the biggest challenges you face in running the programme?

A Mapp-Seta bureaucracy! We spend a lot of time dealing with red tape and completing forms – time which could rather be spent on implementing the programme. We are also required to submit documents timeously, but the Seta takes its time, external moderation of last year's assessments will only be done in August of this year. The result is that learners who completed the learnership at the end of 2006 will only be certified towards the end of 2007! Another challenge is the fact that the learners are spread all over the country. We have learners in six cities. It poses logistical and financial challenges. Also a big challenge is getting enough suitable black Afrikaans-speaking candidates despite a huge recruitment exercise. Then there is always the possibility of learners leaving the programme partway through to pursue other interests or (mostly) because of better job offers from elsewhere. (The prospects of immediate employment with a bigger salary sometimes count for more than having to sweat through a learnership!)

Q What comments have learners given you about the content and methods of the programme?

A The learners appreciate the fact that they are fully exposed to the newsroom environment and its different departments. They like the fact that they get as much opportunity as possible to work as journalists under the guidance of a mentor/coach and that they are given challenging assignments and not merely run-of-the-mill stories. Some of them commented on the fact that they were familiar with a fair amount of the learning materials, although most saw it as an opportunity to refresh their minds!

The learners talk

Elijah Moholola has been appointed as a sports writer with City Press in Johannesburg after he completed the learnership. "I think the learnership is essential for anyone entering a newsroom. After two degrees (from the universities of Limpopo and Rhodes) I didn't expect that I would learn a lot from such a training programme but I was surprised as it was not just a revision. The material was very relevant and the case studies quite challenging." Moholola also found the section on life skills, like how to handle stress, very helpful. "That is something that you will not learn at varsity. Yet it is very helpful as you find yourself in stressful situations almost every day."

Lucille Botha has been appointed as a reporter at *Landbouweekblad* magazine after completing the learnership at *Die Burger* newspaper. Botha said the learnership made it much easier for her to adjust to the practical environment of a newsroom and to apply the theory taught at university. It also afforded her opportunities to enhance her skills as a working journalist. "I enjoyed the workshops, especially the ones on HIV/Aids and Media Law."

Kgomotso Mathe says when you enter a programme like this, you start thinking: "classroom set-up and assessments, another university environment". But that was not the case with this programme. You have a far more interactive setting. Someone who has never done journalism before might need 110% attention to get started, and that is not a problem because everyone is judged on an individual basis. And because of the support you receive and the learning materials, you can sail through with no difficulty – that's if you communicate with the relevant people when needed.

The most amazing thing about this programme is that you have a support structure that builds you and encourages you even when you think you are out of the game – not only from the people that you work with everyday, but from every person associated with the programme. Mapp-Seta inspections allow you to express your concerns about the programme, and you also have the chance to voice your opinion of what you think they can do better to make the programme bearable.

I think the chance to attend the kinds of courses offered on this programme is the best opportunity for any aspiring journalist. Even with a commerce background, I still did not know how to do proper company analysis and simplify the results. It's not about what you know, but how you can use what you know to improve yourself, and for me that is the main thing that I picked up on this programme.

There is nothing as frustrating as entering an industry and finding that you do not have a proper basis.

When I came onto this programme it wasn't a test to see if I could write, but more "What can I get out of it?", which so far has been a positive result. When I finish the programme, I will have been fully prepared, from the basic writing and editing through to the legal side of journalism.

Though it might be a bit of a challenge to be on the programme, it is rewarding at the end, when you know you have put together a good portfolio which could be your ticket to greater heights in this industry.

I may not have much on my portfolio at this point, but I do believe that it would be looking good come the end of this year. And the little that I have, I am very proud of: not every commerce student has that urge to enter a creative industry of this nature. I look forward to adding more stories of value to my portfolio, because this is my platform to make people see that I can rise to the standards.

And the certificate, I believe, will be an added bonus to go with the portfolio. It is also a great reward after putting in so much into your portfolio stuff.

A learner speaks

Tamlyn Stewart, who undertook a learnership on the Johncom Pearson learnership programme reflects here on the section of the programme that required the compilation of a portfolio and the assessment that followed.

"The Manual" was a phrase seldom uttered by the 13 trainees on the Johncom Pearson learnership programme. When it was reluctantly, fearfully, brought up in conversation, it was usually followed by a heavy sigh and a shake of the head. Or a heartfelt, "Eish..." as the speaker contemplated the impossible task of Completing The Manual.

"The Manual" was part of the Mappp – yes that's a triple 'p' – Seta learnership. Our fate, we thought, rested in the Competent Completion of The Manual.

But I breathed a sigh of relief when I was told that the 300-plus page tome would not solely determine my future career, or lack of future career as a journalist.

We also needed to build up a well-stocked contact book, put together a portfolio of our best pieces at the end of the year, and not cock up our internships at the various publications.

I was, I admit, rather terrified on my first day as an intern at *Business Day*. A vast newsroom filled with veteran journalists, all with specialised beats, all with bulging contact books.

They seemed to know what companies were going to do before they did it and they always had the inside scoop.

My first day I was seated at a desk next to one of the veterans that managed to turn out at least two, sometimes three great pieces a day, and still have time to sort out her medical aid admin stuff over the phone. I spent most of the day reading the *Business Day* in detail, trying to think of a story idea I could pitch to the news editor. When I did try to pitch story ideas to the news editor, each attempt would meet with a similar response: He would lean back in his chair, cross his arms and grimace as if I'd forgotten to put deodorant on, and sigh. Then he'd shake his head and say "No, maybe for a feature... but it's not a news story."

This continued for the next eight weeks. Fortunately I did get to write stories, but usually they were assigned to me by the news editor. My "pitching" was lacking. Nevertheless, the reporting and writing experience was excellent, and I managed to slowly build up a portfolio of strong stories.

After two months at *Business Day* I served a two-month stint at a community newspaper, where I covered things like flower shows, pineapple farming, eisteddfods and retirement home AGMs.

Then followed two months at Summit TV where I learnt to produce business and finance news stories under very tight deadlines. The skills I learnt were invaluable – understanding a complex subject, getting to the "so what?" straight away, and then translating it into something understandable in a 30-second story.

Compiling a portfolio at the end of the year was in itself a learning experience. I had to reflect on what kind of stories I'd done and how well I'd covered them. By the end of the year I'd learnt how to find the "so what?" in a story and, looking at some of my earlier stuff, I could see where I'd missed the point on some stories, or really nailed it in others. Putting together a "brag book" of my best stuff was also very useful – it helped me realise where my strengths lie, and as a bonus, it was also quite an ego-boost to see that I had produced some good quality stuff.

As for the more formal assessment – the interview with Paddi Clay, examining my portfolio and answering questions about reporting skills, ethics, and stress, was useful. It wasn't particularly stressful because we'd been well prepared throughout the year, to meet all the "competency" requirements.

At the end of each internship the news editor of the publication had to complete an assessment sheet, evaluating our reporting skills. These assessments varied from brutal stuff that made my toes curl, to glowing. But the brutal comments were the most constructive.

Overall the learnership experience was brilliant. The opportunity to work in a variety of news environments, to learn various skills and still have the security blanket of the programme was great. Going from the programme into a "proper" job was relatively painless thanks to all the training I'd had, and after seven months as a financial reporter for Summit TV, my own contact book is bulging, and occasionally, I get a scoop or two of my own.

Opportunities like this don't come by often, where you get offered an opportunity for practical experience and a certificate to go with it, so one needs to grab it with both hands.

Journalism training in SA – a glossary

Institutions and legislation

SDA – The Skills Development Act: the overarching legislation framing the powers, responsibilities and rights of all those involved in or contributing towards workplace-based training and national skills development.

The Public Finance Management Act – exactly what it says: among other things, allocates oversight for the financial management of the Setas to Parliament via its portfolio committees.

DoL/DoE – Department of Labour/Department of Education. Jointly tasked by the SDA with national skills development but too often involved in a tug-of-war about who does what and how. SAQA and the ETQAs are often seen as representing the standpoint of the DoL, the Council for Higher Education (**CHE**, which has oversight of universities) and Umalusi, the standpoint of the DoE, but interdepartmental relations are probably far more complex than this. At present, the DoL appears to be winning the turf war, but DoE retaliation can't be far away.

NQF – National Qualification Framework: the envisaged structure that will allow for more rational career-pathing by establishing comparability in levels and qualifications across all educational institutions from Adult Basic Education and Training (**Abet**) through vocational, college-based Further Education and Training (**FET**) to university undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications.

Setas – Sector Education and Training Authorities: the bodies responsible for implementing the Skills Development Act in various employment sectors and awarding accreditation, qualifications and credits.

Mapppp-Seta – The Media, Advertising, Printing, Packaging and Publishing Seta, responsible for, among others, journalism training.

ETQAs – Education and Training Quality Assurance authorities; the quality assurance bodies for the Setas.

SAQA – The South African Qualifications Authority: the oversight and facilitation body for the Setas and their work; supports the development of and registers qualifications.

Umalusi – the overall quality assurance body for the general and further education and training bands of the education system.

Philosophies and policies

BEE – Black Economic Empowerment

Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) – Highly complex, controversial and worth an article in itself! But, as it relates to SA journalism training, specifies a learning and assessment design that focuses on the practical competencies a learner can demonstrate, rather than on more abstract and subjective criteria. Has been attacked as neo-liberal and behaviourist, but easily incorporates affective areas such as ethics and decision-making, does not make any teaching methods or lesson structures compulsory, and allows educators to take diverse paths to the same goal.

Programmes

National Certificate in Journalism – the full, workplace-based qualification designed by a team of journalism educators and trainers, registered with SAQA in 2004 and supported by Mappp-Seta workbooks and materials. It is at Level Five, the highest FET band, and, in the current proposed **HEQF** (Higher Education Qualification Framework) equivalent to first-year undergraduate study.

The certificate consists of a number of **Skills Programmes**. The *fundamental* and *core* skills programmes (which include basics such as reporting, interviewing, general newsroom skills, self and time management, and understanding and reporting on HIV and Aids and how government and democracy work) lay the basis for a range of *elective* skills programmes including multimedia reporting, community journalism, first-level newsroom management, sub-editing and more.

Unit Standards – the building-blocks of qualifications and skills programmes. While it is simplest in lay terms to think of them as "subjects", in fact they set out the competencies a learner must be able to demonstrate in a particular area, and the standard to which those competencies are required. Each unit standard attained brings the learner a number of nationally-recognised, transferable qualification credits based on notional hours of study.

Learnerships – full programmes offered to entrants to the profession which allow for qualification against the complete National Certificate in Journalism entailing 60% practical experience and 40% theoretical study. Currently all the programmes offered are one year long and take learners with an undergraduate degree or equivalent, but the rules do not preclude longer programmes for entrants starting at a lower educational level. Workplaces can receive a grant from the Seta for each enrolled learner and must fulfil demanding reporting requirements.

Work Skills Programmes – less extensive programmes offered to entrants to the profession, which cover only a selection from the skills programmes contained in the National Certificate and may (but do not necessarily) fill a shorter time frame. These too can be grant-supported and reporting requirements are slightly less onerous.

Role-players

Accredited providers – both workplaces and education and training bodies can register with the Seta to provide either full learnerships, work skills programmes, specific unit standards or merely specific theory components. Registration involves a thorough enquiry into the status and capabilities of the institution, including most importantly assurance that it can maintain an adequate **QMS** (Quality Management System), adequate learner records and internal systems to develop continuous monitoring and improvement of provision.

Assessor – Assesses the work of learners at the end of their training period by a range of means usually including a portfolio of stories published. Assessors must have a recognised assessor certificate from the ETDP-Seta (education, training and development practices) or equivalent and be accredited with the Mappp-Seta. Trainers can assess – but not moderate – the programmes they teach.

Moderator – Moderates the work of assessors to ensure it complies with national standards. Moderators can be internal to the providing institution, but cannot moderate programmes they have taught. Moderators must be certificated by the ETDP-Seta or recognised equivalent and registered with the Mappp-Seta.

Verifier – appointed by the Seta to provide external oversight of provision, assessment, moderation and QMS via site visits, interviews etc.

...
“Learnerships can be complicated” was the spot-on headline to a story in the Workplace supplement in The Star over three years ago. They still are.

Last time I wrote for the *Rhodes Journalism Review* (No 22, 2003) I urged that we give the Learnership, our Mappp-Seta and the National Qualifications Framework a chance despite the bureaucracy involved and the dysfunctional relationship between them.

I’m now debating whether to propose we give up trying.

Workplace training providers are into the second year of offering the journalism learnership at Level 5 and things are still not any easier on the administration side where we grapple with the bureaucratic demands of the Mappp-Seta and their mechanistic interpretation of NQF standards.

It has been made much worse by the battle between the former Mappp-Seta CEO and the exco of the Accounting Authority, the board ostensibly representing the Seta’s labour and employer constituents. That battle has ended up before a parliamentary portfolio committee and the Seta could find itself under administration by the Minister of Labour.

The spirit of the skills development strategy cannot be faulted. It is the structure, legislation, regulations and implementation that is so problematic. Instead of developing vocational, workplace training it is holding it hostage.

Let’s look at the money side first. This was the big incentive designed to encourage us to “standardise” our training, to get accredited and to take on many more learners and prepare them to be employable in our industry.

For a discretionary grant to be paid out you must fill in mounds of forms written in opaque project management-speak and submit equally dense narrative and financial quarterly reports for every skills programme, bursary or learnership that has been granted funds. As the Public Finance Management Act is the uber-legislation in this maze of intersecting legislation and regulation we must, perhaps, expect to suffer for our grant disbursements.

But it is in the realm of assessment and moderation that the bureaucratic madness morphs into farce.

Firstly there is the newly-spawned industry of providers of training in assessment and modera-

tion. These trainers take on groups of people, some of whom have never done any training before, and drill them in the art of providing compliant paper trails for technocratic audits. All in the name of “quality of education and training”.

It is six months since I submitted the paperwork on the assessment and moderation of our first 12 journalism learners to the LETQA of the Seta – the body which has to verify the validity of our judgments of individual learner competency and evaluate the assessment procedure.

At the end of June I was informed that the LETQA had farmed the job out to a private provider of assessment and moderation. This provider wants sight of some 23 separate documents, including proof of stipend payments to the learners, in order to verify the outcome of our assessment process.

Like the Bible, assessment and moderation can be interpreted in a number of ways and we do not know which interpretation these particular providers were drilled in.

The level of the qualification complicates matters. Few people appear to have experience of assessment at this level, the last level before Council for Higher Education validation kicks in, and above the lower levels, from 1 to 4 which are the usual territory for SAQA ETQA’s and Umalusi.

What’s more this external validation process will begin in July and August just a few months before we are scheduled to begin the summative assessments of our next batch of learners.

Surely such a laborious system chain of checks was never conceived of when the SDA was first mooted as a means of accelerating skills development? By contrast, universities get audited once in a six-year cycle.

As an assessor and moderator, I believe that assessments, in which each person’s competency is assessed in an integrated fashion, and holistically, against the specified outcomes of the qualification, are in fact the way to go. The learners appear to appreciate them as well. They get personal attention and feedback, they are judged on real evidence in a real working situation and they develop the art of self assessment and reflection. Most importantly for most of them, they are now employed as journalists.

But assessment of this kind takes several days even for just a dozen people. The situation is even more onerous for my opposite number at Media 24, Dolf Els, who deals with double that number of learners, across the country. It is a demanding and expensive process for those of us who have tried it.

It is also costly for the Seta which first had to pay for our training as assessors and moderators and now has to pay another set of people to check we’re doing it correctly. All these checks and the learners still do not know if they’ve “passed go” and will get a certificate.

So would it be any better for our purposes if, instead of offering the full gamut of modules in a learnership, we opted to offer only one or two skills programmes? With each learnership divided into several learning areas, or skills programmes, which learners can do as stand alones, this would seem, at first glance, the more manageable route to go.

In the case of the National Certificate Level 5 there are 11 different skills programmes each carrying a specific number of credits. Instead of offering all the necessary modules in a learnership and assessing a whole qualification, time, staff and resources constrained workplace trainers could offer only one or two of the skills programmes most relevant to their needs, like the writing process, the reporting process or sub-editing.

If our grant applications were successful we would be paid R250 per credit per learner going this route. That’s not exactly an incentive but it would cover the cost of an average four- or five-day short course.

The drawback is we’d still have to assess and moderate each learner for them to get those credits, and for us to get any funding support.

Is this what it has all come down to – jumping through hoops to satisfy the demand for bureaucratic evidence instead of focusing on what works and what doesn’t work from an education and training point of view and making sure our learners are competent? A workshop to consider our future skills development approach route is long overdue.

Will anyone lose out if we change to skills programmes rather than learnerships or abandon formal assessment entirely? The learners seem more concerned about employment than getting the qualification or any credits.

Employers may miss out on the funds obtainable, as well as some points to add to their black economic empowerment scorecards, if we opt out of learnerships. The Seta may fall short on the learnership targets promised to government. But will training and development suffer?

An evaluation of the past few years needs to determine whether new providers have been encouraged to provide what the industry needs, whether workplaces that were never doing this kind of training started doing it as a direct result of the SDA, and whether the CHE, FET sector and private providers are now really partnering with industry to produce a better quality of entry-level journalist?

Maybe the revelation will be that the Seta and NQF and all our efforts at compliance of the past several years have only succeeded in complicating, in the most extraordinary way, and with the best will in the world, what many of us were doing very well anyway – helping develop new, working journalists with real, relevant skills.

...
by Paddi Clay

The spirit of the skills development strategy cannot be faulted. It is the structure, legislation, regulations and implementation that is so problematic. Instead of developing vocational, workplace training it is holding it hostage.

Jumping through hoops

Clickety Click!

Meeting the challenges of writing

Technology has changed our world forever. The internet has liberated information, the use of mobile telephony is rocketing, we're showered with powerful gadgets with ever-increasing capacities to record and share information. This exploding world is accompanied by complex cultural, legal and political issues.

But are our media keeping pace with these changes and challenges? Or is it as bleak as Jon Katz, an American media critic and author, says: "Technology is the biggest story in the world... there is no bigger story, no single story that more directly affects the young (or the rest of the planet) and no story more poorly or sporadically covered by journalism."

Of course, there are simple ways of telling complex stories. But the arguable state of ICT (information and communication technology) reporting in Africa shows that many journalists keep missing this moving target. ICT journalism is much more than just a specialist beat about technology. It is a story so intricate and vast that it affects every aspect of our lives. It is about development, economics, governance and, perhaps most importantly, democracy.

As Guy Berger, head of the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University says, "African journalists understand the role of media in promoting democracy,

but don't fully appreciate that there is an equivalent in promoting ICT use, and convivial policy environments."

After all, ICTs allow citizens to access information – and give them opportunities to make their voices heard.

"ICT policies can play a key role in providing opportunities and empowering those who are marginalised," writes Claire Sibthorpe, director of the Catalysing Access to ICTs in Africa project (Catia), in *From the margins to mainstream: African ICT reporting comes of age*. "ICT policies and regulations being developed and implemented across Africa are impacting on its citizens and it is critical that media are engaged in promoting awareness and debate of the issues."

Because it is media that empower citizens to operate their rights in a society, critical and independent coverage is essential. But, broadly speaking, coverage of ICT issues is limited, too technical or from a single point of view. "You either don't get much coverage, or you get technical coverage, or business coverage," says Berger. "But this is a field that

The Judges and Journalists Project is trying to improve the delicate relationship between these two parties. It is not an easy task.

Judges are bewildered by the attitude of editors towards themselves and their work.

This became apparent at a ground-breaking meeting of representatives of these two groups late in 2005. Locked together behind closed doors in a mountain venue for two days, judges told the editors how much they depended on them and their media to convey what the courts were doing. But they were aghast at both the low quantity and poor quality of coverage the editors gave them.

Don't you get it, they were asking. We need you now, and you will need us at key moments to defend your freedom. Surely it is in our mutual self-interest to ensure coverage of the courts is thorough, rigorous and extensive? That was the only way that citizens would come to understand the special nature of a constitutional democracy, and the crucial role of the Constitutional Court in particular.

If that was not appreciated, democracy was in trouble. And it could only happen with

the appropriate understanding between judges and journalists, it was argued.

The meeting, organised by Wits Journalism and the Wits Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS), was the kick-off for a long-term project to examine and improve the working understanding between these two groups. It had begun when, some months earlier, the then Chief Justice Arthur Chaskalson expressed concern at how poor and sporadic was coverage of the Constitutional Court and its important decisions.

The new court had gone out of its way to change the way they related to both the public and the media. Their new building on Constitutional Hill was designed as a welcoming interface with the public, rather than the traditionally imposing and intimidating court buildings of the previous era.

Judges were writing summaries of their rulings in plain language and making these available on their website at the same time as release of their full rulings. At least some

Judges a

members of the Bench made themselves more available to explain matters and provide background to journalists grappling with their complex procedures and decisions.

They had even allowed SABC TV into their courts for a month of trial coverage, only to find that that little use was made of the opportunity and it only provided TV news with pictures of judges filing in and out of court that could be used for months thereafter (even when the judges changed, were ill or absent).

They felt that editors were letting the side down. Junior and inexperienced people were assigned to cover important and complex cases, and the reports were often sensational and plainly wrong. The media were just not

impacts on social life, politics and policy, health, economy and democracy.”

Other criticism leveled at coverage is that a lot of ICT journalism simply covers the news of the day – which is dictated by corporate agendas and marketing. Alastair Otter, editor of Tectonic, a website dedicated to technology, says: “I don’t believe that ICT journalism in South Africa is anywhere near as good as it could be ... We don’t have an industry that exposes wrongdoing in the ICT sector with regularity.”

about technology

by Anne Taylor

To do the job, journalists need to be well informed about all aspects of the story – not just knowing the difference between kilobytes and kilobits (size versus speed), but also issues around policy, legislation and regulation – and how these relate to consumers and citizens. Journalists need to be willing to learn and to spend time researching a topic, says Duncan McLeod, associate editor at the Financial Mail. “Even in an interview situation you need to be able to admit that you don’t have a full understanding.”

Passion and interest are essential too. “I would go so far as to say that if you’re not interested in it, you shouldn’t be covering it,” says McLeod. But it’s not just individual journalists who should take the blame. Editors and publishers can be shortsighted in how they handle technology stories too. “ICT journalism is very often marginalised in mainstream publications,” says Otter. “It is seen as the domain of a handful of ‘geeky’ writers with no real impact on the broader world.”

Otter maintains it is also the beat assigned to more junior writers as it is often perceived to be easier than others in business-focused publications. “With exceptions, of course. But where it is taken seriously, it is very often not because of an interest in technology but rather the business behind technology.”

The perception that ICT journalists are younger and less experienced has a negative impact on the industry as a whole. And this situation is not helped by the “geeks” and other technically trained people who enter journalism because of an interest in technology. And while their background is helpful, they don’t have the training to write

– especially news.

“You can’t avoid becoming a geek when you cover the beat. Unfortunately, many tech journos start out as geeks and never get the kind of rigorous journalism grounding that many retreaded news journos get,” says Toby Shapshak, a previous winner of the Telkom ICT Journalist of the Year and currently a columnist for The Times. “Very often a business or general news reporter ends up covering a specialised beat and they tend to unquestionably accept what they are told by tech or telecoms companies.” Apart from not having a solid grip on the technical stuff, there’s also a limited approach to understanding the impact of the story.

What is glaring to an ICT journalist is how frequently people get their facts wrong, says Shapshak. “Blindly accepting anything told to you by any source – even if they are the world’s largest maker of software or cellphones or iPods or plasma

TVs – is bad journalism. All claims must be checked and verified. If someone claims they have the ‘world’s first’ whatever, many general reporters blindly accept that as true. It may well be, but it has to be verified. That is our job as journalists.”

Berger believes ICT journalism in South Africa is “too silo-specific” and fails to make links to ICTs and communications more broadly. “Telecoms is one beat, media is another – but what happens when they coincide or have mega-implications for each other?” he asks. “Some journalism is gadget-style PR, without any critical reflection. A lot lacks the ease of understanding that you would find in [US technology writer] Dan Gilmore’s work, or in the Financial Times. The coverage of government policy is weak – driven one-sidedly by industry perspectives, with little consideration of consumer or development issues.”

But this boils down to a lack of skills in the industry, with coverage only being as strong as the reporter’s skills set. “When it comes to mainstream media without a specific technology focus there is very often a simple acceptance of technology news issued by the larger and more dominant ICT players in the country. So, for example, when vendor XYZ says that software piracy is costing the country so many billions of rands every year, writers simply accept this as true and publish it.”

In this way, PR spin enters the public domain and becomes fact. Interrogation and intelligent reporting can reveal a more accurate, discerning picture for consumers. Has anyone stopped and asked how piracy costs the country?

Otter believes that ICT can play a positive role. His

About Clict

The Clict ICT journalism course will be offered as a series of Rhodes-accredited short courses. They will be run entirely online. The aim of the courses will be to provide journalists with the skills and knowledge to effectively cover ICT issues in the South African and African context. Writing and editing will be an essential part of every course. For more information, email Anne Taylor at a.taylor@ru.ac.za

website is largely dedicated to highlighting information around the open source movement: “I don’t write from a truly objective point of view. I write from a belief that free and open source software and greater and more affordable access to technology is key to improving the country as a whole. By covering technology that many other publications don’t, we add to the debate around technology.”

That debate can only be made richer by a wider variety of voices – and this includes women. It should be noted that the 2006 Telkom ICT Journalist of the Year awards recognised 14 women out of a total of 19 citations. Nafisa Akabor, a runner-up in the citizen/community journalist category of the awards, says she believes school learners should be given more information on ICT journalism as a career choice. “I feel that women should also be encouraged,” she says.

In an attempt to assist in broadening ICT journalism, Rhodes University is planning to offer accredited training for ICT journalists. Known as the Centre for Learning Information and Communication Technologies (Clict), the courses aim to educate and train journalists in both the use and coverage of ICTs. It will draw on the resources and knowledge of the Highway Africa Conference, the Highway Africa News Agency and the vocational training courses run throughout the year by the School of Journalism and Media Studies. A much-desired by-product of this process will be the creation of a knowledge resource for journalists that will be interactive and participatory. The courses will act as a critical introduction to new media, but will have writing and storytelling as core focuses as these are the areas identified by industry players as needing the most attention.

After all, the ICT arena is only getting bigger. And, as McLeod points out, there are enormous opportunities for people interested in writing about technology. “With the increasing take-up of broadband in South Africa, the web is becoming a huge publishing medium.”

nd journos

by Anton Harber

seeing the importance of the courts, and not even realising their self-interest in ensuring there was proper public appreciation for this body.

Editors started the meeting by shrugging their shoulders. None of them defended their coverage, but many spoke of under-resourced newsrooms, junior journalists and market conditions which made it difficult for them to cover the courts properly.

Even the best-resourced editors said this, causing some scepticism and even hilarity among the judges. The journalists also complained that judges were bad communicators and unhelpful, even hostile, to them, and much more could be done – particularly in the lower courts – to make the work of reporters more manageable. Courts in other jurisdictions sometimes had information officers – people whose job was to actively promote public awareness of their work. Though

this was unlikely to happen in our country for some time, judges could be more understanding of and helpful towards the challenges journalists were facing.

After two days of talking, the mood changed somewhat. Most editors ended the meeting by acknowledging that something had to be done about media coverage of courts and the law, and pledging to put more resources and care into improving it. But, if truth be told, they went away and little changed.

This led to the second phase of the project – a range of long-term activities to encourage implementation. Firstly, the Ismail Mahomed scholarships – named for the former Chief Justice, a great defender of media freedom – were used to attract law graduates into journalism. The response was surprising: a flood of lawyers and legal students applied, and three are now doing the Journalism Honours programme at Wits. They are all doing research into media coverage of the law, and it is hoped this will become a seed for a new generation of properly-trained, legal journalists.

All Wits’ career-entry students spend at least a week doing practical court coverage and awards are given out for the best material produced in that week.

Secondly, a handbook was commissioned for judges on

dealing with the media. This follows a model used by judges in places like Britain and India, and is intended to encourage a better understanding of the workings of the media for those on the Bench. That book will be published and distributed by Juta to all judges and magistrates later this year.

Thirdly, a plan was set in place to facilitate more exchanges between judges and journalists at a local level. This has, however, proven a tough task that will take some time to implement.

The key question this raises is what the appropriate relationship is between judges and journalists. Clearly, they cannot be too close to each other, as both need also to keep an eye on the other. A better understanding of how each other work, and the constraints they face, would help, but one also has to guard against compromising the fact that they had to be distant enough to be free to protect or criticise each other.

And that is why the conference was called the “Two Pillars” conference – picturing these two bodies as two of the essential pillars holding up the edifice of democracy, separate but parallel, standing independently, but ineffectual without the other.

The project is supported by the Ford Foundation, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the US Consulate.

World Journalism Education

Education is a spring

Asians, Americans, Australians. A handful of Africans and a couple of Arabs. A sprinkling of Canadians, Mexicans, Finns. An Israeli, a Chilean and quite a few others. In total, 450 people from some 50 countries. In common: they're all lecturers and trainers. Busy swapping notes in Singapore at the first-ever World Journalism Education Congress (WJEC) in July. It's a resource-rich pool of ideas and experiences.

Coincidentally, the event came a fortnight after the global newspaper industry's annual meeting (WAN and WEF in Cape Town in June), and shortly before African editors were due to debate with presidents in Accra, Ghana, in July.

Being sandwiched between these occasions neatly symbolises the significance of the WJEC. The point is: journalism education is a spring. It bubbles into much that is in the newspapers. It underpins much of the intellectual firepower the African editors would have mustered (had the presidents arrived in time for the debate).

Like many conferences, the WJEC included a share of duds who simply make you depressed about the future of media. But overwhelmingly it showcased a worldwide cadre of cosmopolitan individuals committed to providing the best journalism education possible:

One was Rebecca MacKinnon, founder of Global Voices and a former CNN correspondent now teaching in Hong Kong. She gets her students to blog in order to learn about RSS and social media. Another was Yevgenia Munro, a journalism teacher from Russia who works in New Zealand. She's collated what her fellow educators around the world see as crucial for assessing the quality of a news story. It's evolving into a tool for students to score their own work. South African Margaretha Geertsema, now living in the United States, is on a mission for journalism teachers to learn from how the Inter Press Services news agency mainstreamed gender issues into coverage.

Driving much of the event was Indrajit Banerjee, an Indian living in Singapore whose Asia Media Information Centre merged its own annual conference with the WJEC. With this kind of fusion of folk, it followed that many interesting things were said at the congress.

One of the conference strategies that I found particularly valuable was that of the "syndicate teams" who met regularly to speak on focused topics. Delegates signed up for the topic they were interested in and stayed with that group for the duration of the conference. The list included topics such as the status of journalism education in the academy; the role of journalism in changing the media; adapting journalism education to a digital age, etc. The group I joined was called "Journalism research and journalism as research – the production of journalism at universities". We ended up talking about two issues: the implications of producing journalism in universities and the unique challenges of generating academic research about journalism.

We found that a factor we all had in common was that, within our institutions, two very different groups of people work side by side. On one hand, there are people whose working environment has always been that of the academy. On the other there are those who have made a dramatic transition from another world – that of journalistic practice. It was evident from the discussion that the tendency, within all our institutions, was to attempt to assimilate this second group into the world of the academy. Some members of

our syndicate, in fact, saw themselves as facilitators who worked towards bringing journalists into the fold, by finding ways of creating incentives for academic scholarship and helping so-called "production" staff to develop research interests.

There was no doubt, judging from the discussions in the syndicate and elsewhere in the conference, that there is increasing and quite serious pressure on those who come into universities as media practitioners to start "operating as academics" within their institutions. The message to "production" staff is that they have to do more than "just" teach and produce media; above all, they must also publish academic work. My sense up to now has been that that, within my own environment in South Africa, former journalists can still (barely) get away with being so-called "production people" who do not do research in our universities. For the "production" people in the syndicate – and within the WJEC generally – this was clearly not possible; you have very little future within the university if you are not prepared to contribute to scholarship. Everywhere you turned at the conference, there was a journalist with a paper to present.

It seemed to me, listening to the conversations in our

How to teach when students exhibit two different languages and social classes was the topic addressed by Ujjwala Barve of the University of Pune in India. (Answer: look at the positives, not the problems; enlist the students as co-teachers.)

Canadian Terry Field presented on what his students had learnt about globalisation in an exchange programme with the US and Mexico. (What? Their lives had changed).

Texas-based Brazilian Rosental Alves preached in effect that much journalism teaching today amounts, albeit unconsciously, to instruction in media history. He shook up the skills and mindsets of old, industrial-era media.

Refreshingly, there was no debate about whether journalism education should cover theory or practice – it was accepted that both are essential to producing thinking and skilled practitioners. The main issue was how to teach in a fast and fluid media landscape, and how to prepare students for jobs – like moderating user-generated online contributions – that have only recently been invented, or which are even yet to emerge.

On the agenda were six key subjects:

1. Counting and comparing programmes around the world.

Early results came through from a global census on journalism education. Organiser Charles Self announced a list of 1 859 journalism schools at tertiary level around the world, adding that there may be double that number. An online survey, completed by 193 schools, puts new technology and funding as the top challenges for journalism teachers¹. Also released were figures from a Unesco survey, done partly by Rhodes University's J-school, which listed almost 200 schools in Africa. Only 15% of these have any Internet presence, and less than 1% offer online educational resources or display their student's work².

2. Group brainstorms on topics like adapting journalism education to a digital age.
Among the conclusions:
 - Every journalism teacher needs to become more competent about digital media – and make more use of ICT in teaching.
 - Because it's all new, the old hierarchy of "know-

it-all" teacher and "empty-head" student doesn't wash. Instead, the challenge calls for joint experimentation and mutual learning³.

3. Assessing the quality of J-schools.
Among the systems outlined at WJEC:
 - The US has voluntary peer review based on 10 standards – like what the curriculum covers, how student feedback is gauged, equipment, etc⁴;
 - French-speaking countries look at what's covered by a programme, the means of implementation and the relevance to media⁵;
 - European Union countries use a standard called the Tartu Declaration which sets out the skills that a journalism student should graduate with⁶.

Work towards an African system was presented. This emerged out of a Unesco project (again involving Rhodes) that drew 30 African J-schools into a dialogue. The system pinpoints three broad criteria for what should count towards being a potential centre of excellence in African journalism education:

- internal: the curriculum and capacity of the journalism school;
- external: professional and public service, society links and stature;
- future-focus: plans and momentum.

What's distinctive here is how a journalism school impacts not only on students and the media, but also on society at large⁷.

4. Disseminating research about best practice
Among the papers presented were:
 - support for media rights as a criterion for evaluating journalism education;
 - using a blog to encourage journalism students to engage in critical reflection;
 - from podcasts to attitude shifts: the value of the oral history interview in introductory journalism classes;
 - go far: taking students out of their comfort zones (offering students experiences in foreign

Two issues,

... by Jeanne du Toit

syndicate, that this drive to assimilate journalists into the academy has its problems. Such assimilation does not transform the academy, and may therefore simply reconfirm the divide between the academy and communities of journalistic practice. One proposal that the syndicate made in this respect was for an annual digest, targeting journalists, which reviewed new academic research about journalism. In this way, journalists could be made aware of academic material of relevance to their work.

But the assimilation does not necessarily even transform the journalist-who-becomes-an-academic. One member of the group, a former television journalist who teaches in an American university, told us that he had now gained all the credentials required of him as an academic; he had published papers, and acquired a PhD. He talked cynically

...it

Conference bubbles

by Guy Berger

- reporting);
- students as journalists “working in the neighbourhood”;
- after the Tulip Revolution: journalism education in Kyrgyzstan;
- scholarly turn of journalism education: redesigning curricula at university level in Bangladesh;
- making every comment count: effective formative feedback to journalism students.

5. The basic debate.
Given the diversity of journalisms everywhere, a lot of debate went into what can and should apply to journalism education anywhere.

A common denominator was devised by almost 30 journalism education organisations in the form of a Declaration of Principles of Journalism Education⁸.

According to this document, journalism education should prepare graduates to work as highly-informed, strongly-committed practitioners with high ethical principles and able to fulfil public interest obligations.

It also states:

- Journalism education is an academic field in its own right, with a distinctive body of knowledge and theory;
 - Journalism educators should be a blend of academics and practitioners;
 - Journalism educators should maintain strong links to media industries. They should critically reflect on industry practices and offer advice to industry based on this reflection;
 - Journalism students should learn that despite political and cultural differences, they share important values and professional goals with peers in other nations.
- Some blogs later critiqued the declaration, saying it was silent on the place of journalism in

supporting democracy, and how this impacted on journalism education⁹.

Recognising global issues, the declaration notes: journalism students should learn that despite political and cultural differences, they share important values and professional goals with peers in other nations; and there should be global collaboration to boost journalism education as an academic discipline and ensure that it plays a more effective role in strengthening journalism.

6. Unesco’s model curriculum.
Assuming that there should be common universal components for any journalism curriculum, UNESCO launched a resource booklet at the conference that puts forward recommended course outlines and textbooks¹⁰.

Future calling

WJEC participants hope to meet again in a couple of years – perhaps this time in Africa, if a suitable host can be found. At this maiden meeting, the hard logistics were done by Singapore’s Asia Media and Information Centre. Given the challenges facing media in Africa, journalism education on the continent could benefit greatly from a shot in the arm akin to the Singapore dialogues¹¹.

The ultimate value test of conferences like these is whether they help J-schools to make more impact. It’s hard to see how they could fail.

Endnotes

- <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=941123224498>
- www.unesco.org/webworld/en/african-journalism-schools-database
- <http://gberger.files.wordpress.com/2007/07/educating-multi-media-journalists-syndicate-report.doc>
- <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/>
- www.theophraste.org
- <http://www.ejta.eu/index.php/website/projects/>
- www.unesco.org/webworld/en/african-journalism-schools-report
- <http://gberger.files.wordpress.com/2007/06/wjc-declaration.doc>
- <http://nml.ru.ac.za/blog/guy-berger/2007/07/12/debating-declaration-journalism-education.html>
- <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001512/151209e.pdf>
- <http://gberger.files.wordpress.com/2007/06/african-j-school-excellence-final-draft.pdf>

formerly as students. It was clear, though, that they had conquered this world as well, reinventing themselves in a way that bridged the gap between the academy and journalism. They spoke about their students, their universities and their own work in a way that quite naturally combined the language of practice and reflection.

There are, of course, alternatives to expecting journalists to play catch-up within the academy, until they learn how to be scholars. In the syndicate we spoke, for example, about the importance of acknowledging journalistic practice itself as valuable intellectual work within the university. One idea that was floated here was that the assessment of such work should not be done only by people from an academic background, but that panels should include experienced media producers who are established in their fields and are not working in the university environment.

All the ideas of this group – like the others – were presented in plenary, and compiled for the WJEC organisers to take further.

Declaration of Principles of Journalism Education World Journalism Education Congress Singapore, June 2007

We, the undersigned representatives of professional journalism education associations share a concern and common understanding about the nature, role, importance, and future of journalism education worldwide. We are unanimous that journalism education provides the foundation as theory, research, and training for the effective and responsible practice of journalism. Journalism education is defined in different ways. At the core is the study of all types of journalism.

Journalism should serve the public in many important ways, but it can only do so if its practitioners have mastered an increasingly complex body of knowledge and specialised skills. Above all, to be a responsible journalist must involve an informed ethical commitment to the public. This commitment must include an understanding of and deep appreciation for the role that journalism plays in the formation, enhancement and perpetuation of an informed society.

We are pledged to work together to strengthen journalism education and increase its value to students, employers and the public. In doing this we are guided by the following principles:

- At the heart of journalism education is a balance of conceptual, philosophical and skills-based content. While it is also interdisciplinary, journalism education is an academic field in its own right with a distinctive body of knowledge and theory.
- Journalism is a field appropriate for university study from undergraduate to postgraduate levels. Journalism programmes offer a full range of academic degrees including bachelors, masters and Doctor of Philosophy degrees as well as certificate, specialised and mid-career training.
- Journalism educators should be a blend of academics and practitioners; it is important that educators have experience working as journalists.
- Journalism curriculum includes a variety of skills courses and the study of journalism ethics, history, media structures/ institutions at national and international level, critical analysis of media content and journalism as a profession. It includes coursework on the social, political and cultural role of media in society and sometimes includes coursework dealing with media management and economics. In some countries, journalism education includes allied fields like public relations, advertising, and broadcast production.
- Journalism educators have an important outreach mission to promote media literacy among the public generally and within their academic institutions specifically.
- Journalism programme graduates should be prepared to work as highly informed, strongly committed practitioners who have high ethical principles and are able to fulfill the public interest obligations that are central to their work.
- Most undergraduate and many masters programmes in journalism have a strong vocational orientation. In these programmes experiential learning, provided by classroom laboratories and on-the-job internships, is a key component.
- Journalism educators should maintain strong links to media industries. They should critically reflect on industry practices and offer advice to industry based on this reflection.
- Journalism is a technologically intensive field. Practitioners will need to master a variety of computer-based tools. Where practical, journalism education provides an orientation to these tools.
- Journalism is a global endeavour; journalism students should learn that despite political and cultural differences, they share important values and professional goals with peers in other nations. Where practical, journalism education provides students with first-hand experience of the way that journalism is practised in other nations.
- Journalism educators have an obligation to collaborate with colleagues worldwide to provide assistance and support so that journalism education can gain strength as an academic discipline and play a more effective role in helping journalism to reach its full potential.

two groups

about the value of having done so – saying that now that he had jumped through the necessary hoops, he wanted to return simply to teaching his students. His academic achievements did not, according to him, make any impact at all on his own thinking about his journalistic practice or the way he would teach.

By contrast, there was a very impressive group of women from Australia at the conference who had all been print journalists and have now established themselves as academics. They shared notes over supper about how intimidating it had been for them to enter university environments, even though each of them had been a well-established professional in their other world. For some of them, universities had been completely alien, since they had not even been there

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Thinking ahead

It was in Johannesburg, South Africa, that the fifth World Summit on Media and Children took place from 24 to 27 March – a great jamboree where a thousand or so delegates from around 86 countries congregated together with 300 young people between the ages of 13 and 16.

The summit provided the forum for the exchange of perspectives on the media between professionals, regulators, researchers, those civil society

groups concerned with children, and, importantly, young people themselves.

It was organised by the Children and Broadcasting Foundation for Africa (with Firdoze Bulbulia as primary organiser) with support from the SABC, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa, the Department of Communications, and the Media Development and Diversity Agency.

This summit followed four previous World

Summits on Media and Children held in Australia, England, Greece and Brazil. Since its inception in Australia, these meetings have aimed to foster “the growth of a global movement for collaboration, policy development and exchange in the world of children in the media”, according to Patricia Edgar who was instrumental in the founding summit in Melbourne, Australia.

If it was Africa’s chance to host this event, what

Giving children a voice

But does allowing and encouraging “voices” amount to taking children seriously or to “empowerment” as the liberal discourse might have it?

... *by Jeanne Prinsloo*



EC/ECHO/François Goemans



EC/ECHO/François Goemans



EC/ECHO/François Goemans

was remarkable was the extent to which there was an African presence among the delegates, achieved as a result of a number of pre-summits organised in several countries, but notably in countries such as Egypt, Mali, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Libya. This African flavour was then enacted in the organisers’ choices of music and entertainment (including Yvonne Chaka Chaka) and cultural activities that ranged from the daily welcoming of guests by a praise poet and the inclusion of traditional chiefs or kings on the stage for the morning plenary sessions¹.

The organisers had also succeeded in including many young people for whom a host of media-related activities and workshops were organised on the lower levels of the convention centre. Some of these were highly interactive and the young participants engaged enthusiastically in these activities. Their involvement in the main programme was arguably more problematic.

Under the broad theme of “Media as a tool for global peace and democracy”, the topics ranged from media regulation, media literacy and education, productions for children, and productions by children in various media including puppets, radio, print, TV and new media. Concerns with cultural identity (and its flip side, cultural imperialism), with children’s well-being (and HIV), with marginalisation, and with war, informed the presentations. Themes for panels were intriguing, for example “Producing for toddlers”, “Reporting peace”, and “Sport as a peace-builder”. Producers were present, but I was surprised that there were so few broadcasters and producers from the industrialised countries. (At the summit I attended in Greece they were more visible.) One exception was the opening and keynote address by Roy Disney, nephew of Walt and representing the Disney Empire. I did not understand why there was no real space to interrogate the politics of the Disney world. Needless to say the cartoon illustrations received enthusiastic responses from the young people – and the adult delegates.

I was repeatedly struck by how little space there was for critical engagement, whether with the producers and regulators or with those producing media with children. People reiterated a concern for “quality” children’s media yet what might constitute “quality”, and what this might mean under some of the very different circumstances that were described (from Palestine, Liberia, Colombia to New York or Mitchell’s Plain), was never adequately debated. The lack of any critical rigour was disappointing and in some ways it became a “show and tell” space and the critical questions, when asked, did not get the time or space to be explored.

However, the theme of the conference with

its focus on peace and democracy ensured that serious issues were addressed. Certainly the hegemonic idea of childhood as a time of innocence and joy perpetrated in much kiddies' media was subverted by the presence of children from across the globe but particularly from countries in the south, from war zones and where economic deprivation has resulted in grave social problems.

I was profoundly moved in one plenary session when a former Liberian child soldier shared the platform with Ian Stewart, former correspondent for Associated Press in Sierra Leone, a posting he chose out of his deep personal concern for the phenomenon of child soldiers and his desire to publicise and influence their plight. Ironically he was shot in the head by a child soldier. (In a subsequent conversation he recalled a particular incongruous detail that remains an image in my mind – the child at this road block was wearing a bowler hat.) Unsurprisingly perhaps, there was nothing light about the former child soldier who now participates in a radio project and spoke of the ways in which such children are forced or enticed to take up arms, of their abuse and their struggles to reintegrate into their social worlds. Perhaps surprisingly, the former correspondent (author of *Ambushed*), with no bitterness directed at the child soldiers, continues his concern with them in spite of being disabled.

The voice of this child was one of the youth delegates who spoke in plenary sessions. The young teen delegates were expected to attend plenary sessions. At times they sat through discussions that must have felt irrelevant to their worlds. The determination of the organisers to have children's voices heard resulted in children being nominated daily to say what they wanted in the media. Yet it is precisely this notion of "voice" that is problematic. Allowing and encouraging "voices" does not amount to taking them seriously or to "empowerment" as the liberal discourse might have it. And it runs the risk of being perceived as patronising.

Certainly one young Pietermaritzburg school boy who approached me was feeling powerless and angry, and experienced being given voice as tokenism. He questioned me as to whether I thought that the children's voices had been heard. Certainly they had spoken and I had heard him say what he thought the media should address at the previous day's plenary. In spite of this he clearly did not feel heard in any meaningful sense.

An arguably patronising attitude to giving children voice disallowed the notion of real dialogue, of both speaker and listener engaging. The approach to children's voice presumed children as both canny and innocent, as having an authentic voice with little recognition of the fact that children have specific historic contexts and are socialised, sometimes also as racist chauvinists. At its most extreme edge this construction of the child as all-knowing was articulated by a delegate from the SABC in her proposal that children should be consulted at every stage of the production process! Rather than debating what children might contribute, and when and where their contributions would be valuable, the childish voice was constituted merely as beneficent.

If being given space to say what you think on a public stage was not specially effective, the summit provided delightful and poignant moments of children speaking in media made of or by children. One such moment is recorded in the video made by the Nomadic Children's Project. Vinay and Meenakshi Rai record their young daughter (perhaps nine or 10 years old) interviewing nomadic desert children. She (as children tend to do) asked questions outside the normalised frame of professional documentaries and which defy the assumed authority of the interviewer. She was curious about how they lived and asked the small group of nomadic children how often they washed. They replied "about once a month". When asked why they didn't do so more often, they responded that they would be beaten if they did. Turning the question back on her, she replied she bathed daily. Their response to this was slightly horrified. "Don't you get cold?" they demanded. This little cameo of children learning about each other gestures precisely to the possibility of media-making by children that works against the usual structural hierarchies and learning of the realities of others.

For me there were a couple of surprising gaps in the programme. First, the really exceptional, interesting or controversial South African youth media were not show cased. The Soul City, LoveLife, TshaTsha interventions were absent as were the pressing debates of production approaches and assumptions. Then, in line with this, little time and few presentations actually focused on what actually is in the media for children.

While I have included aspects of the summit that both pleased and troubled me, I must hasten to add that beyond the confines of the formal sessions in the many restaurants around the Convention Centre and in Mandela Square, the discussions continued late into the night. Here other issues were debated and certainly one found common ground with those seeking more critical debate and discussion of the media practices. Here, other projects were dreamt up and international research projects instigated. No doubt they will reach fruition by the next World Summit on Children and the Media in Sweden in 2010.

Photographs from the ECHO photo library: <http://ec.europa.eu/echo>

Distinctly

A reflection on black journalism in South Africa since 1994

Thirty years have passed since 19 October 1977 when the National Party banned Black Consciousness organisations and black-oriented newspapers – *The World* and the *Weekend World*. What drove the NP regime to such desperate moves was that the majority of black journalists in the 70s unequivocally identified their journalism with the liberation struggle. Black journalists declared themselves "black" first and "journalist" second. They questioned reference to "objectivity" by journalists who called freedom fighters "terrorists". They objected to the misuse of this term by journalists who served in the then South African Defence Force, while they objected to black journalists' identification with the liberation movements.

The term "black" was not just a matter of pigmentation but was used in a political context. In his book *I Write What I Like*, Black Consciousness martyr Bantu Biko explained the concept of "black" thus: "Merely by describing yourself as black you have started on a road towards emancipation, you have committed yourself to fight against all forces that seek to use your blackness as a stamp that marks you out as a subservient being." Black journalists, therefore, understood blackness to mean, among other things, commitment. It is in this line of thinking that the *Sowetan*, the descendant of *The World* and *Weekend World*, was given birth to. The name *Sowetan*, as observed by the first editor Joe Latakomo, was identified with the "symbolism of Soweto to identify with the black struggle".

But what of black journalism since 1994? Can black journalists operating in the post-1994 era recognise themselves in Allister Sparks' description of black journalists of the 70s, about whom he says in his book *Beyond The Miracle*, that they not only reported the events of the townships, but brought uniquely black perspectives into the newsrooms?

With typical honesty, the late Editor-in-Chief of the *Sowetan* Aggrey Klaaste, in an interview with Chabani Manganyi, observed that with "liberation in 1994, the paper had to find its feet. We frankly did not know what to do next". Perhaps this explains why Sean Jacobs and Richard Calland in their book *Thabo Mbeki's World*, refer to the black press as "less influential".

To their credit, though, black journalists have recognised the need to redefine themselves in post-apartheid South Africa. Soon after Mathatha Tsedu took over the editorship of the *City Press*, he declared the newspaper "distinctly African". Explaining the concept, Tsedu said that the *City Press*' role was to enhance the understanding that Africans have of themselves and the rest of the continent, to showcase not just the evil that happens in Africa, but also the good.

But more importantly, Tsedu further observed, "distinctly African" means a commitment to inspiring and motivating this continent's people.

When the *City Press* declared itself "Distinctly African" some of us were curious as to how different the newspaper would be from its western counterparts who have declared themselves "distinctly American". A brief illustration is necessary to elucidate my point here. In his book, *Rogue State*, William Blum observes that during the bombing of Yugoslavia, CBS Evening News anchor, Dan Rather declared: "I'm an American, and I'm an American reporter. And yes, when there's combat involving Americans, you can criticise me if you must, damn

me if you must, but I'm always pulling for us to win." This is what has characterised western journalism, particularly on issues that affected Africa. When commenting on issues about Africa, western journalism has been and is often devoid of



African

by Simphiwe Sesanti

historical contexts. How “distinctly African” has been the *City Press* for instance on the wildly and widely publicised Zimbabwean issue?

To his credit, when commenting on the recent beatings of Zimbabwe’s Movement for Democratic Change leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, the *City Press*’ current editor Khathu Mamaila, attempted to give a historical context to the Zimbabwean crisis. Rightly so, he asked the question: what went wrong? Unlike many journalists in South Africa who refused to recognise any good in Mugabe, Mamaila acknowledged that Mugabe started massive educational and developmental programmes. But the *City Press*’ reporting of the “beating of the opposition” was somewhat “dimly African”. Of the 16 paragraphs of its story on the beatings, it dedicated only two short paragraphs to the bombing of two policewomen in a police station in Harare who were badly injured. Mugabe’s government accused the MDC of the bombing.

When the London-based *New African* published the scarred head of Morgan Tsvangirai and that of the scalded face of Constable Vusani Moyo side by side, Tsvangirai’s ordeal paled in comparison. No differently from other “distinctly Western” newspapers, the *City Press* devoted yet another column to Zimbabwean journalist Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi, who told of “his horror at beatings he and MDC members suffered last week”. On seeing Tsvangirai beaten, he thought he “was dreaming because I could not imagine this was happening to such an important and respected man in Zimbabwe”. No guesses as to where this journalist’s sympathies lay!

What is expected from “distinctly African” newspapers like the *City Press* is no more or less than what Tsedu himself committed his newspaper to: “We commit to showcasing the good, the evil, the bad and the ugly that happens, and to do so *without fear or favour*” (italics mine).

Considering that the question of Zimbabwe has been used to condemn President Thabo Mbeki for most of his time in office, there has been little effort in answering Mamaila’s appropriate question about “what went wrong”. Failure to do so on the part of black journalists is a great disappointment because they – since they were part of the liberation struggle – occupy a unique position to write with insight and empathy.

In dealing with Mbeki’s fiercely criticised “quiet diplomacy”, the South African media failed to report the fact that – as former African Union secretary-general, Amara Essy, told the *New African* – when Mugabe tried to address the land question in 1990 “it was African heads of state who told him to be quiet” since they did not want to “scare the white people in South Africa”. It is against this background that former Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano told the *Sunday Times* in July 2003 that “President Mbeki belongs to a team, our team”. In clearer terms the African heads of states’ team, which chose a multi-lateral approach as opposed to a unilateral approach.

But the South African media, including black journalists, ignored this reality. Had the South African media given this historical background the attention it deserved, light would have been shed on why it took Mugabe 20 years to address the land question. With all its shortcomings, Ronald Suresh Roberts’ book *Fit to Govern* must be commended for addressing this question in an enlightening way.

Roberts notes: “Between 1990 and 1994, as the FW de Klerk propaganda machine attempted to unsettle world opinion by presenting African democracy as a monstrous project, Mugabe was asked by the ANC to delay land reform in Zimbabwe and he agreed. The 10-year constitutional moratorium had expired in 1990, the year of Mandela’s release.” This sorely missing context and dimension is what should set apart “distinctly African” media from the rest.

While the *City Press* has correctly declared itself “distinctly African” there are those, like Bill Saidi, deputy editor of *The Standard*, in Zimbabwe, who argues that “there can be no such thing as African journalism”. Really? In advancing his argument in his Friday column in the *Sowetan*, “State we’re in”, Saidi notes that after Ghana’s independence in 1957, “it appeared as if there would be a new animal called African journalism” that “would be different from the



journalism of other countries”. This African journalism, Saidi continues, “would hear no evil and see no evil in African governance. It would praise the leaders until kingdom come, or until they died, either of natural causes or by the bullet of a soldier or a hired assassin”. This description of African journalism that would protect despots is certainly undesirable, but it is wrong on the part of Saidi to throw the baby out with the bath water. In defining their mission as “distinctly African” the *City Press* certainly did not mean that.

While the world shares common problems, there are those that are particular to certain people and must be dealt with in a particular way – hence the need for African journalism. In her chapter “African Politics and American Reporting” in a book entitled *Media and Democracy In Africa* (edited by Goran Hyden, Michael Leslie and Folu Ogundimu), Beverly Hawk laments the tendency by western journalists to portray “African culture as the problem and western institutions as the solution” when dealing with problems of the African continent. She notes that instead of contextualising African problems, western journalists tend to reduce African problems to a “tribal problem”: “Focusing on tribalism as a problem, therefore, mutes other conflicts of interest between groups and distracts us from covert causes of many African conflicts. Consequently, class conflicts become tribalism; regional conflicts become tribalism; responses to structural adjustment programmes become tribalism.”

Bantu Biko made a similar observation before he left for the ancestral world: “One writer makes the point that in an effort to destroy completely the structures that had been built up in the African society and to impose their imperialism with an unnerving totality, the colonialists were not satisfied merely with holding a people in their grip and emptying the native’s brain of all form and content, they turned to the past of the oppressed people and distorted, disfigured and destroyed it. No longer was reference made to African culture, it became barbarism. Africa was the ‘dark continent’. Religious practices and customs were referred to as superstition. The history of African society was reduced to tribal battles and internecine wars.”

It is against this background that African journalism is required – to contextualise issues and put African culture or cultures into perspective. In addressing the issue of African culture/s the challenge for black journalists who hold positions of authority is to give space to more black women journalists to address issues of culture. In many African communities cultural power is political power. Giving more writing space to black women journalists is necessary so that they can begin to challenge the self-serving notions of African culture used by some male chauvinists to entrench ill-gotten privileges.

A number of years ago, veteran black woman journalist Nomavenda Mathiane pointed out that, come 1994, some black male journalists who cried foul against white male journalists-only club, have since tasted the sweetness of power. Writing on the 25th anniversary of the *City Press*, the newspaper’s features editor Mapula Sibanda observed: “Today, with the progressive male editor Mathatha Tsedu, each section of the paper has a female writer either leading the pack or making a substantial contribution, save for politics, still the preserve of testosterone.” The challenge facing female black journalists is to challenge the status quo – or else no gender equality! *Aluta continua!*



Biko-inspired artwork by students of the Carinus Art School in Grahamstown.
Left: Microcrystalline, wax and plastic sculpture by Lucas Antoni (Grade 12);
Above top: Linocut by Xanadu Loesch (Grade 10);
Above middle: Linocut by Megan Riddin (Grade 11);
Above: Linocut by Joseph Coetzee (Grade 10).

...or dimly African?

goodbye to big on bronze

When the Sunday Times turned 100 last year, it decided not only to celebrate, but to ‘give back’ by getting into the heritage business.

By Charlotte Bauer

On Thursday 9th of March last year a life-size bronze statue of Brenda Fassie was unveiled outside the Bassline Club in Newtown, Joburg. Well, Brenda wasn't a big man, and she's not on a horse. Still, there's no getting away from it: she is a figurative statue and she's cast in bronze. Inspired by Jose Soberon Villa's bronzes of John Lennon on a park bench and Ernest Hemingway propping up a bar – both in Havana – Brenda's creator Angus Taylor has made an unconventional memorial that is every bit as inviting and playful.

At the time of her death on 9 May 2004, Fassie was this country's top selling local artist. She may not have been everyone's idea of a role model, but then, The *Sunday Times* Heritage Project is not about role models.

Brenda Fassie was a stellar newsmaker. Her work is part of this country's musical and social history, and two years after her death, both her life and her music continue to excite emotion and curiosity.

This is why we chose her as our “poster girl” to launch the *Sunday Times* centenary heritage project.

The *Sunday Times* turned 100 on 4 February 2006. As part of our centenary celebrations and under the baton of the paper's editor, Mondli Makhanya, we set out on an ambitious journey across what – for us – was virgin tundra.

My brief was to, in some way, mark the spot where some of the significant news events of “our” century (from 1906) happened while also recognising the remarkable newsmakers who stood at the heart of these actions.

The blue plaques that pepper the streets of London – “Sylvia Plath lived here” etc – were mentioned as a point of departure.

But it was the far more engrossing “memory” signs on the streets of Schöneberg, Berlin which informed our early thinking.

The Schöneberg project, by Renate Stih and Frieder Schnock, consists of 80 small signs. Each sign has an image on one side and text on the other, usually quotations from Nazi laws that limited the freedoms of Jews in the period between 1933 and 1945.

It is only when the viewer reads the images – blonde braids; a clock's hands set at 7pm – together with the text – eugenics; curfew – that the meaning of these stylised, even pretty, images, becomes clear.

This memorial making was neither grimly explicit ➡



Lenore Cairncross

The Olive Schreiner memorial by Barbara Wildenboer

The *Sunday Times*' decision to commemorate Olive Schreiner's contribution to the women's suffrage movement required a different approach to the “event-linked-to-a-location” yardstick that we set for ourselves in choosing most of our other sites and stories. We believed that while Schreiner's contribution as one of South Africa's finest writers is widely acknowledged, far less well known was her participation in the movement to give women the vote. Her book *Woman and Labour*, published in 1911, was acclaimed internationally and regarded as a bible of the women's suffrage movement. Schreiner argued that the vote was “a weapon by which the weak may be able to defend themselves against the strong, the poor against the rich”. In the light of this, it is not surprising that she objected to the decision of the Cape Women's Enfranchisement League (of which she was a member for several years) to campaign for the right of only white women to vote. What led us to the Main Road, Kalk Bay location was our discovery that a meeting of the Women's Enfranchisement League was held at the English Church Schoolroom in March 1913 which used to stand opposite the Anglican Church in Kalk Bay. There is nothing to mark the demise of this old stone building which is now a parking lot. In the photograph artist Barbara Wildenboer puts finishing touches to the memorial.



men horses

*The Brenda Fassie statue
by Angus Taylor*

outside the Bassline in Newtown, Johannesburg.

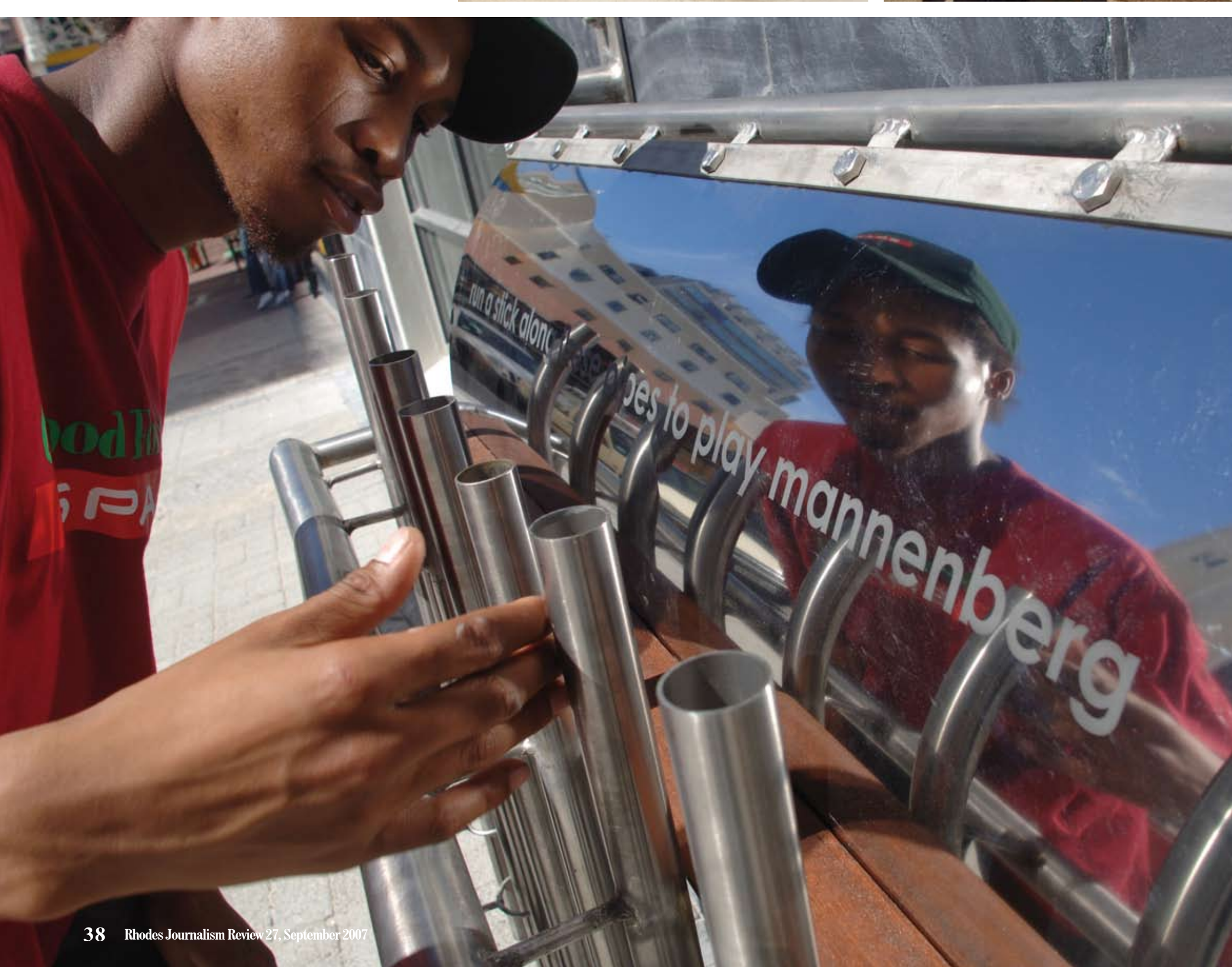
Debbie Yazbek

*The Teboho Tsietsi
Mashinini memorial
by Johannes Phokela*

opposite Morris Isaacson High School
in Mputhi Street, central western
Jabavu, Soweto.



Debbie Yazbek





Gary Horlor

Enoch Mgijima and the Bulhoek Massacre memorial by Mgcineni Sobopha

between the N6 and the R392 at Queenstown, Eastern Cape, was unveiled on 22 April 2007.

The Mannenberg memorial by Francois Venter and Mark O'Donovan

The memorial whose chief “protagonists” is a song. Or more aptly, the marabi-meets-cape-jazz composition that became a beloved anthem of hope and resistance, called *Mannenberg*. Composed by Abdullah Ibrahim, *Mannenberg* was recorded here, at the UCA studios, at 21 Bloem Street, Cape Town in June 1974 with a stellar cast that included Robbie Jansen, the late Basil Coetzee and the producer Rashid Vally. We were intrigued by the idea that a piece of music could speak to the experience so many people at a particular time in our history. *Mannenberg* spoke of the destruction of District Six and of forced removals. Abdullah Ibrahim, who has taken a great personal interest in helping us to make this memorial happen, says people have come up and told him they would sing *Mannenberg* as they were being bundled into police vans. The artwork, by Mark O'Donovan and Francois Venter, is quite spectacular: seven pipes of different heights that, when “played” by the visitor’s car keys in sequence, will sound the opening bars of *Mannenberg*.

nor sentimental, and ideas began to swirl for what might inform the look and feel of our first 40 public, permanent and site-specific, “narrative” memorials.

The decision to give a selection of local artists pretty much free reign to make their own unique pieces evolved over time and with the guidance of many people who know a lot more about art than we do – notably the arts management company we work with to source and manage the artists and the artworks.

By no means all of the news history we wished to mark was shocking and painful. Our researchers set out to identify and develop a number of stories, characters and sites across the news board – eureka moments in science, the arts, sport, politics, and society. A range of memories, often proud, even playful.

We wanted to show how today’s news is tomorrow’s history. We wished to add a small stitch to the fabric of dozens of streets and communities; to shine a light on a singular moment in 100 years of news time which, subtly or significantly, helped to shape the diverse ‘us’. We wanted to show that history is interesting because it is always, in some way, driven by fascinating humans – whether they are fearless, flawed, heroic or badly behaved – or a mixture of the above.

To date we have installed 19 narrative memorials in three provinces – Gauteng, Western Cape and Eastern Cape. By the end of this year – and the end of the project – we hope to have 35 in total.

Journalists are storytellers of a particular stripe. Typically newspaper stories are personality driven and action-orientated. The *Sunday Times* is a popular paper, so our angle on these narrative memorials is to hook the viewer by making the historic news events we are asking people to remember, worth remembering; not because we should but because we can’t resist a good story.

In the identification and development of these stories our dedicated team of senior researchers has trawled through books and theses, original court documents, inquest papers, letters, banning orders, manifestos and commissions of inquiry; they have triple checked facts and tracked down people connected to the story whom we didn’t know were dead or alive; they have established exact sites where events happened and found and interviewed people who were there to make sure no version was left unturned.

Our Cape Town researcher Sue Valentine spent months looking for Philip Kgosana, the chief character of one of our memorials in Langa.

In 1960 Kgosana, a PAC member, was a student at UCT. Thanks to leaders like Robert Sobukwe being jailed at the time, it fell to his young shoulders to lead a march of 30 000 people into the city to protest the arrests that followed uprisings in Sharpeville and Langa. Kgosana led the march in short pants and a pair of borrowed shoes he had to cut the toes out of.

Bloodshed was narrowly avoided that day through the 22-year-old Kgosana’s disciplined hold over the crowd and the actions of a single police officer, Colonel Terry Terblanche, who defied orders to shoot Kgosana and negotiated with him instead.

The process of tracking down Philip Kgosana owes a lot to a hefty dose of luck. Starting out we had no idea if he was alive or dead. We knew he’d lived in exile for many years, working for Unicef, but we had no direct links with anyone who knew if he’d returned to South Africa and if so, when and where he lived.

The first stop was a visit to Langa to check out the site with the company contracted to commission the artists for the memorial sites. On approaching Langa circle our researcher decided that, seeing as she was so obviously not from the area, the best

thing to do was to admit her total ignorance and ask the first elderly people she could see sitting at the shops that surround the circle whether they knew anyone who remembered the march in 1960.

The grey-haired man she approached responded enthusiastically. He had been there and he confirmed that the marchers had gathered for the march into the city at that site. Mr Mngqibisa, as he introduced himself, also told us that the former leader of the PAC, Clarence Makwetu, (Mlamli Makwetu as he prefers to be known) had been actively involved in the politics of the day and offered to set up a meeting with him.

Another early PAC activist joined our conversation, and we discovered that Mr Sakauli had spent years on Robben Island for his part in the Poqo (an armed offshoot of the PAC) uprising in Mbekweni near Paarl in 1962.

During our interview with Makwetu at his home in Fish Hoek, we realised that he himself had not been part of the march because he had been detained by police during the protests that brought Cape Town to a standstill in the week after the Sharpeville shooting on 21 March leading up to the 30 March Langa march. He also could offer us no information about reaching Philip Kgosana.

In looking for further information about oral history sources at the UCT African Studies Library, our researcher discovered a student video which proved that Kgosana had returned to South Africa and had been interviewed about the march in recent years. While watching the credits regarding which students had made the video, our researcher recognised a name – a friend of her partner’s. A phone call to him confirmed that Kgosana was indeed alive and well and living in Pretoria and we eventually were given a phone number for him....

And so one warm winter’s afternoon last July, Valentine and I finally caught up with Philip Kgosana. We met him in the lounge of a Pretoria hotel and drank tea while he told us the story of that day – and of what happened next – in his words. It was mesmerising.

Finding Philip Kgosana, however, was – is – not the end of the story. At the time of writing, we are still battling to get permission from all parties (in this case, political) to install this memorial in Langa.

Of all the sources – original and archival – consulted in pursuit of fleshing out our research, the one source we hardly used at all was The *Sunday Times*.

Since 1906 The *Sunday Times* has called itself “the paper for the people”, but this catchy slogan rather depended on who “the people” were at the time.

For instance, in 1947 – around the time one of our story characters, the painter George Pemba, was coming to terms with the loss of his friend and mentor Gerard Sekoto, who had fled to Paris, The *Sunday Times’* art critic du jour HE Winder wrote: “There is a disturbing new trend to take black art seriously.”

So, we have the story plaques, on or alongside each artwork which briefly describes the action: the plaque text is as short, sharp and adjective-free as a good news report should be. Those whose curiosity is piqued by the anecdote, are invited to find out more via our new heritage website, whose address is on the story plaques.

Our branding on the plaques is discreet: this is not a branding exercise for the *Sunday Times*, it’s a self-funded “give back” project. The small logo on our plaques is there partly to direct visitors to our heritage website and, as importantly, to announce that we are accountable for the choices we have made.

Then we have the memorials themselves: floor and wall pieces, signage, 3D sculptures, etc. Each one is unique, our chief command to artists



The Duma Nokwe memorial by Lewis Levin

outside the High Court in Pritchard Street, Johannesburg. In the photograph, from left to right: Lewis Levin; Vuyiswa Nokwe, widow of Duma Nokwe; and George Bizos, who illegally shared his chambers with Nokwe.

Debbie Yazbek



The Cissie Gool memorial by Ruth Sacks

in the Longmarket pedestrian mall between Buitenkant and Plein Streets in Cape Town.



Garth Stead

being that their artworks be made as time-proof, weather proof and people proof as possible.

The sites themselves are obviously a big part of the story. Across four provinces, they include a railway station (Raymond Mhlaba), a mosque (Mohandas Gandhi), several schools (Bessie Head, Alan Paton), courts (Duma Nokwe, Nontetha Nkwenkwe), a boxing stadium (Happy Boy Mxgaji) and two beach-fronts (Ingrid Jonker; Eastern Beach).

The great thing about the sites is that they are all freely accessible and visible to the public. It would be antithetical to the spirit of this project to close off the memorials to free public view. Indeed many of the artworks invite the viewer to touch them or sit on them (Cissie Gool; Race Classification). They are meant to look approachable.

The not-so-great thing is that we have had several cases of vandalism. The Gandhi memorial outside the Hamidia Mosque in Fordsburg was vandalised twice. Our memorial to Enoch Mgijima and the Bulhoek Massacre was vandalised shortly after its unveiling, though in this case the church community which has taken ownership of this piece found the vandals within days and handed them over to the police. We are currently repairing this memorial.

As journalists it is our democratic right to publish what we like under law in our newspaper each Sunday. But it is our privilege to build memorials on the streets of South Africa.

It probably goes without saying that getting the necessary permission, buy-in and blessings to erect 40 public memorials across the country is a massive yet delicate undertaking.

Temperamentally, journalists tend to have low boredom thresholds. Our jobs require us to work accurately, yet as quickly as possible. Final decisions are made by one person – the editor. Deadlines are sacred. Pressure is our friend.

Government departments and committees tend to have high pain thresholds. Their jobs require them to work accurately, even when that means quite slowly. Final decisions are seldom made by one person. Reaching consensus can be like waiting for Godot, but consensus is the oft-stated aim. Due process is their friend.

I believe the mutual learning curves and resultant chemistry between these two personality types have served the project very well.

Of course we started blind, with no idea about the reach, complexity and number of roads and relationships we would need to travel, the caravans of consultation, negotiation, form-filling, pitching and pleading that would be required to put up even one memorial. Actually, we don't plead: there are



literally hundreds of stakeholders on this project in progress and their blessings – be they of the rubber-stamp kind, the political kind or the personal kind – are essential to the successful installation of any and all of our memorials. For the most part the officials we’ve met have liked the project and have taken great pains to help us make it happen in their neck of the woods.

Ethically speaking we decided that without the support of this project’s first ring of custodians – the families, and some of our chief characters (Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Bruce Fordyce, Abdullah Ibrahim) who are still living – we would not proceed.

We do not change or censor the angles of our narrative memorials to accommodate the agendas of particular interest groups, but we have walked away from a couple. And one was a close call. There may be more in future.

After protracted though polite discussions with members of the Rand Club in Johannesburg, they voted against allowing us to install a mosaic-ed “painting” on their Commissioner Street side façade about the mining magnate Lionel Phillips.

We also walked away from a story we were developing about James Mpanza who, depending on one’s point of view, was a Godfather-like thug and/or a champion of the poor and landless in early Soweto. In 1944 Mpanza, a convicted murderer with a bit of a Messiah complex, seized a tract of vacant municipal ground and settled thousands of landless people there. A keen horseman, Mpanza and his men helped Soweto’s first squatters to erect temporary shelters – then galloped round charging them rent. To this day he is seen by some as the Father of Soweto and by others as a dodgy figure whose “disciples” later formed the Sofasonke Party which was seen as a stooge of the apartheid government.

Many people still ask us why we’ve left Mpanza out of our project. Simply put, we were informed by local ward councilors after meetings with the stakeholder community that anything we put up was liable to be dismantled. More than 60 years later, the most straightforward account of Mpanza’s historic actions remains “too hot for dialogue”.

But our most politically and technically challenging site to date remains our ongoing attempt to erect a memorial marking the deaths in detention which occurred at John Vorster Square police station in downtown Joburg. Between the early 70s and 1990, seven men died there while in the custody of the security police on the 10th floor of the building. Some were tortured, others “jumped” or “fell” out of the window of the interrogation room. Today the station has been transformed into Johannesburg Central Police Station and the bust of then

prime minister John Vorster has been removed to the police museum.

Hundreds of ordinary men and women work here now. Many of them were children or not yet born when apartheid made the law unto itself. A building that was once a symbol of fear for many law-abiding citizens now pledges to serve and protect those same people’s rights.

How might we mark the terrible things that once happened within the station’s precincts without offending and upsetting those who work there now by association? How to do it without sanitising the facts? It gave us – and the artist – sleepless nights.

The artist on this story, Kagiso Pat Mautloa, came up with a powerful first concept – four huge metal cut-outs of the human body that would ‘fall’ down the outside wall of the police station. It was rejected by all stakeholders – including the *Sunday Times* – though with varying degrees of reluctance. Mautloa’s second concept was considered by us to be too sentimental – though I don’t blame him for overcompensating this time.

Six months after Mautloa submitted his third concept, it has been approved by the South African Police Service’s national office and other vital city stakeholders. It is a 10-ton rock, sourced in Mpumalanga, which will be mounted on a concrete plinth and bound with wire. It variously suggests resilience, confinement and strength. The story on the plaque will remain as it was.

After all that, we were told we still needed to comply with the Johannesburg Roads’ Agency’s Wayleave rules for anything that requires drilling beneath street level to a depth of more than 50cm. This involved seeking individual permission from each of the following service providers whose pipes run beneath our site: Telkom, Eskom, Rand Water Board, Sasol, City Power, Egoli Gas and City Parks.

As I write this – in July 2007 – this memorial is in the process of being installed outside Johannesburg Central Police Station.

In choosing 40 memorials to show and tell we are of course inviting criticism, especially concerning the many, many significant events and amazing people we have left out.

The *Sunday Times* heritage project makes no claim to be definitive. The stories and people we have chosen to commemorate are not the only ones; our way is not the only way. But we have made a start. This is our contribution to “storytelling” our heritage, one we’ll document through our website (www.sundaytimes.co.za/heritage) and through the memorials still to go up.



Race Classification Board memorial by Roderick Sauls

Remembering the effects of the Race Classification Board outside the High Court Annex in Queen Victoria Street, Cape Town.

Garth Stead

SABC NEWS : AFRICA

In broadcasting, facts speak for themselves. So at the outset, just think about this for a while: SABC News is the biggest news organisation on the continent.

Making up this organisation are a) award winning staff; and b) the most effective media and technical resources on the planet. Locally, there is a vast network of editorial offices, correspondents and news contacts. And internationally, there are bureaus in London, Brussels, New York, Washington, Senegal, Kenya, DRC and Nigeria, with more to come in Brazil, Zimbabwe, China and Jamaica.

So it's not really surprising then, that 80% of South Africans choose the SABC as their primary news source. That's about 24 million people. And they can do so with confidence, safe in the knowledge that the organisation is guided by principles of objectivity, accuracy, fairness, impartiality and balance.

Those principles, in turn, lead the SABC to its goals, and closer to its vision: to be Africa's leading news organisation. Their mission is to provide credible, accurate and interesting news programmes, bulletins and current affairs,

that bring the world's news into every one's home, in everyone's language.

Information sets us free! That's the SABC's fervent belief. And they'll go to any lengths to bring that information to you. They've broadcast from aeroplanes, from submarines, even from the Antarctic! And they've been side by side with Africans as we've struck gold, conquered space, climbed Everest, found peace and realised our dreams.

Through it all, they've reflected the world to the nation and the nation to itself. Never allowing outside considerations to influence editorial decisions. Never accepting gifts or favours. Never being a government mouthpiece. Always critically evaluating political programmes and policies. Always seeking the balanced view.

SABC News International was launched in support of the African Renaissance and NEPAD initiatives. The service broadcasts leading news stories, sports, current affairs, arts and weather via the Sentech Vivid decoder.

SABC NEWS INTERNATIONAL PUTTING YOUR WORLD INTO PERSPECTIVE

SABC launches SABC News International, a channel dedicated to bringing you global news from your perspective.

The service is dedicated to reporting domestic and international news from an African perspective, and is dedicated to giving Africa a balanced view of itself – a view that reflects our place and relevance on the global stage.

YOUR PROGRAMMING

SABC News International is a dedicated news service, yes, but it's far from one-dimensional: content is carried in a variety of programmes, each with a different slant, each covering different aspects of the world we live in.

Rendezvous Africa

A meeting place for Africans to discuss continental and global issues. Rendezvous Africa includes provocative panel discussions by experts, helping to clarify contentious issues.



Marie-Laure Digbeu
French Current Affairs - Table Ronde



Pamela Koumba
French News



Seipati Mokheti
English News

CA'S NEWS LEADER

World Today

An international news and current affairs programme, detailing Africa, sport, entertainment and business.

Interface

An interactive discussion slot, focusing on that week's current affairs. A host and various guests discuss news, sports, economics and political issues.

In The Public Interest

A critical debate between different media stakeholders, the programme also provides analysis of breaking stories. Viewer interaction is facilitated via electronic messaging.

Timeline

A weekly current affairs programme, concerned with economic development in Africa.

Special Assignment

Since 1998, Special Assignment has built a reputation for honest hard-nosed reporting. To this day, the programme offers something different, still telling viewers something they don't know.

The Commercial Continent

Interviews with major African business players, taking a look at business, commerce and investment on the continent. By covering as many countries as possible, SABC News International gains a valuable, uniquely African perspective.

Afrobytes

The science and technology angle. The service tracks the advances made on a continent long thought to have little or no innovation. And they reveal, beyond a doubt, that this is not the case.

Health Matters

A weekly update on public health-care issues: personal health, medical research, diseases and healing on the African continent.

Into Africa

A high-end travel show that unearths and showcases the hidden treasures of Africa.

Africa Rising

A series of 13 documentaries on innovative Africans who, through

their creativity and leadership, have forged a proud legacy for our continent as a whole.

The Healing Power Of Nature

A series of documentary-style films that explore the age-old relationship between people and nature.

French News: le Journal

A news service aimed at Francophone Africans. It is entertaining and informative, with cutting-edge news, while at the same time promoting multilingualism in Africa.

French Current Affairs: Table Ronde

A 30 minute actuality programme with studio guests discussing a broad range of current, relevant African issues.

(French channels are currently streamed live on www.sabcnews.com)



Mapaseka Makoti
Rendezvous Africa



David Webb
Rendezvous Africa



Richard Mwamba
Rendezvous Africa
Africa Upwards

Eric Miller

44 Rhodes Journalism Review 27, September 2007



Breve olhar sobre a lei de imprensa

“Se algum dia o género humano se aperfeiçoar, filósofos, teólogos, legisladores, políticos e moralistas descobrirão, então, que a regulamentação da imprensa é o problema mais importante, difícil e perigoso que terão de resolver”. (John Adams, Presidente dos Estados Unidos de 1797 a 1801)

Anacleto Pereira, Jurista e activista

Mais de um ano decorre desde a aprovação da nova Lei de Imprensa (Lei nº 7/06), a segunda em vigência após a abertura de Angola ao multipartidarismo e a institucionalização do estado democrático de direito, que determinou o reconhecimento, em sede constitucional, dos direitos e liberdades fundamentais dos cidadãos, entre as quais as liberdades de expressão e de imprensa.

Não sendo ainda a lei ideal, este novo diploma legal conforma-se, no entanto, nos seus aspectos essenciais, com os princípios relativos à liberdade de expressão *latu sensu*, visando, genericamente, regular as formas do exercício da liberdade de imprensa, definida, no seu artigo 5º, como a liberdade que se “*traduz no direito de informar, de se informar e ser informado através do livre exercício da actividade de imprensa e de empresa, sem impedimentos nem discriminações*”.

Se comparada com a anterior, a Lei 7/06 incorpora, ao longo dos seus 90 artigos, algumas inovações susceptíveis de alargar o pluralismo na comunicação social, a livre formação da opinião pública e o confronto de ideias e de informação. As mais evidentes são as disposições de princípio que põem termo ao monopólio do estado sobre a televisão e as agências de notícias e que conferem a possibilidade de criação de rádios comunitárias. O texto legal atribui, assim, a prerrogativa de exercício da actividade de televisão e de constituição de agências noticiosas a outras *entidades públicas e privadas* bem como estabelece que o *exercício da actividade de radiodifusão é de âmbito nacional, local ou comunitário*”.

Apesar desta abertura, a actividade de radiodifusão por entes privados é feita depender de licença outorgada na sequência de concurso público, aberto e homologado pelo Conselho de Ministro. A lei não só não acatou as reivindicações no sentido de atribuir a competência de licenciamento a um órgão regulador independente, como o proposto pela Declaração de Windhoek sobre a Liberdade de Imprensa ou pela Carta Africana sobre a Radiodifusão, como manteve o exclusivo da transmissão em ondas curtas na esfera de acção da rádio estatal (RNA).

Na senda da concretização do direito à liberdade de imprensa, a nova lei continua a conferir protecção a um conjunto de direitos inerentes ao exercício do jornalismo, enquanto profissão. Encontram-se, assim, salvaguardados – entre outros – os direitos de acesso às fontes de informação, corolário imprescindível do direito dos cidadãos à informação, o direito ao sigilo profissional ou o direito de invocar a cláusula de consciência, este sim, um direito acolhido *ex novo* pela Lei 7/06.

Por seu lado, as normas referentes às empresas de comunicação social aparecem estruturadas com base nos princípios da transparência, da não concentração e da livre constituição. Consequentemente, é imposta a obrigação de divulgação dos proprietários e dos meios de financiamento das

empresas de comunicação social bem como proibida a concentração de tais empresas numa única entidade, como medida para garantir a “*isenção e o pluralismo da informação e a sã concorrência*”.

A lei acolhe, por outro lado, o entendimento de que a liberdade de expressão manifestada através da comunicação social não configura um direito absoluto e ilimitado que se sobreponha aos demais direitos e, por isso, estabelece limites ao seu exercício. Tais limites são, segundo o texto legal, os que decorrem dos princípios, valores e normas constitucionais que visam *proteger e garantir o direito ao bom nome, à imagem e a palavra, e à reserva da intimidade da vida dos cidadãos*, entre outros. A divulgação pelos jornalistas de informação ilícita ou desleal, sendo esta considerada como a obtida por meio fraudulento, é igualmente reconhecida como uma restrição legal ao livre exercício do direito à liberdade de imprensa

As discussões geradas em torno da lei de imprensa antes e depois da sua aprovação reacenderam a polémica sobre o carácter das medidas sancionatórias a aplicar contra os “*actos lesivos de interesses e valores protegidos por lei, cometidos através da imprensa*”, na definição legal, apesar de aceite o princípio da responsabilização dos profissionais da comunicação social. A opção do legislador foi a de responsabilizar os autores de tais actos com sanções de natureza disciplinar, civil e também criminal, remetendo a determinação da pena para a respectiva norma incriminatória do Código Penal.

A Lei 7/06 não acolheu, assim, o argumento a favor da descriminalização da difamação, calúnia ou injúria. Não obstante, privilegia a aplicação da pena de multa para os casos que tipifica como crimes de abuso da liberdade de imprensa ou como crime de desobediência, ao mesmo tempo que altera o regime vigente para o crime de difamação na pessoa do Presidente da República ou seu representante, ao admitir a prova sobre a verdade dos factos.

Polémica também se apresenta a disposição legal que prevê a suspensão do periódico (ou do programa de rádio ou de televisão) que tenha sido objecto de três condenações por crimes de difamação, injúria, desobediência ou crime de abuso de liberdade de imprensa.

Mas se esta lei é considerada por uns como excessivamente penalizante, para outros é vista como um documento quase perfeito, que falha apenas em questões de pormenor.

Neste confronto de opiniões, restará saber em que medida está a lei, tal como se apresenta, a concorrer para a materialização efectiva do direito à informação e democratização da comunicação social, já que fora do seu âmbito de regulamentação ficaram matérias tão importantes como as que definem o modo de realização do serviço público de informação. Facto é que, decorrido mais de um ano, continua por aprovar todo um pacote de legislação, entre leis e regulamentos, que complementam e conferem operacionalidade à lei de imprensa ora em vigor.

A brief look at the new press law

Anacleto Pereira, lawyer and activist

More than a year has elapsed since the coming into effect of the new press law, the second since the advent of the multiparty system and the democratic rule of law in the country, enshrining rights and fundamental liberties, including freedom of the press and of expression.

Though not an ideal piece of legislation, the new law broadly conforms to the right to “*seek, receive and impart information without interference through the free exercise of media activity and business, without discrimination or barriers*”.

When compared to the earlier version, the 2006 law introduces a number of elements likely to promote media pluralism and the evolution of free public opinion.

Among the main changes is the provision bringing an end – in principle – to the state monopoly over television broadcasting and news agencies; as well as provisions for the establishment of community radio.

However, despite this apparent opening,

broadcasting activities by private entities depends on licences granted through public tenders, with the final approval of Cabinet. The law failed to take into account demands that these powers be entrusted to an independent regulator; likewise, it ignored demands to open up the monopoly on short wave radio broadcasting, enjoyed by the national radio broadcaster (RNA).

The new law retains the basic elements of the protection of journalism, and lays down a number of ownership principles based on transparency, pluralism and freedom of ownership.

On the other hand, the law makes it clear that freedom of the press is not an absolute right and therefore does not override other rights, such as those that aim to protect one’s “good name, reputation, honour and privacy”. In the same vein, information obtained by fraudulent means is deemed to be illegal, thus deemed to constitute a limitation to freedom of the media.

The debate around the press law rekindled the controversy around how to punish the

media for violations of interests protected by law. Though recognising the principle of holding media accountable, the legislators opted for leaving it up to the Criminal Code to determine applicable sanctions. Consequently, the 2006 law did not embrace arguments favouring decriminalisation of defamation and related offences. Nonetheless, a small change was introduced, allowing for the “defence of truth” (“*prova da verdade dos factos*”) if the crime of defamation injures the “person of the President”.

Equally contentious, is the provision that a publication or broadcasting programme can be suspended once found guilty of defamation on three occasions.

It remains to be seen to what extent the new law will contribute to the right to information and democratisation, seeing that it does not cover public service information. It cannot go unrecorded here that – one year on – a whole batch of other bills remain to be tabled, including the Regulation of the Press Law, which complements the law and renders it operable.

Inês Filipa José, senior producer and scriptwriter

Angola, a country with great cultural and linguistic diversity, was devastated by 27 years of civil war. With the arrival of peace, how can we restore the broken dreams of so many Angolans in this country that has been so destroyed and help it rise out of the ashes and marks left by war? How can we take a message of hope to these people? The answer is *Camatondo*.

The challenge

The great challenge has been how to make a radio programme with which every Angolan can identify? How is it that a rural woman who is illiterate can relate to a radio presenter? “I am a poor woman, I have no shoes, I don’t know how to express myself. Do you think a person like me could talk on the radio?”

Nowadays, when we record *Camatondo* it is difficult to do it on our own, with just actors and producers present. There are always other staff members from the radio station, wanting to know what is happening and what will take place in the next episode. There are even scenes that make us cry, including myself who wrote the scene, because the actors put so much effort into giving life to the characters and to the script of the soap opera.

The soap opera does not always give the answers to the problems that arise in the fictitious community of *Camatondo*. It makes the listener think, so that each one comes up with his own opinion and solution about what should be done. In that way, in many regions of the country, the topic of the day in *Camatondo* becomes a source for debate – questions of health, education, voter education and entrepreneurship. When the issue in question is controversial, then listeners with no batteries for their radios go to their neighbours to listen together in order not to miss the programme. Nobody sleeps when *Camatondo* is on air, they even make comparisons with their own lives: “That guy of the soap opera is really like so-and-so in our village/ neighbourhood/house”.

The most relevant feature of the soap opera is that the listeners are entertained while they are learning. The language is simple and everyday and the educational topics are treated in a lively, happy and amusing manner to avoid the boredom that can set in when you listen to a programme for more than 20 minutes. The plot is constructed entirely from the listener’s perspective. What would he do, what would he imagine and what would he feel in a situation like that? That way, it’s easy for the listeners to relate to



Camatondo

the mirror of our lives

Camatondo. In *Camatondo* everybody learns! After being on air for two years, with 110 episodes transmitted, people say: “Yes that drama is really ours, it talks about us, our land, our customs. It’s your programme that is ours”.

The audience

I used to write the script by myself. Today, I have lots of helpers: the actors and the listeners who often send letters and give their suggestions. It is in this way that *Camatondo* is touching peoples’ lives, in this way that *Camatondo* is capturing over half of the radio listeners in Angola. And one of the reasons for this success is that when I write I see myself in *Camatondo* – I don’t write just for them but for all of us!

On one occasion the actress that plays the part of Isabel (Avelina Ngueve) asked: “Inês, I really identify with Isabel. I

have even wondered if, before you started to write the script for Isabel, someone had told you about my life. Because everything that Isabel suffers is what I have suffered. Isabel and I have had the same experiences.”

When I laugh during the writing of a particular scene I know that the listeners will laugh as well; when I cry I know that that the listeners will also cry. What gives me the greatest satisfaction in all this is to know that *Camatondo* is able to evoke all types of emotions in its listeners. In writing *Camatondo* I have attempted to reach peoples’ hearts, because I am sure that in this way, beyond simply giving the listeners pleasure, I can also make them think about what that they have been listening to.

To read this story in Portuguese go to www.rjr.ru.c.za/no27.html

Imprensa comunitaria: voz dos ‘sem voz’?

José Paulo Funcionário do Programa para a Comunicação Social OSISA Angola

Desde 1976 que Angola não tem qualquer imprensa comunitária, seja esta escrita, falada ou televisiva, fruto do regime Marxista-leninista que os políticos adoptaram logo a seguir à independência. Os jornais semanários privados apenas surgiram em 1995 e ainda assim são generalistas de estilo nacional e não comunitário. Todos os seis semanários publicam informações gerais sobre o país e as poucas informações sobre certas comunidades têm como público-alvo os Angolanos em geral. Algumas publicações comunitárias surgiram apenas em 2000 e ainda assim respondiam mais aos desejos dos seus financiadores, maioritariamente ligadas às Nações Unidas e algumas ONGs. A verdade é que estas publicações foram irregulares e acabaram por desaparecer por falta de financiamento para garantir a produção e impressão.

Os programas de rádio a falar das comunidades existem praticamente desde 2001 e eram patrocinados por organizações filantrópicas. Estes programas eram à base de compra de tempo de antena nas rádios existentes. Mas devido aos custos do tempo de antena e de produção que garantam os subsídios de transporte e comunicação para os produtores e repórteres, esses programas também são irregulares e não provocam o impacto desejado nas comunidades.

Logo depois das primeiras eleições em Angola em 1992, o Governo de Angola concedeu alguma abertura, no sentido de autorizar o aparecimento de alguns jornais privados, que surgiram sobretudo em Luanda. Mas devido às dificuldades financeiras e o alto custo do

papel e a falta de empresas para a impressão de jornais, as primeiras publicações privadas surgem em 1995 e ainda assim como semanários. Muitas outras publicações surgiram no mesmo estilo e hoje são ao todo sete. Todavia, estes semanários trazem para o público leitor alguns desafios: saem apenas uma vez por semana; são bastante caros e pouca gente os compra; são generalistas – isto é: falam de assuntos gerais do país. Sendo eles produzidos em Luanda, os problemas e anseios das comunidades periféricas encontram-se espelhados de maneira genérica e não específica. A linguagem utilizada é de certo modo alta se comparada com o nível de escolaridade da população na periferia e mesmo na cidade.

Ao lado destas publicações, surgiram também pequenas publicações em estilo de revistas mensais que falam concretamente da vida dessas comunidades; assim é a InforSambila, Ecos do Henda na Província de Luanda e a Ondaka na Província do Huambo. Porém, aqui também encontramos as seguintes dificuldades: os jornalistas e responsáveis destas publicações, na sua maioria jovens, não têm muita formação para prestar um bom serviço à comunidade através da imprensa. Falta apoio financeiro que assegure os custos de produção, impressão e distribuição. A qualidade preta e branca e o tipo de papel prejudicam ainda mais essas iniciativas. Algumas ONG que estiveram na origem de certas publicações comunitárias e as garantiram por algum tempo abandonaram-nas pouco tempo depois por terem terminado as suas missões com o fim da guerra no país.

A Fundação Open Society, OSISA, empenhada em contribuir para o surgimento em África de sociedades abertas, onde as comunidades são activas e participativas no desenvolvimento dos seus países e no melhoramento das suas condições de vida, implementou uma série

de actividades no capítulo da formação de jornalistas, privilegiando as províncias do interior que têm pouco acesso a informação. Durante o ano de 2006, 65 jornalistas participaram das sessões de formação realizadas pela OSISA Angola e com a participação de quatro professores universitários das faculdades de comunicação social das universidades de Luanda, dois analistas e jornalistas seniores Angolanos, um especialista em jornalismo investigativo vindo do Brasil, o director de uma empresa portuguesa de sondagens e o presidente do conselho deontológico dos jornalistas portugueses.

As sessões de formação tiveram como objectivo equipar os jornalistas com conhecimentos capacitantes para facilitarem o surgimento do jornalismo investigativo especializado, o acesso às fontes oficiais de informação, um melhor entendimento da ética e deontologia no tratamento de matérias informativas, reportagens específicas (para o crime, direitos humanos, a infância, violência doméstica) e uma melhor cobertura dos processos eleitorais. Os jornalistas da imprensa comunitária foram capacitados em matérias relacionadas com a vida das comunidades, reportagem, entrevistas, edição e produção. A OSISA acredita que os meios de comunicação social têm um papel preponderante na formação das comunidades. Dai, que a capacitação de jornalistas e a sua profissionalização é um desafio permanente. Um projecto pró-activo da OSISA denominado de *Community Media*, está em curso e visa, para além da publicação de três jornais comunitários em duas províncias do país, a formação de jornalistas comunitários para rádio e jornais.

Em todas as sessões de formação nota-se que os jornalistas conhecem melhor os problemas das suas comunidades. Os membros das comunidades manifestam um grande desejo em exprimir as suas





Eric Miller

ideias através destes meios. Estas publicações são uma porta segura para o fortalecimento da sociedade civil e um modo de pressão para que os governantes resolvam os problemas das comunidades e que estas por sua vez participem do desenvolvimento. A médio e longo prazo, as próprias comunidades ganharão consciência no sentido de contribuírem financeiramente para a continuidade destas publicações, caso se revejam nas matérias publicadas. Estas publicações ajudarão a juventude – que é a maioria nestes bairros periféricos das grandes cidades do país – a ganharem o gosto pela leitura, logo que se derem conta de que as publicações falam de si e do seu quotidiano.

Apesar de a lei aprovada em 2006 permitir o surgimento de rádio comunitárias, nenhuma rádio deste cariz foi criada, por falta da regulamentação da lei de Imprensa no país. Todavia, a OSISA incluiu na formação de jornalistas, um conjunto de temas sobre o jornalismo radiofónico para as comunidades. No que diz respeito aos programas radiofónicos, as comunidades continuam expectantes à espera da autorização da abertura de rádios comunitárias. Todavia, sabe-se, de fontes ligadas ao processo, que tal abertura não acontecerá antes das eleições cujas datas continuam no segredo. Assim sendo, uma estratégia deve ser gizada para que o advento das rádios comunitárias não fique à espera de autorização. Para tal, a OSISA aposta na formação dos jornalistas nestas matérias. Já em 2006, enviou 2 jornalistas da Rádio Ecclésia ao Brasil onde – durante um mês – fizeram estágios em algumas rádios comunitárias, dado que o Brasil possui uma experiência avançada no sector. Em Abril de 2007, a OSISA convidou, o director da rádio zimbabueana, *Voice of the People*, John Masuku, que em Luanda e no Namibe proferiu várias palestras aos jornalistas locais sobre a experiência dos nossos vizinhos zimbabueanos no que concerne as

Mó Kamba reaches the youth

Gary Mundy, Cândido Mendes and Angelina Jorge

Interactive call-in programmes are making a real difference to the awareness of HIV and Aids among young people in Angola. *Mó Kamba*¹ (My Mate) – a Portuguese-language radio call-in programme – broadcast twice weekly on Rádio Nacional de Angola², invites young people to contribute directly to programme content, providing a platform for dialogue between youth from across Angola. Educational radio programming has become a common component for health development projects across Africa³. In Angola, programmes like *Camatondo* and *Angola:Adentro*,⁴ use drama and magazine formats to address important issues for Angolans. Sexual health, sustainable livelihoods and wider health and welfare issues are all addressed.

Within the media for development, creative interactive formats – which actively include young people in the creation of programme content – are a powerful format for communicating health issues. However, until recently, there had been little evidence of the effectiveness of interactive radio programming in delivering change in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in relation to health outcomes. Research carried out in Angola by the BBC World Service Trust is a step towards building the evidence base⁵.

In March 2006, eight months after the first broadcast of *Mó Kamba*, the BBC World Service Trust carried out a survey of almost 2 000 radio listeners, aged between 15-24 years, across four provinces of Angola. The sample covered the urban centres of Luanda and Benguela, and the rural border provinces of Cunene and Lunda Norte, where there is a relatively high estimated prevalence of HIV and Aids. The sample was divided equally between males and females, and between 15-19 year olds and 20-24 year olds. Since the end of the civil conflict in 2002, research on media consumption in Angola has been limited, and largely confined to the key urban centres. This was the first time that robust data was collected on radio consumption in the rural border provinces.

Overseen by the Trust's Research and Learning team in Luanda⁶, the survey explored two key questions:

1. What proportion of 15-24 year olds are listening to *Mó Kamba*?
2. What is the impact that *Mó Kamba* is having on the self-reported knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of listeners?

The research established that radio is a strong platform for reaching young Angolans, with 68% of radio listeners reporting that they listen at least once a week. Over one third (36%) of respondents were aware of *Mó Kamba*, and 75% of these (27% of all respondents) reported having listened to *Mó Kamba*. There were substantial variations in listenership between urban and rural areas. In Luanda and Benguela, 13% and 14% of respondents reported listening to *Mó Kamba*, but this figure grows to 37% in Lunda Norte and 56% in the Cunene Province. This is a significant achievement for a relatively new programme facing the challenge of having to establish itself in the

radio market.

Using a range of indicators, the analysis explored differences between *Mó Kamba* listeners and non-listeners, in their levels of knowledge, their self-reported attitudes, and behaviour around HIV and Aids.

This analysis revealed that, compared to non-listeners, *Mó Kamba* listeners were more likely to be able to:

- cite condom use as a means of reducing the risk of the transmission of HIV and Aids (98% of regular listeners, compared with 89% of non-listeners⁷);
- cite limiting the number of sexual partners as a means of reducing the risk of the transmission of HIV and Aids (47% regular listeners, compared with 27% of non-listeners);
- report that condom use is a sign of respect for their partner (82% of listeners, compared with 76% of non-listeners);
- were more likely to have bought a condom (70% of listeners, compared with 59% of non-listeners); and
- were more likely to be motivated to be tested for HIV and Aids (67% of listeners, compared with 60% of non-listeners).

Taken together, these findings indicate that interactive radio programme formats can make a strong contribution to reducing the risks of the transmission of HIV and Aids between young Angolans.

Mó Kamba will, in 2007, continue to broadcast throughout Angola, expanding out to local language radio versions and a *Mó Kamba* television discussion programme. This will take *Mó Kamba* to a wider audience across Angola. Further research by the Research and Learning team will continue to explore the impact which interactive programmes are having with Angolans.

For this story in Portuguese go to www.rjr.ru.c.za/no27.html

Endnotes

1. *Mó Kamba* is produced in Luanda by the BBC World Service Trust as part of a multi-format campaign. Between 2005 and 2007, the project has been funded by the UK Government's Department for International Development. For further details about BBC World Service Trust projects, see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/>
2. The state owned Rádio Nacional de Angola remains the only national broadcaster in Angola. For a comprehensive overview of the media landscape in Angola, see: http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/researchlearning/story/2006/12/061205_amdi_angola.shtml
3. For an overview, see <http://www.commissionforafrica.org/english/consultation/submissions/ro/sb-nov-dec04-025.pdf>
4. See <http://www.irinnews.org/AngolaCamatondo.aspx> and <http://www.irinnews.org/AngolaAdentro.aspx>
5. "Formats, partnerships, and content: optimising the components of an HIV and Aids media campaign in Angola". Cândido Mendes, Argentina Michinga, Gary Mundy, Dr Tomaz Volf, BBC World Service Trust. Forthcoming.
6. The BBC World Service Trust has a network of over 30 media and audience researchers, working across Africa, Asia, the Middle East and London.
7. Regular listeners are respondents who reported listening to *Mó Kamba* "every week" or "most weeks".

Community press: voice of the voiceless?

José Paulo, Media Programme Officer, OSISA Angola

Angola has not had any community media – written, spoken or televised – since 1976, thanks to the Marxist-Leninist regime adopted after independence.

Private newspapers appeared on the scene only in 1995, but then they were general interest publications, catering for a nationwide audience. It was not until 2000 that community publications made their debut but, even then, catering more to the interests of their financiers – the UN and NGOs.

Radio programmes dedicated to communities have been around since 2001, mainly financed by donors, who would pay for airtime on existing radio stations. These programmes are irregular and have little impact. The government loosened its control on media activity soon after the first elections in 1992, but because of financial and material obstacles, it was not until 1995 that the first papers surfaced – and as weeklies at that. Their shortcomings remain unchanged: they are expensive, bought by few and they depict community issues from a national angle and in a language that is inaccessible to most.

A number of magazines have hit the streets, but again plagued by issues of quality due to lack of resources and skilled staff. The end of the war was the death knell for magazines kept afloat by donors, as these considered their task over and departed.

rádios comunitárias e o jornalismo nas democracias nascentes de África.

A formação vai abrindo novos horizontes aos jornalistas, ao mesmo tempo que cria uma consciência clara das suas responsabilidades perante as comunidades e a sociedade. Os 'sem voz' poderão, num jornalismo de proximidade, participar activamente na resolução dos problemas que os afectam, através do debate de ideias sobre vários assuntos das comunidades e do país. Apesar de haver

Open Society stepped into the breach, targeting journalism training for those in the hinterland of the country. In 2006, 65 journalists participated in a number of training events held in collaboration with media departments of universities in Luanda and assistance from experts from Brazil and Portugal. Specialist training was provided for community media on how to report on community issues. Three community papers have since hit the streets under the aegis of the Community Media Project. It is hoped that communities will, in the long run, contribute to the financial sustainability of the publications, as they begin to see themselves depicted in the content. These papers will also stimulate reading, as the youth realise that the publications talk about them and their daily life.

Community radio stations remain on hold, as the Regulation of the Press Law has yet to be tabled and approved. Sources close to the inner circle of power indicate that things are not likely to change until after the elections. Nonetheless, the OSISA training makes provision for community radio journalism. Two journalists were sent on internships to Brazil as part of the project. Early in 2007, a well known Zimbabwean community radio journalist was invited to Angola to share experiences.

OSISA firmly believes that with more creativity, a keen eye and professionalism, community and investigative journalism will inject a new dynamism in the fight for the well-being of the communities.

ainda um longo caminho a percorrer, acreditamos que novos ventos vão soprando para o jornalismo comunitário e investigativo no país, que ajudará a imprimir uma nova dinâmica na luta para o bem-estar das nossas populações. É necessário sim mais criatividade, perspicácia e profissionalismo. A OSISA Angola acredita que isso é possível e por isso vai continuar a trabalhar nesta linha.



The country through my eyes

Olívio Gambo

“Today we suffer but tomorrow it will be different because God will save us. My life...your life are not our lives, they do not belong to us. Without bread and water we are going to suffer but God will save us.”

Children seven to 13 years old were singing this melancholic song while we entered the Mungo Church at the most distant municipality of Huambo Province in the country's central highlands. They were dirty, ragged, shivering and pale because of the cold weather, felt particularly in this high area. Our eyes caught their sad and hopeless faces, but suddenly we were drawn to a group of women with heavy, red eyes that seemed to be crying. I could not resist all the emotions and I started tearing up. I had to hide my face and force myself to look straight to the altar ruins of the majestic Catholic Church destroyed during the war in Angola. Their voices and songs were coming deep from their souls and I could not stop asking myself what was my professional role as a journalist when dealing with realities that are different from those reported by the general media.

Our journey to Mungo municipality was done by car. We left Luanda for Kuanza Sul, Benguela, Bié and Huambo provinces. It took us seven days and we travelled more than 2 000 kilometres. To do the IRIN programmes for the National Radio of Angola we have to travel to very remote areas of the country. We report on the reconstruction process, the electoral process and most importantly on the population's lives and needs. The journeys are very productive; the more stops we do the more interviews we get for the different IRIN programmes. During these missions, we face so many situations – starting with car damage, roadblocks, bad roads, lack of hotels and restaurants and more. Most of the times our meals are eaten in the street.

The missions are very interesting – the secret is our personal joy for the profession. We get to know so many people, the reality of the country, the natural potential that makes us forget the hunger, tiredness or the need of a bath.

Each opinion is precious

Cláudia Constance

I am from Mozambique and I have been working with IRIN Angola for more than a year now. IRIN gave me the opportunity to tackle issues such as landmines, demobilisation, resettlement and humanitarian assistance. I am also learning about the power of radio: its benefits and needs in a post-conflict country like Angola. From our missions to the provinces, I realise how important this information vehicle is for the rural population. It almost rules their lives: entire families get together to listen to news, to laugh, to learn and discuss.

During the period of electoral registration I travelled to Massangano (in Cambambe, Kwanza Norte) and I met two isolated families of fishermen. They lived in a very remote area. When we arrived, the women were cooking a small lizard, the men were setting up their nets, an old woman was washing some clothes and children were running naked around us. The women said that they only travelled to the village every six months; that all children were born at home and did not go to school; that they used plants and herbs for their

health care; and they were happy in that beautiful and green hilly area. I was amazed mostly because although they seemed so isolated, they had a radio and knew what was going on in the country. They were anxious to register to vote.

I just regret that information is still so controlled and limited. The majority of people do not have any option other than the National Radio of Angola (RNA). That is why I think the IRIN programmes, even those co-produced with RNA, can make a difference. We voice the concerns, interests and expectations of rural Angolans by producing regular reports about their problems, their ideas, aspirations and hopes and demonstrating that grassroots community members, peasants, women, children, the elderly and the poor, can positively contribute to the development of their country.

We travel far and deep to hear as many and different voices as possible. Each opinion is precious and our fight is to broadcast them all. But life and minds are changing and more than ever people demand information. We just hope to be there whenever they need us.

SJA reivindica

Luísa Rogério, Secretária geral do Sindicato dos Jornalistas Angolanos

O Sindicato dos Jornalistas Angolanos (SJA) é uma organização socioprofissional, vocacionada para a defesa dos interesses dos jornalistas e a desenvolvimento de um o equilíbrio entre direitos e deveres dos profissionais da comunicação social. De certo modo, concorre para regular o exercício da profissão, fiscalizando o cumprimento do Código de Ética e Deontologia, o Estatuto do Jornalista, além da legislação ligada ao exercício do jornalismo, como a Lei de Imprensa.

Com cerca de mil e setecentos filiados em todas as províncias, o SJA foi fundado a 28 de Março de 1992, pouco depois de o país aderir ao multipartidarismo. O seu surgimento foi marcado por vários constrangimentos e incompreensões que passaram por uma tentativa de o rotular de partidário da oposição ao governo e a favor de interesses estrangeiros. Esse julgamento terá decorrido, dentre outros factores, da particularidade de o SJA ter sido o primeiro sindicato independente criado em Angola.

Demarcando-se absolutamente de envolvimento com questões de índole político-partidárias, o SJA tem como princípio não fazer distinção entre jornalistas da imprensa estatal e privada, apesar de o Estado angolano – que detém os maiores meios de comunicação social – ser ainda o principal empregador de jornalistas e técnicos do ramo. Ao abrigo dos seus estatutos, podem ser filiados no SJA – além dos formalmente empregados – todos os jornalistas freelancers que exerçam actividade em Angola, incluindo estrangeiros.

Dentre os seus objectivos, inclui-se a formação e capacitação, por entendermos que uma preparação sólida servirá de base para que o jornalista possa exercer a sua

Pela dignificação

Noa Wete, Jornalista/ Director Executivo do MISA-Angola

Temos presente que na era colonial a autoridade foi imposta pela força da repressiva ditadura registada ao longo de séculos. Porém, o opressor regime pretendia dar a impressão que nunca tivera oficializado ordens para impedir a livre circulação de pessoas e bens.

Não sendo possível manifestar qualquer espécie de “defesa a favor do diabo”, verdade seja dita: no decurso da longa época fascista (mesmo com a agressiva prática da censura política e policial) havia significante Informação Pública ao alcance dos cidadãos, então, residentes em Angola.

Em relação a determinado espaço da época colonial, para justificar o referido – como exemplos, fazemos as seguintes referências:

Estações Radiofónicas

Além da chamada Emissora Oficial de Angola cuja emissão cobria o Território com a finalidade de propagar interesses ideológicos do regime colonial; em paralelo ou como “estação satélite” (cumprindo a mesma missão mas emitindo em Línguas dos Nativos) funcionava a dita “Voz de Angola”.

Porém, na maior parte das capitais dos considerados Distritos – sob gestão privada – funcionavam estações comerciais, vulgarmente, denominadas ‘Rádio Clube’: Luanda, Huambo, Bié, Uíge, Malange, Benguela, Huíla, etc tinham as suas emissoras ‘Rádio Clube’. No mesmo quadro (no início da década 50) com relevante distinção editorial, entrou em exercício a Emissora Católica de Angola, também, designada “Rádio Ecclésia”.

Imprensa

A partir de Luanda, com capitais privados, eram divulgados os seguintes jornais diários:

“Província de Angola”, “Diário de Luanda”, ambos matutinos e o “O Comércio de Angola” – vespertino, entre outros.

Posteriormente, na década 70, experimentando um exercício jornalístico mais abrangente e pluralista; movida pela envolvente visão empresarial, com abordagens de muito impacto público, destacou-se a Revista “Notícias” da Neográfica. Adiante, julgamos que motivados por interesses dirigidos às comunidades, no mercado, destacaram-se também os jornais “Angolense”, a “Tribuna dos Musseques”, etc. Entretanto, em alguns distritos foi incentivado o

dica observatório de imprensa

função com isenção, rigor e respeito pelas chamadas regras de ouro da profissão. Dentre as actividades ligadas à formação, a actual direcção eleita em Novembro de 2004, destaca a realização de seminários e palestras em todo país. Face ao aproximar das segundas eleições legislativas e presidenciais em Angola, que podem ser em 2008 e 2009, o SJA tem realizado vários ciclos de formação sobre *Media e Eleições*, destinada aos seus filiados, de modo a proporcionar-lhes ferramentas que lhes permitirão fazer uma cobertura eleitoral à altura das recomendações dos instrumentos que regulam o exercício do jornalismo.

Temos trocado experiência com outros profissionais e pessoas que se interessam pelo jornalismo, como juristas e sociólogos. Foi o caso do juiz federal norte-americano Peter Masette, que proferiu uma palestra para os jornalistas sobre o funcionamento e a evolução dos tribunais americanos e o comportamento da comunicação social desse país face à inexistência de uma lei de imprensa nos Estados Unidos da América. Uma das preocupações do SJA é a inexistência de um observatório de imprensa, instrumento que permitiria acompanhar o comportamento da imprensa e eventuais violações ou não da liberdade de imprensa – sobretudo durante o processo eleitoral. Da monitorização, no âmbito do observatório, resultará uma avaliação com maior precisão do estado da liberdade de imprensa em Angola, para além de se apurar factualmente a denúncia de um pretenso favorecimento do governo – e por extensão do partido no poder – pela comunicação social pública, em detrimento de outros actores sociais. Nesta mesma perspectiva, o SJA tem por objectivo formar conselheiros jurídicos que darão assistência aos seus filiados em caso de conflitos laborais ou em qualquer outra situação de conflito legal.

O SJA tem contribuído para a revogação e formulação das leis que regulam o jornalismo, sendo um dos exemplos

SJA calls for media observatory

Luísa Rogério, Secretary-General of the Angolan Journalists' Trade Union

The Angolan Journalists Trade Union (SJA) is a professional body dedicated to the defence of the interests of journalists and the promotion of a balance between the rights and obligation of media workers. The union contributes towards the regulation of the profession, monitoring compliance with the Code of Ethics, the Journalist's Statute and applicable legislation. With about 1 700 members across

the country, the SJA makes no distinction between journalists working for the state and private media – despite the state being the biggest media employer in the country. Its statutes also make provision for membership by freelancers, including foreigners.

The SJA's objectives include training and capacity as key elements for balanced and accurate reporting that respects the so-called golden rules of the trade.

One of the SJA's biggest concerns is the absence of a media observatory to monitor media behaviour and violations – especially during electoral periods. The observatory would – among other things – investigate accusations of biased reporting. In a related initiative, the SJA aims to train paralegal counsellors to assist

its members with labour and other disputes.

The SJA has played its part in the abolishment of state monopolies in television broadcasting and news agencies, through the new Press Law.

Another important objective is the professionalisation of journalism. The SJA would like to see the introduction of a tertiary qualification as a minimum requirement for would-be journalists. The union approaches its partners for bursaries so that its experienced members can improve their academic qualifications.

Without its own sources of financing, the union depends on membership fees and contributions by Unesco and other international institutions and foreign embassies.

a presente Lei de Imprensa, aprovada a 15 de Maio de 2006, o futuro Estatuto do Jornalista e a comissão da Carteira e Ética, que aguardam aprovação do Governo. Uma das premissas visadas pelo SJA foi já cumprida, em relação à Lei de Imprensa. Trata-se do fim do monopólio da televisão e das agências de notícias. Apesar dos avanços conseguidos, o caminho a percorrer ainda é longo.

A valorização da profissão de jornalismo é uma meta a alcançar. Não temos ainda uma carteira profissional, o que 'autoriza', de certo modo, qualquer pessoa a exercer o jornalismo, desvalorizando a profissão e – às vezes – levando a uma desobediência das normas.

Outra das preocupações do SJA é elevar ao grau de licenciatura a exigência mínima dos candidatos a jornalistas. Neste mesmo sentido, o SJA tem procurado parceiros

(universidades) dispostos a concederem bolsas para os seus filiados com muita experiência em jornalismo e que pretendem elevar o seu nível académico.

Por outro lado, conseguir uma sede própria constitui um dos maiores desafios da presente direcção. O facto de que os membros do executivo trabalharem sem qualquer remuneração, excluindo as previstas por escassos projectos, é um factor que impede o engajamento integral dos profissionais.

Sem fontes próprias de rendimento, o SJA serve-se fundamentalmente das quotas dos seus filiados para manutenção das despesas correntes. Ainda assim, é de salientar o contributo de embaixadas e instituições internacionais como a UNESCO, graças às quais tem sido possível implementar alguns projectos.

ão da nobre causa: ‘informar para formar’

exercício da informação pública para atender objectivos comunitários ou, na generalidade, satisfazer interesses públicos. Como exemplo, dentre outros, citamos o “Jornal do Kongo” cujos serviços editoriais bem como as operações gráficas funcionavam na então cidade de Carmona – Distrito do Uíge.

Considerando a validade do contributo prestado pelos referidos órgãos de comunicação, também, evocamos a capacidade de intervenção de outros tantos que se revelaram como excelentes fontes de informação com tendência formativa. Na sequência da retumbante vitória alcançada com a conquista da independência política, a partir do Dia 11 de Novembro de 1975, no contexto das nações – Angola ganhou o direito de se assumir como Estado Soberano. Na ocasião, com “o secular sonho pela Liberdade de viver bem na sua própria Terra”, o Cidadão Angolano alimentava esperanças, certo de que o futuro seria risonho e próspero...

Contudo, contra as nacionalistas aspirações que justificam o histórico êxito da justa luta de libertação, Angola foi mergulhada numa sangrenta e mortífera guerra civil que (como é evidente) tendo carácter fratricida, durante cerca 17 anos consecutivos, dizimou milhões de vidas humanas e dilacerou preciosa parte do património nacional. Pelo exposto, muito contraditoriamente, depois da proclamação da independência de Angola, num longo e dramático tempo, a realidade vivida anunciou aos cidadãos Angolanos a impossibilidade de vivermos em paz. Contra o facto o argumento nunca ganha espaço. Por isso afirmamos que – entre 1975 e 1991 – em Angola foi atrofiado, impedido e reprimido o exercício das Liberdades de Expressão e de Imprensa. Logo, com a abertura do sistema multipartidário (em 1992), os cidadãos Angolanos sentiram que parecia estar à vista a sã convivência social capaz de garantir a tolerância diante da diferença de opções políticas e da diversidade de opiniões sobre a realidade vigente no país.

Mais uma vez, dolorosamente, entre 1992 e 2002, a condenada violência da guerra voltou a causar o derrame do vital sangue de milhões de filhos de Angola. Muito felizmente, garantindo o precioso aumento do nível de esperança de vida social dos cidadãos Angolanos (a partir de 2002) a história registou “o forçado silenciar das mortíferas armas”. Então, finalizou o conflito armado. Aleluia! Acabou a guerra civil.

Face ao exposto, nos dias que correm, a classe de jornalistas de Angola está confrontada com as barreiras

Dignity of a noble cause: inform to educate

Noa Wete, Journalist and Director of MISA-Angola

Let's start off by saying that the colonial government would like to pass off that it never officially gave orders to limit the free flow of people and goods.

However, if the truth be told, throughout the colonial days, there was a substantial amount of public interest information within reach of the people. To substantiate, let's cite a few examples:

Radio Stations

Besides the so-called 'Official Broadcaster of Angola, which covered the whole country, there were the parallel broadcasts in local languages on *Voz de Angola*.

However, most regional capitals had the so-called Radio Clubs. In the same picture, there was the Catholic Church radio, Rádio Eclésia, which arrived on the scene in the 50s, with significant editorial impact.

Press

A number of private morning and evening newspapers were distributed from Luanda. The 70s saw a more pluralistic environment, with the advent of magazines and publications aimed at the communities. In a number of provinces, there were incentives for the creation of public interest information for communities and the population at large. Quite a few titles were not only informative but also educational.

Independence in 1975 brought not the much-awaited realisation of dreams, but 27 years of war and destruction. The years between 1975 and 1991 saw the weakening and repression of the freedoms of expression and the press.

The introduction of multi-party democracy in 1992 gave fresh hope of tolerance and a diversity of opinions. However, the country was once more plunged in bloodshed. Finally, in 2002, the war was finally over.

Against this background, Angolan journalists face hurdles imposed by political

decisions that are slow in being taken. Sixteen months down the line, the Regulation of the Press Law has still not evolved into a final draft. Journalists are forced to operate without a compass, the private media operating in a state of “suspended independence”.

There are presently half a dozen titles – all weeklies and six commercial radio stations, broadcasting to the limited audience of the capital, Luanda. There are also a number of “news agencies”. A rich country, poorly informed!

Collectively, through MISA-Angola, we are conscious of the need for selflessness and sustained effort to intervene in the process with the objective of better rules for the practice of journalism and improved working methods for media outlets. In essence, the media should strive to “inform to educate”. Firm in this belief, we believe there will be an increase in contributions to dignify the noble cause that media organisations in Angola have defended all along.

impostas por decisões políticas que (por exemplo) depois de 16 meses, não são tomadas. O facto está a inviabilizar a conclusão do processo que deve autenticar a vigência da Lei de Imprensa cuja regulamentação, ainda, não está definida... Na comparação concreta, em Angola, o jornalista está a funcionar sem a respectiva bússola.

Realmente, por menos que pareça, em Angola o jornalismo com capitais privados “está com a independência suspensa...”

Actualmente, a produção gira em torno de meia dúzia de jornais – semanários; 6 estações de rádio de carácter comercial que funcionam para os limitados auditórios constituídos pelo público da capital, Luanda e – no activo – estão algumas poucas “agências de notícias”. Diante da excessiva escassez, ocorre-nos salientar que, em Angola, a prática da liberdade de imprensa está muito “afectada

pelo vírus da incongruência...” País rico mas pobremente informado!

Por isso, também, pela via MISA-Angola, colectivamente, ganhamos consciência que é necessário abnegação e consequente esforço para intervir no processo que deverá culminar com o melhoramento das regras de actuação dos jornalistas e o aperfeiçoamento dos métodos de trabalho dos órgãos de comunicação social que, por essência, devem cumprir a missão de ‘Informar para Formar’ enquanto direito que deve beneficiar o cidadão residente em Angola.

Assim, convictos, acreditamos que os próximos tempos serão determinantes para paulatino crescimento de contributos direccionados à dignificação da nobre causa social defendida pelas distintas organizações da classe de jornalistas que funcionam em Angola.



EC/ECHO/Khaled Halouane



The Saharawi struggle

It is difficult to summarise 32 years of occupation, fear, war, exile, human rights violations and lost dreams of the people of Western Sahara, the last colony in Africa.

... — by Malainin Lakhal —

But I will try to give you an idea about my own experience within the framework of the general experience my people went through for three decades and are still living with.

I was born under the Spanish occupation in 1971, in El Aaiun, the capital of Western Sahara, and I grew up under the Moroccan occupation.

Western Sahara has been recognised as a non-self-governing territory by the United Nations since the early 1960s. It was decided then that Spain, the de jure administering power of the territory, should co-operate with the international community in the decolonisation process recommended by the UN Security Council and General Assembly, and a referendum on self-determination was supposed to take place in 1975. Instead, in 1975, Spain, Morocco and Mauritania signed an illegal tripartite agreement, the Madrid Accord, by which the Spanish administration unilaterally withdrew from the territory leaving it to the two neighbouring countries, but maintaining a privileged priority in the exploitation of Western Sahara's natural resources. Unfortunately, this illegal act was blessed by both France and the US.

The invasion completely changed the human rights situation in the territory, and a set of violations and crimes against humanity committed by the Moroccan army and authorities has been reported by international and local human rights organisations and also by eyewitnesses and survivors. The Saharawi people resisted this de facto situation the three countries wanted to impose on them and decided to proclaim an independent Saharawi State, on 27 February 1976. The Saharawi govern-

ment established its administration and authorities over 20% of Western Sahara (known as the liberated areas) as well as in the refugee camps in the south-east desert of Algeria, and is now recognised as a sovereign state (though in exile) by some 80 countries worldwide, and is a founding member of the African Union.

After fierce fighting the Saharawi liberation movement, Polisario Front, which was created in 1973 by the different Saharawi political tendencies, succeeded in forcing Mauritania to sign a peace treaty in 1979, and recognise the Saharawi State as the sovereign authority in the territory. Morocco remains the only occupying force now and the human rights violations are the daily routine in the "occupied zone" of Western Sahara (80% of the territory under Moroccan illegal occupation).

As a child I did not realise what was going on because the adults were so scared to speak out about the atrocities they had been subjected to since 1975. But, when I became 14 years old, I started to understand and discover that my country is colonised, that I was treated differently, despised and discriminated against at school and in the streets.

And in 1987 my generation experienced the biggest shock of its life. Moroccan authorities forced 10 000 Saharawi students to stop their studies and deported them from Western Sahara to Moroccan cities to work. Another 300 Saharawi students and activists disappeared. They were detained in Moroccan secret detention camps and those who survived torture and humiliation were released four years later, in 1991.

Outraged, we just could not accept this situ-

ation and we decided to do something. Of course the first thing to do is to fully understand what's going on, what's the story, and what's the best way to react.

With friends, we started as secondary school students, but particularly in the university in Morocco (because the colonial power did not build a single university or high school in Western Sahara), to organise ourselves in secret organisations, to search documents and books about the colonisation of Western Sahara, and this was in itself a risk as the Moroccan political police is very active in the occupied zone and in universities especially.

Because of my activism, I was first arrested in January 1992. So I entered a new experience. Imprisoned in a secret detention camp in El Aaiun, with some 100 other Saharawi youngsters, I was subjected to all imaginable methods of torture on a daily basis, handcuffed and blindfolded for two months, but the secret to survive this experience was very simple, as a wise young friend said: "just say NO!"

And I survived the first experience, so I became a "client" of the secret police. Whenever a demonstration is organised anywhere in Western Sahara, I would be arrested, for hours, or days and sometimes for a week or more.

With my friends, students, unemployed qualified graduates, and human rights activists, we succeeded in organising or helped in organising a lot of activities and acts of protest against the Moroccan occupation in 1992, 93, 95, 97 and 99, and it was a long, hard and risky process of raising awareness but it was also harder to break the siege of fear and terror imposed on the old generation and to educate



EC/ECHO/Daniela Cavini



EC/ECHO/Khaled Halouane

the younger generations about how to fight back the occupation in peaceful ways.

In 1999, we succeeded in organising the biggest peaceful popular uprising ever organised since the Moroccan occupation. Thousands of Saharawis in all the cities of the occupied zone of Western Sahara and in the southern cities of Morocco joined the protest. For four months people got to the streets, chanting slogans in favour of the independence of their country, fighting back Moroccan military and police forces' attacks against peaceful demonstrations. Hundreds of demonstrators were arrested, tortured, imprisoned or abused in one way or another by the colonial forces. And I was forced to work undercover, because this time, I learnt that the secret police was really determined to shut me up for ever.

From September 1999 to August 2000, I lived undercover, working with activists and comrades, but it was impossible to live this way forever so I decided to flee the occupied areas and join the independence movement on the other side of the Moroccan military wall (berm). And in the first week of August I started the long journey with two other friends, in the desert heading to the berm in the south of Western Sahara.

The Moroccan military wall (or the wall of shame) is another inhumane outcome of the occupation. It is a 2 700km long sand wall that divides the territory of Western Sahara and its people in two from north to south. It is guarded by more than 120 000 Moroccan soldiers, barbed wire and landmines.

We walked for three days and three nights in the desert, heading south, thinking about all the probabilities but resolute to die rather than be arrested by the military soldiers. The third day we reached the wall, and managed to cross it unnoticed.

After another night walk we reached the territory of Mauritania and managed to get to the nearest city in the north-west of Mauritania, Nouadhibou, where we could contact representatives of the Saharawi liberation movement and join the Saharawi camps in August 2000.

In the camps another story of resistance began. The Saharawi refugees live in dire conditions, but in dignity. They struggle to survive, but they are also struggling to build the basis for a future modern and free state. They built hospitals and schools for

In the camps another story of resistance began. The Saharawi refugees live in dire conditions, but in dignity. They struggle to survive, but they are also struggling to build the basis for a future modern and free state.

...

their children, organised themselves and run a government with all institutions any government may need. And they are determined to struggle to return to their homeland.

Because I have a lot of contacts in the occupied zone, and in the universities, I found that the best way to help my people is to get the information out of the siege, to contact international organisations and to be a sort of bridge for the human rights activists and victims with the outside world.

Life in the occupied zone of Western Sahara is becoming even worse since 2005. Morocco rejects all UN peace plans for the decolonisation of the territory, and abuses the Saharawi people's human rights.

The Saharawis started a new popular and peaceful uprising in May 2005. They are demonstrating on a daily basis, expressing their rejection of the occupation but also paying the cost of this refusal with hundreds of arrestees, thousands injured during peaceful demonstrations, and also hundreds of youngsters are forced to migrate or to flee to neighbouring countries, and sometimes they do not survive the journey.

Human rights activist or journalist?

With regard to my personal experience as a colleague of yours, I have to admit that I became a journalist out of necessity. My education and language skills as well as the need to spread information about the Saharawi cause were factors that pushed me to embark in a journalistic adventure and role. This has not been easy as I had practically no previous training, few means and almost no free time to learn.

However, with a lot of patience, perseverance, amateurism but determination I managed, with the help of many foreign friends, to contribute in shed-

ding light on the Moroccan human rights violations against my people.

Despite the lack of means and training, Saharawi journalists have succeeded in setting up an online Saharawi news agency, a national radio and four regional channels, a local TV that will be a satellite TV soon, a few magazines and many websites.

My modest organisation, the Saharawi Journalists' and Writers' Union (UPES) was created years ago, and was reconstituted in 2005 after many years inactivity. A small group of Saharawi journalists, poets, writers and intellectuals decided to reactivate this body to participate in the social life and struggle of their people, in the refugee camps and in the occupied zone. We launched a website in Arabic, and recently in English too, to open an additional space for writers from the occupied zone and the camps to interact and publish their writings.

UPES also constituted the first classes for a future school for journalism and peaceful resistance in the camps, the Basiri Institute for Communicators for Peace, with the contribution of a Spanish organisation, Comunicadores por la Paz, but it is still in its beginnings, and I cannot say that I am the best of its students.

Internet is the best avenue we use to communicate with the outside world and with our people in the occupied areas despite the fact that the Moroccan regime invests money and technology to censor and block all the Saharawi and pro-Saharawi internet websites.

This talk was given in Sydney to the members of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance in Australia and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in July.

*Photographs from the ECHO photo library:
<http://ec.europa.eu/echo>*

Rwanda: a question of

... by William Bird and Sandra Roberts

There is no doubt that media freedom is essential for a functioning democracy, but it can be extremely difficult to realise and protect in a country where media have been used as a key tool of repression. Rwanda's recent violent history provides a powerful argument for media monitoring.

In 1994 the campaign of ethnic cleansing in Rwanda took less than 100 days but left 800 000 people dead. The genocide was preceded and encouraged by hate media against Tutsis. During the genocide a radio station went further than stereotyping and told the aggressors where to find Tutsis, and then to kill them. Although the media cannot be considered responsible for the genocide, the Rwanda media failed to act as a safeguard against the tragedy. Unlike other instances where media have been used as a tool for propaganda, Rwanda highlighted the extreme power of the media.¹ In addition to this, was the failure by the overwhelming majority of international media to engage the international community in efforts to prevent or limit the genocide. In the words of Al-

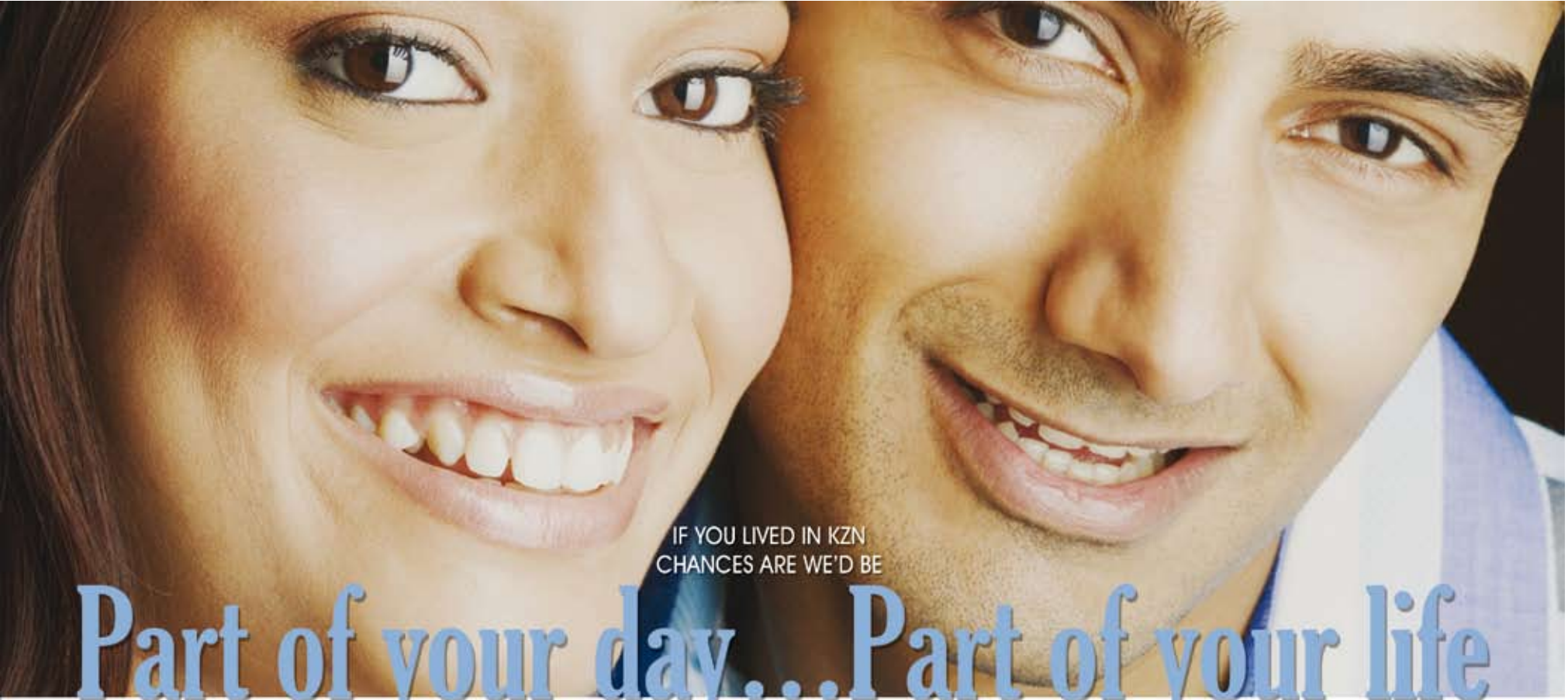
len Thompson: "Confronted by Rwanda's horrors, western news media for the most part turned away, then muddled the story when they did pay attention. And hate media organs in Rwanda – through their journalists, broadcasters and media executives – played an instrumental role in laying the groundwork for genocide, then actively participated in the extermination campaign."²

The role of the many media can be seen as either actively complicit in the genocide or failing in their fundamental role to inform people and give voice to the voiceless. This experience has understandably resulted in a great deal of scepticism about media among some sections of Rwandan society and, more importantly, about the pre-eminence and value of media freedom.

In addition to the fear and mistrust, there is now also a clear desire to ensure that the media plays a positive role in nation-building and opposing ethnic divisions. While such a discourse may be positive and necessary, it may also pose a significant threat to media freedom if media do not wish to adopt the nation-building discourse.

Media credibility in Rwanda is low. Again this situation is not unique as, according to a number of sources, "media credibility ratings for the major broadcast and cable television outlets [worldwide] have fallen somewhat in recent years."³ But for the media to fulfil their responsibilities in Rwanda it is imperative that they can be trusted by the public. In such a context, the potential to limit media freedom in the name of building credible media that acts in the national interest is great.

According to Waldorf: "After taking power in 1994, the Rwandan Patriotic Front retooled the previous regime's information agency and the official media to disseminate its own propaganda. As under the previous regime, the government has promoted private media outlets to create a facade of media pluralism. At the same time, the RPF has successfully suppressed or co-opted independent journals and accused independent journalists of inciting ethnic 'divisionism' and even genocidal ideology.



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credibility and quality

As a result, there is less press freedom and media pluralism in Rwanda today than there was before the genocide.”⁴

The Media Monitoring Project’s experience in Rwanda suggests that, like many other emerging democracies, quality journalism and media freedom are a work in progress. As outsiders, it is incredibly difficult to fully comprehend the depth of distrust and fear created by the genocide, particularly as many trials for those responsible are still in progress. The discourse repeatedly identified in Rwandan media is overwhelmingly one of unity, talking only of one Rwandan people.

Given local and international trends at play in Rwanda, it seems that challenges to journalism that upholds democracy are immense but structural interventions are in place to support the media sector in Rwanda.

Where to from here?

There is no formula for media freedom, but a process has started in Rwanda. A combination of putting structures in place to encourage and support media freedom as well as media monitoring in support of human rights is moving Rwanda in the right direction. It is important that Rwandans are made more aware of the positive role media can play in rebuilding democracy, and human rights-based media monitoring and self-regulation assist this process.

The enormous job of prosecuting those involved in the genocide, and a realisation that it would be almost impossible to identify and convict all those involved, contribute to a culture of fear in the power of the media and those who claim to be independent journalists. This climate can be used to further the interests of those who wish to suppress media freedom for their own purposes. However, there are indications that the country is moving to support greater media freedom. Rwanda now has an independent institution which has been tasked with promoting freedom of the press. The High Council of the Press (HCP) was established in 2002. A code of conduct for the media⁵ has also been debated and agreed on by media practitioners.

MMP worked together with Rwandans to make the code a reality. At a meeting between HCP and MMP a draft code was drawn up based on best practice African and international codes. The draft was developed and finalised by an elected task team of media practitioners. In 2005, during a media workshop organised by the HCP in conjunction with the Press House. Over 300 media practitioners have since signed and adopted this code. The open process in which the code was developed and adopted serves to restore some credibility to the Rwandan media. Having a code that is public, and a mechanism for members of the public to submit complaints, is a critical step. It also demonstrates a common commitment to key journalistic principles.

In spite of the attempts to make the code and regulation as democratic as possible, there have been reports of media freedom being limited by the use of laws punishing incitement to discrimination or divisionism. “The law also requires journalists to reveal their sources on demand from the judicial organs (including, presumably, the judicial police). Finally, the law created the High Council of the Press, under the Office of the President, which accredits journalists and advises the government on censorship.”⁶ This underscores and provides further justification for independent media monitoring.

MMP has worked in Rwanda building media monitoring capacity since 2002, using a human rights approach. MMP has formed a solid relationship with the media monitoring team in Rwanda, training them on media monitoring around gender, children, elections and broader media monitoring. An inclusive view of human rights necessarily includes issues of freedom of the media and expression, gender⁷, ethnicity⁸, and children. Media monitoring from a human rights perspective consequently has the advantage of making it very difficult to use the results to limit media freedom. It is also inherently a tool to encourage better media practice, as comparisons can be drawn between different media, rather than between a country’s media and an ideal.

It is possible, using media monitoring, to identify quality and diversity markers such as a diversity of sources, regional coverage and gender. Thematic media monitoring means that particular human rights areas can be explored in-depth. To ensure buy-in and support for such media monitoring however, it is important that issues are contextualised and that where possible local codes or guidelines are used to set the standards. The Rwandan press code, along with human rights principles, forms a solid basis for independent, comparative media monitoring in Rwanda.

In support of the commonly-agreed code and process for complaints, monitoring the media can also be used to help encourage ethical journalism, and credibility. Media monitoring enables common trends to be identified, be it the kinds of stories covered, the limit or diversity within each subject, who speaks and what the key messages are.

Three of the key commonly accepted ethical principles of journalism that can be found in the Rwandan media code as well as numerous other media codes are:

- To seek the truth and report it as fully as possible,
- To act independently, and
- To minimise harm⁹.

Media monitoring can be used to highlight best practice in each of these principles.

If there is diversity in news, in terms of stories, sources, places and subjects, there is a greater chance that news will be more fully reported. By monitoring the kinds of information provided, as well as the fairness of stories, there is a greater chance of stories being more accurately reported. Similarly, by monitoring how sources and subjects are portrayed, monitoring can identify where the media has attempted or failed to prevent harm. For example, identifying a rape survivor where she did not give permission is not an attempt to minimise harm. In addition, perpetuating nega-

tive stereotypes about particular ethnicities can be tracked through media monitoring. In terms of acting independently, it should be emphasised that media monitoring should be only one component of a comprehensive strategy aimed at protecting and promoting ethical practice.

Other components may include skills development of journalists and targeted training. The further development and implementation of a complaints process would also be informed by monitoring. In addition, general media literacy campaigns to enable citizens to critically engage with media would help build a more informed public.

There is of course a flip side to the power of monitoring – that it may be used to regulate and limit media freedom. The trends and findings may be used to target individual journalists and media, or those who wish to offer different views and opinions. Ironically, if there is abuse of media freedom it will be seen in monitoring. Monitoring will provide the necessary evidence if over time there are the following trends: a worrying similarity in different media; key messages are the same; different opinions and people are not heard; and certain voices dominate without reason over others. Provided the monitoring is made available to members of the public, it will enable those in authority to be challenged, as well as alert civil society in the fight for media freedom.

As long as the monitoring is driven by a human rights framework this should always be the case. What cannot however be guaranteed, is the independence of those responsible for the media monitoring. If independence is threatened or undermined, the results may not be reliable even if made available to members of the public. It is then up to civil society and government to ensure the independence of those monitoring is restored and protected.

This discussion and the conclusions drawn are also in line with the four recommendations put forward by Allen Thompson in his report on media and the Rwandan genocide¹⁰:

1. Media in vulnerable societies should be monitored.
2. There should be greater collaboration between media organisations and conflict resolution organisations.
3. Media organisations need to build a better case for monitoring and early intervention and encourage appropriate donor support.
4. A systematic review of media behaviour in vulnerable societies should be conducted.

Media monitoring could have identified and highlighted problems in Rwandan media in 1994, and it can continue to challenge the lack of press freedom and highlight human rights issues today.

Endnotes

1. See also the summary judgement of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Available on the ICTR website, www.icttr.org.
2. Thompson A. (ed) 2007. *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*. Pluto Press: London: 4.
3. See, <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?PageID=838>, as well as http://www.stateofthenewsmedia.org/narrative_overview_publicattitudes.asp
4. Waldorf L in Thompson A. (ed) 2007. *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*. Pluto Press: London: 154.
5. Journalists and Media Code of Deontology in Rwanda, May 2005.
6. Waldorf L in Thompson A. (ed) 2007. *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*. Pluto Press: London: 155.
7. In the prosecutions against genocide participants, rape has been recognised as a crime against humanity.
8. The discourse of national unity in Rwanda means a reluctance to address issues of ethnicity.
9. From Bob Steele, Poynter Institute.
10. Thompson A. (ed) 2007. *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*. Pluto Press: London: 152.

Since writing the article a currently unnamed bill on the media has been submitted to the Rwandan parliament for debate. The bill, similar to the South African Films and Publications Amendment Bill, if passed poses significant threats to media freedom in Rwanda, as it requires all journalists to be registered, and involves direct regulation of the media by the state in ways that can be used to limit media freedom.

STOP
PRESS



‘It’s our paper’

Despite being state-controlled, the Bulawayo tabloid uMthunywa is a popular read for people who feel alienated from the Zimbabwean government.

...

by Hayes Mabweazara

U*Mthunywa*, a vernacular paper for Bulawayo and the Matabeleland region was created in 1985, as a state-owned paper. In 1993 the paper folded due to viability problems linked to political interference and its failure to provide an alternative voice to the mainstream English newspapers.

On 4 July 2004, *uMthunywa* re-emerged under a new editor with a new market-driven editorial thrust anchored on the values of tabloid journalism. It took the lead as the prototypical representative of tabloid journalism in Zimbabwe, gaining popularity as a paper that prints gossip and human-interest stories that the ‘man’ in the street can relate to and identify with.

Although selling nationally, *uMthunywa*, by virtue of being an isiNdebele paper, has wide readership in the Ndebele-speaking provinces of Zimbabwe and Bulawayo, where it is based, takes the lead in circulation.

The content

uMthunya prioritises social issues related to ordinary people – this is evident in its pictorial content and its sources. Coverage hinges on township gossip, rumour-mongering and other unconventional stories peppered with idiomatic and slang expressions. The storylines capitalise on unadulterated exaggerations characteristic of the yellow journalism of 1920s America.

The bulk of its stories appear to defy logic and normality. One notes for example the following stories: “Isela limila amathamathisi emhlane” (Tomatoes grow on thief’s backside, 24 September–1 October 2004); “Ubabhemi utholakala etshaye isathongwana embhedeni” (Donkey found fast asleep in bed, 3–10 December 2004).

The use of the vernacular is central to projecting the paper as a sensationalist medium. Ndebele tends to be more brazen and sensational than English. The paper appears to reinvent expressions

and words, which resonate with colloquial street talk, for example: “Ijazi lika mkwenyana” literally meaning “son-in-law’s jacket” (4–11 June 2004) being used as a euphemism for a condom.

uMthunywa also covers very little of political parties and government activities. For example, in the 20 issues I studied, there were only three political stories: one on the dangers of political violence during the senatorial elections (29 October–4 November 2004); a ZANU (PF) senatorial election campaign advert (25–31 March 2005); and a comment on the senatorial elections (1–4 April 2005). This is particularly striking given that the paper re-emerged in a politically-charged environment that saw, among many other events, the 17th amendment of the Zimbabwean constitution.

Several stories expose the private lives of public personalities and celebrities. A notable example involves Tapuwa Kapini, then a goalie for prominent football club Highlanders based in Bulawayo,



whose involvement in street fights was published in a story titled: “Ukapini wehlula abafundisi” (Church ministers gave up on Kapini, 1-7 April 2005).

Readers’ identities

Although the readers I interviewed for my study came from diverse ethnic backgrounds, they broadly construed themselves as Ndebele. This points to the fluidity of identities in the region mainly shaped by socialisation, intermarriages and the influence of the geo-political space. For all the interviewees, socialisation in Matabeleland (Bulawayo in particular) has played a key role in framing their identities around the Ndebele ethnic group.

This collective identity influences the readers’ relationship to the broader political formation as they read *uMthunywa* as a distinct marginal group with a shared identity akin to an ethno-nationalism that resonates with their political behaviour. A pervasive feeling of disillusionment and marginalisation is marked among the readers. This attitude resonates with the general and sustained climate of fear that emerged with the immediate post-independence war that took place in the region. Notably, the readers’ conscious and selective consumption of the print media is structured by their regional identity and relationship to the broader political formation. They are unified by their scepticism toward sections of the mainstream press as news sources and their resolve to selectively consume newspapers.

Although the paper is read across a wide demographic spectrum, it is clear that the lack of interest in political issues among some of its readers, particularly those in the lower classes, is a key factor for its selection.

Meanings

Although the reading of *uMthunywa* varies, the paper is seen as an alternative way of knowing about the world that is not offered in other media, particularly the state-controlled press. The readers characterised the style of *uMthunywa* as fun, exciting or entertaining precisely because, among other things, it carries stories they enjoy, which enable them to symbolically escape from the conditions of their day-to-day lives. Thus the content of *uMthunywa* provides a platform for symbolic distancing, imaginatively taking some distance from the spatial-temporal conditions of everyday life (as discussed by Strelitz 2005: 79). This is particularly so in the light of the fact that the participants in this study expressed unequivocal fatigue with the mainstream press, a scenario compounded by their general disillusionment and feeling of neglect by the power bloc.

This was clearly articulated in the following personal interviews with one reader, Sibekezele: **Interviewer:** Looking at the copies of *uMthunywa* that we have with us here, which particular stories do you have interest in?

Sibekezele: I like stories that provide humour and are bizarre, like this one which talks of a father-in-law who flogged his son-in-law for spilling his illicit opaque beer, also this one which talks of a woman who stripped naked when she lost her bucket in a water queue in eNtumbane. You can’t avoid laughing after reading such stories. I also like Zenzele Ndebele’s column “Asixoxeni ngezomculo” (Let’s talk about music), it highlights the biases in the Zimbabwean music industry in a very humorous manner, particularly the skewed support given to the industry by the government... Zenzele also graphically describes what happens at musical shows, you amazingly find your self cruising in the gig, picturing all sorts of happenings – you know what I mean! (chuckles). This is what you don’t find in the other papers.

In terms of coverage of public figures, the

readers naturally wished to know intimate and personal details about celebrities. The closeness they feel to celebrities is underlined by their perception that stars are public property whose lives can and should be scrutinised by their fans. Some readers, however, felt that the paper goes way too far in its intrusion into celebrities’ lives.

It also emerged from the readers that the content of *uMthunywa* reinforces their already-existing beliefs about different kinds of issues, like witchcraft and other kinds of paranormal phenomena they live with. This confirms Rosnow and Fine’s insight that “truth is only accepted when it is consistent with one’s frame of reference” (cited in Bird 1992: 121). One of the interviewees aptly captured this by reflecting on how *uMthunywa* “mirrors” his personal lived-circumstances.

Dube: The stories do reflect our society and I believe they are true. Sometimes I hear of the stories before they even appear in the paper. If you remember well, I said in our discussion the other day, that I witnessed the story of the brothers who came all the way from Tsholotsho to ferry the body of their deceased sister for burial on a donkey-drawn cart. It’s also the same about this story of a traditional healer who does his job over the phone. I know someone who can testify. I think I get access to these experiences because of my background; I was born and bred in Magwegwe Township, so I’m a township boy. The stories covered in *uMthunywa* are really true, and they constitute our daily talk and experience in Magwegwe.

The majority of the readers don’t express disbelief in the paranormal occurrences covered in the paper. For them, these constitute real experiences. Witchcraft, for instance, is seen as part of their culture and so when they read about the stories, they are not at all taken aback.

One important theme that emerged from the interviews is the apparent influence of the folkloric tradition that runs through most of the stories in *uMthunywa*. The readers noted that the stories follow the narrative conventions and formulae they already know from their cultural repertoires and this was instrumental in drawing their attention to the content of the paper. One reader said: “I really enjoy reading stories in *uMthunywa*; they make me feel as though my grandmother is telling me a story because of the way the stories are written. The stories are written in a different way, it’s as though you are going through a folk narrative.”

The fact that the stories constitute part of the popular daily discourses of the readers also emerged as fundamental to the cohesion of the readers’ marginal group-identity. Thus, it emerged that some of the readers sometimes read the paper in groups, laughing together and drawing parallel examples from real life experiences.

Political significance

Although no overtly political questions were asked in the interviews, some political views did emerge, revolving mainly around distrust of and alienation from the establishment. These political attitudes are deeply rooted in the readers’ relationship to the broader political formation and constitute part of the reason why they prefer *uMthunywa*. Many of those who discussed politics expressed a strong belief that the government had a negative attitude towards the people of Matabeleland. The majority

of readers felt alienated from mainstream politics, believing that the government is conspiring against the people of Matabeleland.

Given *uMthunywa* readers’ feelings of discontent with the power bloc and its institutions, it is arguable that their interest in *uMthunywa*, in part, represents the failure of other societal institutions, among them the more prestigious news organisations and traditional political organisations, to address adequately issues of vital concern to members of the public (see Ornebring & Jonsson 2004: 293).

One may further contend that *uMthunywa* offers “ammunition” against what is seen as a biased establishment that denigrates the Ndebele people. It is important to note that the frustrations felt by *uMthunywa* readers stem from their position in some kind of underclass that perceives itself as unable to do anything significant about events in the mainstream. Clearly, the reading of *uMthunywa* is symptomatic of a deeper social malaise in Bulawayo and Matabeleland at large – precisely the political alienation experienced by the readers.

Language

The fact that *uMthunywa*’s editorial content is in isiNdebele is undoubtedly key to its consumption as language naturally locates individuals in particular cultures, placing them firmly in their own realities (Kramseh 1998: 65-66). This point was widely acknowledged by participants in the study with one reader commenting: “You see, *uMthunywa* is in our mother language and, traditionally, language is the carrier of culture. We, therefore, see the paper as reviving our cultural values through its use of pure isiNdebele and proverbs which explore issues that we, the poor of Matabeleland, experience. I think this is important because even my own mother at times asks me to read the paper for her, this has not been happening before – it’s our paper and we should be very grateful for its availability and pray that it doesn’t disappear again.”

The language thus works towards the cultural cohesion of the readers. Further, the language also expresses some issues in a graphic and sensational way that cannot be matched by English. It achieves this largely through departures from official, formal language. One reader observed that the paper re-invents phrases and comes up with catchy and interesting ones like “Idlalichatsha” (18-24 March 2005), used in the literal sense, as a euphemistic title for mischievous women who prey on married men. More obvious, however, is the fact that the language has enabled more people, including those not so comfortable in reading English, to partake in the discourses of the paper.

One may conclude that *uMthunywa* offers the people of Bulawayo something they do not find in other Zimbabwean print media. The cornerstone of its attractiveness is plainly that it deals with issues experienced by the readers in their lived circumstances – the socio-political conditions that have alienated them from the macro-political life of the nation. The use of the vernacular sharpens the paper’s tabloid form and appeals to their identity as Ndebele people. The paper thus constitutes an “alternative mediated public sphere” for readers who feel alienated from the power bloc and dominant frames of reference. It remains contestable therefore, whether the tabloid press has no place in the journalistic terrain as its critics argue.

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Pictures to rewrite history by

Women by Women: 50 Years of Women's Photography in South Africa, published by Wits University Press, showcases photographs of and by South African women. The idea was hatched by Minister of Arts and Culture Pallo Jordan who approached photographer George Hallett to make the project a reality. Hallett approached journalist Robin Comley and photographer Neo Ntsoma to help him source and edit the spread of photographs. The most difficult task was to find the work of those no longer living and this involved archival work by the Iziko South African National Gallery's Pam Warne. The book aims to do several things: recover the work of women photographers of the past which has been forgotten; showcase the work of women now working in the profession and exhibit the captured lives of ordinary mothers, sisters, aunts and daughters as well as heroes and icons.

Being woman

by Neo Ntsoma

Photography has the ability to change people's ideas and their minds as well as change their actions. I guess that's one of the things that keep us getting up in the morning and going out with our cameras. I've never had the luxury of taking a chance that could result in failure. I've always tried to play it safe in so many ways. I've done a lot of jobs that didn't interest me just to prove I could do the stuff that guys did. But this project gave me the freedom to exercise my rights and beliefs as a woman.

The first leg of the preparation process was the most challenging. From creating a database of all the photographers that have made a significant contribution in the 50 years of South African women's photography, to choosing relevant issues and subjects to be highlighted and celebrated, was the greatest challenge of all.

These decisions involved a lot of research and co-ordination and negotiations, and at times it raised a lot of unpleasant debates among the editorial team. By the end of the project, I had learned so much about myself and my role as a woman in the media industry and I had also gained an enormous amount of knowledge on a variety of issues affecting women in my country.

It made me appreciate my worth as a woman in this industry even more. There was obviously a constant reminder of the fact that what we were doing was much bigger than just putting together a book of photographs, but actually rewriting our history as women in this country. As we all know, it's practically impossible to try and accommodate or please everybody. We knew that there was going to be criticism of some sort at the end of the project, especially when dealing with women's issues.

I guess being a practising photographer as well as part of the editorial team, was also one of my biggest challenges. I knew that if anything was to go wrong, I was likely to be the first one to feel the heat from my colleagues. I really tried my best to practice fairness whenever necessary during the editing process. There was an obvious imbalance of race in the submissions we received and somehow we tried to balance that by including student portfolios of some of South Africa's upcoming black female photographers. I also felt somehow it was my responsibility to try and represent my sisters so they can also claim their place in the industry.

I'm grateful to all the photographers involved for contributing their work and trusting us with it. The book gives an insight into conditions affecting women in this country. Some of the pictures will bring a smile to your face, like Jenny Altschuler's picture of a black domestic worker kissing a white boy and Ruth Motau's picture of a Soweto woman pinning a poster of Nelson Mandela to a washing line in celebration of the ANC victory in the first democratic elections. Others will bring a tear to your

eye, like Debbie Yazbek's "A Fall of Sparrows" series of pictures showing the suffering of two HIV/Aids-infected mothers. All the pictures in the book will make you stop and think – as a photographer and as a person.

On that note, Penny Siopis says in her foreword: "This publication cannot be absolutely representative of photographers and subjects alike. No single book can." We just tried our best as editors to show a range of perspectives in both content and types of photographic practice by women photographers of South Africa.



"It would have been fitting if the iconic image of the 1956 march had been taken by a woman photographer," says artist Penny Siopis, who wrote the introduction for the book, "it was not and this is too bad." But photographer Neo Ntsoma covered the re-enactment of the march in 2006. Ntsoma reflects: "Covering the 50th anniversary of the 1956 Women's March was not only an honour, but an unforgettable experience. It was humbling to see thousands of women joined in one spirit to commemorate the day that made such a significant impact on our history. Women came from all corners of South Africa, just as they did 50 years ago, marching down the streets of Pretoria to the Union Buildings to hand over a memorandum to the President. United for one single cause, this time not against oppressive laws, but to ensure that every woman and every girl tastes the fruits of liberation."



On Page 56
Jillian Edelstein

Fikile Mlotshwa, comforter and briefer, was employed by the TRC to help testifying victims.



Above
Jenny Altschuler
Busride, 1998

Right
Debbie Yazbek
Tony and Evelyn, Auckland Park, Johannesburg

Far right
Tina Smith
Fancy Galata and Sylvia Mdunyelwa, Cape Town





Unrecorded, hidden or lost

by Pam Warne

The paucity of research on both black and white South African women photographers suggests that the lives of many female professionals and amateurs have remained unrecorded, their work hidden in archives or lost. But “the most telling absences” in our photographic histories, as South African National Gallery director Marilyn Martin has observed, are black women.

On the other hand, black women frequently found themselves in front of the lens, if not behind it. It is not without significance that the earliest extant photograph taken in southern Africa is the 1845 daguerrotype, *Native woman of Sofala-Moçambique*.

Black women were frequently stripped of individual identity and offered up as representatives of an exotic or inferior culture for scientific scrutiny or prurient attention. It was only when they became paying customers, as demonstrated in the late 19th and 20th century studio portraits compiled by Santu Mofokeng in his project, *The Black Photo Album* (1997 ongoing), that they gained greater control over the manner in which they were represented.

One is bound to interrogate the intentions and power relations in photographic encounters where black men and women become the subjects of ‘art’ and portrait photography by white women photographers. For three women whose work is illustrated in this book, Constance Stuart Larrabee, Anne Fischer and Jansje Wissema, representations of the ‘other’ were primary in their choice of subject matter in their personal, if not in their commercial portrait work.

All three were immigrants. Larrabee and Fischer received photographic training in Germany in the 1930s, while Wissema was trained by Fischer. Their work reflects the influence of the new documentary style in Germany that coincided with the development of the first commercial 35mm cameras and the more professional, but compact, Rolleiflex camera, to which all three photographers had a life-long loyalty.

Between 1936 and 1949, apart from a period when she worked as South Africa’s first woman war correspondent in World War 2, Larrabee photographed the Ndebele, Sotho, Xhosa, and other peoples of South Africa. This work was not a scientific endeavour, but was motivated by aesthetic admiration: “I photographed the African people because they were wonderful looking and their culture was so interesting to me. It was just the most wonderful material for my Rolleiflex,” she is quoted as saying. Interestingly, the most intimate of Larrabee’s work is the 1947 series of the *Nagmaal*, the Afrikaner religious gathering that took place four times a year.

Anne Fischer (1915–1986) established a reputation as a very fine portrait photographer and master of lighting and, like Larrabee in Johannesburg, ran a flourishing commercial business. By the 1960s, Fischer was considered Cape Town’s pre-eminent wedding photographer. For her personal projects, she travelled alone to the former Transkei and Basutoland, probably during the 1940s and, closer to home, the mission village of Genadendal.

The lives of Anne Fischer and Jansje Wissema (1920–1975) intersected in 1947, when Fischer appointed Wissema as a trainee photographer and manager of her studio during a two-year absence. After Fischer’s return she worked freelance, undertook theatre photography at the University of Cape Town’s Little Theatre (as did Fischer) and even medical photography. Wissema is perhaps best known for her photographic celebration of the then soon to be demolished District Six.

In the silence surrounding black women photographers before the 1970s and 1980s, the name of Mabel Cetu (1910–1990) resounds like a bell. We are indebted

Tribute, record, inspiration

by Robin Comley

As a tribute to the brave and pioneering women who have fought for this country’s freedom, *Women by Women* portrays them with respect and dignity. As a record of the immense talent among women photographers, it stands as the first publication of its kind. As an inspiration to young and aspiring women among us, it is an uplifting example of what is achievable. And as an exciting portrayal of our femininity, it is a sensuous and intelligent work of art.

Over 100 photographers were invited to submit work for the project commissioned by the Ministry of Arts and Culture to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the 1956 Women’s March. The work of 75 women was selected and through these images we are able to glimpse some of the passions, fears and frustrations of these years. But the overall sense is one of women who know where they want to be.

Louise Gubb, one of the few women to have documented the violence of the 80s and 90s, makes very real in words and pictures the terror and hope of that era, while Gisele Wulfsohn’s elegant portrayals of women leaders present them in an understated style which tells us they are powerful individuals with nothing to prove.

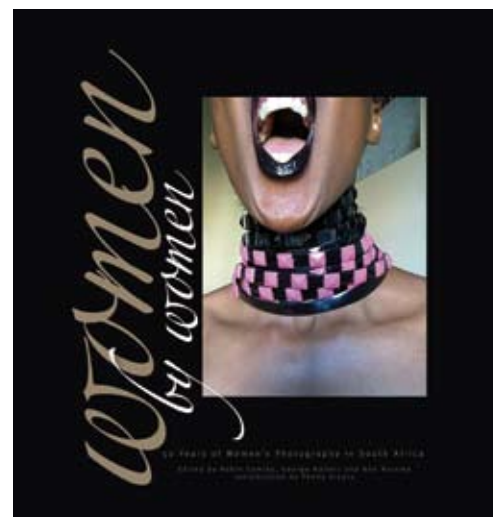
Neo Ntsoma, Nontsikelelo Veleko and Tracey Derrick are the edgy new faces of photography. Young, sexy and confident, they dare us to stand in their way.

Debbie Yazbek takes us on a journey beyond pain. Her Rembrandt-like image of a young daughter bathing her terminally ill mother is perhaps the most powerful in the book, steeped in compassion and sadness.

But for me the most inspiring image in the book is that of Dudu Zitha’s. She photographs a mother leaving her derelict basement home in Hillbrow carrying her tiny daughter who is dressed like a princess. Forced into unthinkable living conditions, this is a mother who will stop at nothing for her child. Courage, sacrifice, love and pride burst from the image ... a little speck of colour and beauty in a filthy dangerous street.

Nadine Hutton

Rosa Cooper and Cornelia Terblanche, a couple, live in a tiny wooden shack at Sonskuin Hoekie, a shelter in Pretoria North. Rosa is employed as a blockwoman at a butchershop but lost her sight when she developed cataracts. Now almost completely blind she cannot afford to travel to Johannesburg General Hospital to undergo a R70 operation. The same surgery in Pretoria would cost nearly R2 000.



to the Port Elizabeth *Herald* columnist, Jimmy Matyu, for his affectionate recollections of the life and achievements of this photographer. He recounts how the Free State-born Cetu became a prominent figure in Port Elizabeth's White Location, first as a pioneering midwife and then as the first-trained, black woman photojournalist in the country, working for *Zonk* magazine. In 1958 she joined the *Golden City Post* and, although there is no record of her in the Bailey Photographic Archives, *Drum Magazine*. She later became a contributor to *Umsobomvu*, the Eastern Province *Herald's* weekly page, and the SABC's Radio Bantu. Widely known as Sis May, Cetu's social and political commitment to her community earned her the title Mother of the White Location. In 1978, the Khayamnandi Town Council named the White Location Cetuville in her honour.

These women made significant contributions to the development of photography in South Africa and paved the way for the women photographers who have come after them. Many of them are remembered as remarkable women with powerful personalities and pioneering spirits. But others, in cities and in small towns across South Africa, remain either simply as names or are unknown, remembered only by friends or family. Much work is needed in order to remedy the absence of both black and white women photographers from the public domain in museum archives and history books and to reinsert their work into the history of South African photography.

Excerpted from the essay in the book.

Above right
Constance Larrabee
Nagmaal, 1947

Below
Anne Fischer
Untitled, Transkei, 1940s

Below right
Jansje Wissema
Ruth, 1957



Debate about debate

... by Lesley Cowling

Reports about the SABC's apparent ban of certain commentators from its programmes last year led to a hotly-contested debate aired largely in the pages of the print media. The controversy intensified when the final report of the commission, set up by the SABC to look into the allegations was not released to the public. The issue continues to reverberate, as the Freedom of Expression Institute is now pursuing a case against the SABC with Icasa, the broadcasting regulatory body, arguing that it has failed to fulfil its mandate as a public broadcaster. The "blacklisting" issue was particularly interesting, then, to our research group at Wits University, which examines the role the media plays in providing a space for public debate in South Africa.

The day-to-day demands of producing news necessarily restrict who is chosen to comment and what issues are discussed. How these individuals and ideas are selected is crucial to understanding what kind of discussions, issues and voices appear in the media, and clearly important to a country that is wrestling with the demands of being a new democracy.

The group decided to investigate the following questions:

- What led to the on-air dispute on SAFM between presenter John Perlman and SABC spokesperson Kaizer Kganyago over whether certain commentators were being barred from SABC shows?
- In what ways does the SABC, in its day-to-day news operations, attempt to fulfil its public service mandate to represent a diverse range of opinion and voices?
- How do the SABC's executives interpret the broadcaster's responsibility to be accountable?
- What does this debate say about how the media reflect on and evaluate their role in providing a forum for public discussion?

The individual research projects showed some interesting things. The first is that the professional ideology of journalists, which commits them to certain values and practices, is also deeply personal – it is part of the way in which

individual journalists define themselves – and so they feel compelled to fight for it. However, they defend it in particular kinds of ways that conform to their understanding of how journalists operate; they do not simply defend values, but the practices and organisational structures they consider to be inextricable from those values.

Secondly, the general processes in place at the SABC to source commentators are thorough and systematic, and attempt to fulfil the criteria of diversity, expertise, and representivity of race, gender, region and language. However, the process privileges educated black men, who form part of an elite, and under-represents the voices of women, and the poor and working class.

Thirdly, although all the participants contesting the issue fundamentally agreed on the values of public broadcasting, accountability and providing a space for public debate, there are widely divergent positions on what that means in practice. The "journalistic" position (largely supported by legal and judicial opinion) imagines the media as a space between the public and government, while a majoritarian position imagines the public as represented by Parliament, through democratic elections. The public interest and the national interest are often conflated.

Finally, the debate in the media indicates a "policing" by the media of its professionalism and an attempt to regulate journalistic practice by criticism and disapproval of an aberration. However, what was largely missing from this debate was any wider reflection by the news organisations on their own gatekeeping in choosing commentators and analysts.

What also became evident was that there was little middle ground, with both sides accusing the other of acting in bad faith. There was a wide ideological gulf between the contestants in this debate, which seems to indicate conflicting ideas about the role the media should play in a democracy – particularly in relation to government – and very different ideas about the public and how it should be represented.

The Media and Public Debate project is a collaboration between the Journalism programme at Wits University and the Public Intellectual Life project, led by Professor Carolyn Hamilton

Professiona

... by Nazeem Dramat

The disagreement on AM Live on 22 June 2006 was a rare instance in which a news organisation's process of convening public debate became the focus of public debate. The issue got onto AM Live in the same way as issues usually do – in response to a news story. The *Sowetan* had reported the previous day that a number of media commentators had been "black-listed" by the SABC director of news Dr Snuki Zikalala. The broadcaster's spokesperson Kaizer Kganyago denied the report, but presenter John Perlman contradicted him on air, saying that he had personal knowledge of instructions banning commentators. This kicked off the furor.

Interviews with a range of people associated with AM Live and the SABC found that this eruption was the end point of a long period of contestation, in which the journalists and producers of AM Live attempted to defend what they saw as threats to their professionalism.

In the usual course of events, journalists operate in a fairly routine way, following a set of professional practices and principles. Differences over what issues should be raised and who should comment is also a usual part of the process, and is managed within news organisations. Any departure from these journalistic procedures is resisted. At AM live, the resistance was actively pursued, in ways quite characteristic of its culture.

AM Live was launched as a "transformed" news and current affairs programme in 1995, with the majority of new recruits coming from what had been the alternative media under apartheid. They set about transforming news programming to fit the changing dynamics of the country.

The range of opinions on air soon began to mirror the intellectual discourse and robust contestation that happened on the AM Live terrain. "We fight a lot to get the stories we are passionate about on the agenda. So I go to the meetings with at least two story ideas I've decided I will push," said one interviewee. This strategy appeared to pay off in terms of product: AM Live became a flagship current affairs programme and had the highest audience ratings on SAFM.

However, AM Live journalists have to negotiate conflicting demands: there's the station, SAFM, with which the programme has a historically-strained relationship, and the structures of the SABC's news division located in Johannesburg, and the regional and specialist desks of the news division. All these are overseen, ultimately, by the group executive of news and current affairs, a position currently held by Snuki Zikalala.

Despite ongoing negotiation with other divisions about what should be covered, AM Live staff understood their programme as having significant autonomy. This autonomy has been actively defended, and staff have historically resisted SABC news hierarchy's attempts to influence content.

The cosmo

... by Refiloe Lepere

The banning of certain individuals from SABC programmes was seen by many as a departure from the usual way in which a public broadcaster should operate – to provide a space for a range of diverse voices that reflect differing opinions. The SABC, for many South Africans, is the only source of news and therefore considered to have a special responsibility to its audience of 19-million radio listeners and 18-million television viewers.

But how does a broadcaster with an audience so large and diverse select commentators and issues to conform with its mandate to be both representative and diverse?

I attempted to investigate how the SABC – in the normal process of doing business – goes about selecting its commentators. I asked what criteria inform that process and what difficulties it encounters.

The research focused on three SABC radio stations: SAFM, Lesedi FM and Umhlobo Wenene FM. Umhlobo Wenene FM is a Xhosa broadcast, and reaches 4.9-million

Journalism and resistance

*‘I come to work to practice journalism
– not to do as I’m told.’*

The bulk of the material for the show is generated by the AM Live team and largely consists of live interviews with newsmakers and commentators. Because of the unique challenges of live radio, there is careful screening of guests and producers do pre-interviews with potential commentators.

“I believe it is important to try out new people all the time,” said one journalist. “However, if it’s a big story you may not want to compromise on quality and will go for the tried and tested.”

The crisis developed from a routine decision taken at the morning meeting on 28 March 2006, when *Business Day* Political Editor Karima Brown was chosen as a commentator for the next day’s show to discuss the ANC leadership race. A producer called Brown shortly afterwards to line her up. That same afternoon, the producer was told by a senior producer – who had “heard in the corridors” – that “we are not allowed to use Karima”. The producer consulted AM Live’s executive producer (EP), who consulted the head of radio, at the time, Solly Phetoe.

The EP came back to the producer to confirm that Brown could not be used as a commentator. The instruction was simply conveyed, interviewees said, and there was “no communication, verbal or written” or discussion on the matter. The AM live team then tried to get an explanation by asking for reasons at their meeting on 29 March. They got no answers. Individual journalists then made several calls to Phetoe directly, which initially went unanswered. Then one journalist was apparently told that Zikalala was “unhappy” because an article Brown had written on President Thabo Mbeki the previous year had factual errors.

In the following weeks the AM Live team regularly checked in with the EPs for updates but to no avail. They said in the interviews that they were “never engaged on the matter” at any stage by Zikalala or other heads. Then in May a similar restriction was applied to analyst Aubrey Matshiqi. The details around the “restriction” were not clear from the interviews, as the interviewees had the story second-hand. However, what was agreed is that a producer was informed of it on Sunday 7 May while preparing for the show.

One journalist then sent an email (dated 9 May) to the AM EP Steven Lang, asking for clarity. “We were told on the weekend that we can’t use Aubrey Matshiqi as a debate guest and a similar issue arose when we intended to

use Karima Brown.” Lang passed it on to Phetoe, who apparently passed it on to Zikalala. Again there was no response.

On 25 May Lang informed staff that “management was drawing up guidelines on analysts” and would “address staff” when the document was “ready for discussion”. AM Live staff then asked what applied in the interim. “Were we allowed to line up interviews with Karima Brown and Aubrey Matshiqi?” The EPs responded that they did not know. On 30 May Zikalala met the on-air team after the show where the matter was “raised with him”. Zikalala’s reason on Matshiqi was that he was an “independent analyst, unattached to any institution or research body”.

Then came the publication in the Sowetan on 20 June of the blacklisting allegations. The same day, six AM Live journalists co-authored a letter to the SABC GCEO Dali Mpofu outlining their “concerns”. At the morning meeting of 20 June, staff discussed ways of covering the matter on the show, but could not agree. Lang was present at the discussion and “suggested that we leave it for a couple of days”. He also indicated that any plans to cover the story had to be discussed with Phetoe. The following morning the Sowetan had a follow-up story, and several other media had picked up on it.

The AM Live on-air team hurriedly tried to get hold of Mpofu, but was unsuccessful, so they lined up Kganyago. In discussing the show, the team considered how they should handle the situation if the “blacklisting” was denied, and decided they would publicly contest any untruths and through that challenge the erosion of their operational decision-making powers. As one journalist put it: “I come to work to practice journalism – not to do as I’m told. “The decision to “out” management was prompted by their understanding of their role as journalists – not to mislead the public.

It became clear from the interviews that the journalists at AM Live saw the ways in which the commentators were excluded as more significant than the exclusions themselves. Firstly, there was no discussion of the decisions, which the journalists saw as creating the conditions “for a newsroom culture that was void of critical engagement”.

Secondly, the decisions were conveyed through middle management and line managers, who had not been party to the decisions or themselves been given a proper explanation, which was seen as a breach of accepted lines of communication and decision-making.

Finally, the journalists exhausted internal mechanisms to press their case. The public platform of their programme became the place to give expression to their resistance to the erosion of their powers and functions. The personal nature of their resistance was such that six of the journalists have subsequently resigned.

...

cosmopolitan, black male ideal

listeners, and Lesedi FM, a Sesotho broadcast, reaches 2.65-million. It is important to note that there is a high percentage of illiteracy and poverty in the rural areas reached by these two radio stations.

SAFM, on the other hand, caters for an English-speaking audience that is generally more affluent and educated. Thus the choice of commentators by these stations was of interest in revealing how the public broadcaster serves a range of social groupings.

Because access to information is considered to be important to citizenship in a democracy, I chose to look at the scheduled commentators for the SABC’s broadcast of the South African local government elections that were held on 1 March 2006.

The SABC has a research department that produces lists of experts and potential commentators on a range of topics, and producers and journalists can consult these lists. I looked at which commentators were on the lists produced for the elections, interviewed compilers of the lists to find out what criteria they used to choose commentators, and interviewed

producers from the stations about who was ultimately used for comment and why.

The criteria that compilers and producers used to select commentators/analysts were:

- Expertise: it was important that the experts were well informed on the subject and its aspects, so that news items and debates were credible to the audiences.
- Language diversity: the SABC’s mandate requires it to broadcast in all 11 official languages.
- Location: programmes are broadcast into all nine provinces and there had to be commentators based in those regions and able to speak the regional languages.
- Gender: equal representation was a commitment.

The lists of commentators compiled by the SABC were produced carefully, consultatively and systematically. The SABC also actively attempted to fulfill a number of public broadcasting criteria, which included a diversity of voices and expertise.

In practice, however, the characteristics of the actual commentator did not always manage to match the criteria, as

the demands of production influenced the outcome in certain ways. For example, the commentator had to be an individual who could be used for an African-language as well as an English-language programme. This person was, therefore, likely to be black. The criteria also placed emphasis on academic professionals, thus privileging elite voices.

The study also identified a bias towards male commentators. The reason provided by the interviewees for this was that there are few women in the areas of expertise needed for the coverage of elections. However, the lack of women in broadcasts could reinforce societal norms that women do not know about the functioning of society, and are not part of decision- and policy-making processes.

Organisational constraints and the independence of producers, who often use their own judgment about audience tastes, as well as the emphasis on expertise, tend then to make the cosmopolitan, educated, black man the ideal SABC radio commentator. This may be good in terms of terms of the representation of race, but it does mean that working class, rural and female voices are not foregrounded.

understanding 'accountability'

'The print media insists that being accountable to the public means we must account to them directly.'

... by *Rehana Rossouw*

There is general agreement that public broadcasters should account on a regular basis to the people they serve. Usually, broadcasters account to the public through their board members, who are regarded as representing the broad spectrum of public opinion through a public nomination and selection process. Board members then account to the public at regular meetings with elected representatives in Parliament.

But some public broadcasters have instituted other accountability forums, such as advisory councils and public meetings. Public broadcasters generally develop detailed criteria for their work – including charters, editorial codes of conduct and programming policies – which are used to measure whether they have met their mandates.

Our research looked at how the executives and staff of the SABC interpret the notion of accountability and what mechanisms they see as sufficient to account to the public. We found a disjuncture on the issue between the SABC's former and present staffers (the journalistic point of view) and the board (as represented by Thami Mazwai, interviewed for this project).

Mazwai believes public accountability is achieved in the broadcaster's annual report and adds that it is "entirely appropriate" that the SABC's major public reporting exercise annually is to Parliament.

He interpreted criticism of SABC's accounting practices as a move by commercial newspapers to force the SABC to account to them. "The print media insists that being accountable to the public means we must account to them directly. Our annual report is available to everyone."

Mazwai contends that the SABC is not a watchdog of government. He says the SABC's function, certainly in terms of reporting the news, is to protect the rights and interests of civil society; to protect everybody – including government and big business. This is because peoples' rights are not only at risk from government, they are at risk from many other sources.

Parliamentarians are elected by the public, and therefore, "more than anyone else, they are the people to whom the SABC should report, because they, in turn, report to the people. To what other forum than Parliament and the portfolio committee does the print media suggest we deliver our annual report? Should we print copies for every member of public? Shall we invite them all to visit our offices so that we can brief them individually on its contents? Shall we travel to every township

in the country to hand them out?"

Mazwai says the process used to appoint the SABC board is a measure of its commitment to public accountability. Members of the public nominate potential board members. After a shortlist is announced they are subjected to public scrutiny via the media.

Mazwai also argued that the SABC does not pursue news from the same vantage point as the commercial media. Its mandate is to ensure a service to society with respect for criteria such as language, culture and religion. The SABC board has several subcommittees to provide oversight, including a news subcommittee which is responsible for policy issues around coverage. "For instance, we will look at whether coverage is politically sensitive; that people are not merely reporting on one political party; and that news is balanced in terms of issues like culture and religion."

Mazwai, a member of the news committee, says it reports regularly to the board. The committee also examines what is reported in other media about the SABC and will ask management to account if there is criticism of the broadcaster. When the allegation of the blacklist was raised in the media, board members asked why this was happening at their very next meeting.

Mazwai says the SABC's board and management meet stakeholders "from time to time". There were two meetings with the Congress of South African Trade Unions last year and they had meetings with organised business as well. He says they meet in the provinces with community leaders "such as premiers and other elected representatives of the people", to measure the degree to which the people are satisfied with the work of the SABC. And the SABC also hosted a media and society conference as a way of interacting with the public.

The SABC road shows, when the broadcaster travels to the provinces, are also an important part of their accountability, Mazwai argued. He says the SABC meets with politicians when they travel as they are the representatives of the people. But they meet with other sectors of the community as well, including non-governmental organisations: "Normally, they give us a roasting, people always complain that we're too Gauteng-biased."

After the road shows, board members sift through the complaints and prioritise them for management to deal with them, Mazwai says. The board always ensures that management has dealt with the complaints.

Mazwai says he believes most of the criticism of the SABC is generated by the print media, which are direct competitors with the public broadcaster and motivated by a commercial agenda. "Sometimes they pretend to be acting in the public interest when they only have a revenue-generating agenda. The SABC hogs most advertising in SA, and the print media has to fight for every rand and will use every method to do so."

However, it is interesting to note that what

we have called the "journalistic" approach to accountability tends to be supported in South Africa by the legal and judicial establishment. Gilbert Marcus and Zwelake Sisulu, who were appointed by the SABC's CEO, Dali Mpofu, to lead a commission of inquiry into the blacklisting allegations, said in their report: "The issues canvassed in this report are matters of substantial public importance to South African democracy and the role of public broadcasting therein. It would indeed be abhorrent, and at gross variance with the SABC's mandate and policies, if the practices of the old order were being repeated in the new, with the effect of again disqualifying South Africans from democratic discourse and debate. For this reason, we are firmly of the view that this report should be released to the public after consideration by the board."

The report concluded: "As custodian of the SABC's mandate, the board... needs continuously and publicly to emphasise that the corporation is the property of all South Africans. Accordingly, the board's leadership should encourage SABC personnel to recognise their accountability to the public at large in terms of programming, ethos and presentation of a full spectrum of views and discourse within the country. In these ways, the corporation can move forward from the damaging incidents around the 'blacklist' controversy."

Despite this recommendation, the board did not release the report, and when it found its way on to the *Mail&Guardian's* website, the SABC took the newspaper to court to get it removed. The judge who heard the case ruled that the report was clearly in the public interest, thus taking a journalistic view of public interest.

It seems that the SABC, while espousing the value of accountability and committing itself to acting in the public interest, has difficulty putting this into practice. Mazwai points out, quite rightly, that it is impossible to canvass all the members of the public, and therefore the SABC has to account through its mechanisms to representative entities. However, he rules out the "print media" as a forum through which to account to the public, and argues that Parliament, as the elected representative of the majority of South Africans, is the appropriate forum.

The "blacklisting" controversy, however, shows that the issue of public accountability is a thorny one when it comes to matters of news and analysis, as the news media generally takes the position of being the watchdog of government. To account to government, therefore, on allegations of political bias, seems an inadequate exercise that cannot be justified by majoritarian arguments.

Policing the aberration

The commercial media, academics and civil society attempted to exercise an active regulatory and policing role of what they perceived as an aberration of journalistic norms

...

by Shirona Patel

The “blacklisting” controversy allowed for an examination of how “policing” occurs both formally, through the adherence to professional ethical codes and policies, and indirectly through the remarks and actions of academics, media commentators and peers.

The SABC is subject to the regulatory framework of the broadcasting industry and is answerable to the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa, the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa and the Advertising Standards Authority. Aside from these legislative directives as stipulated in the Broadcasting Act and the sanctions set down in the Constitution, the media in South Africa are self-regulated.

Wasserman maintains that the self-regulatory system, while preferable to the controlled system under apartheid, “does not seem to be working all that well due to ongoing debates about the role of the media in a transitional democracy, an increased commercialisation of the media and the interpretation of ethical norms through different value systems”. The debates around the “blacklisting” reflect these different value systems.

Despite the critical stance of most of the media commentators towards the SABC, our research showed that the four-month public conversation was dominated by Group Chief Executive Officer of the broadcaster, Advocate Dali Mpofu. He was by far

the most vocal commentator, quoted in almost 40% of all print media articles and 74% of all broadcast inserts. His participation ranged from commenting on issues pertaining to the process of the inquiry and defending the decisions made by the SABC, to lashing out at the print media for being too critical and shouting down the “bloodlust of the right-wing lobby and its fellow travelers in the mass media”.

Mpofu was so visible because he made himself available for interviews on SABC radio and television channels. Moreover, 86% of the coverage of the blacklisting saga emanated from the public broadcaster. Some airtime was afforded to the issue by commercial radio stations but the controversy was not covered in news bulletins by the free-to-air television station e.tv. He was also vocal at several media gatherings. He lashed out at the print media at a meeting of the Johannesburg Press Club in July. At the Media and Society Conference in October, organised by the SABC, he introduced a new dimension to the debate, publicly accusing certain factions (based on racial and class distinctions) of vying for the power of the SABC.

Mpofu strategically shifted the debate from media policies and practices at the SABC to encompass practices of gatekeeping and self-censorship across the entire media sector, arguing that all media privilege certain commentators and exclude others. However, few other commentators really engaged with this issue and tended to treat it as a red herring. Mpofu’s visibility in the debate tended to be because he was a participant in the story, and the journalistic requirement of fairness meant that he was offered the right of reply.

Other commentators who were vocal tended to come out of the media world, drawn from the ranks of editors and journalists, media-related NGOs or from journalism programmes at universities. Academics like Professor Anton Harber, Professor Tawana Kupe and Franz Kruger engaged with issues as the controversy evolved, as did the Freedom of Expression Institute and the Media Monitoring Project. At editor level, Ferial Haffajee, of the *Mail&Guardian* was engulfed in a legal battle with the SABC over the release of the inquiry report, while Peter Bruce, editor of *Business Day*, and Martin Williams, editor of *The Citizen*, engaged in a public spat with Mpofu. Political editors dedicated entire columns to the discussion and most newspapers had dedicated journalists to follow the story.

At another level, blacklisted commentator Karima Brown (political editor of *Business Day*) entered into a public row with Pippa Green (former head of SABC Radio news) and also into a spat with Christine Qunta (SABC Board member) over media practices at the SABC. Thami Mazwai (SABC Board member) and Harber also clashed in the *Business Day* on the role of the public broadcaster in a transitional democracy.

But what did all this mean? Based on the extent to which the SABC “blacklisting” controversy was carried and condemned in the South African print and independent broadcast media, it is safe to say that the print and independent broadcast media, academics and civil society attempted to exercise an active ‘self-regulatory’ and policing role of what they perceived as an aberration of journalistic norms.

But although they kept these issues in the public eye, the pressure they mounted against the SABC’s news practices seemed to have little effect on the organisation, as none of these stakeholders have the ability to sanction what they see as misbehaviour.

Also, in the focus on policing these boundaries, the media, were also not readily reflective of their own inconsistent media practices. Of all the commentators, only an outsider to the media, academic Sipho Seepe, called for editors, commentators and the SABC to reflect on their own practices.

Ideas, the seeds of all original creative output, cannot be protected. No one can offer assurances that an idea is unique and therefore the “property” of the creative persona. Ideas therefore cannot be stolen or copied. Indeed the law affords the likes of inventors, artists, writers and musicians absolutely no iron-clad protection for their genius, their brilliant ideas or their intellectual property.

...

by Tess Fairweather

What is protected however, is what they make of those ideas. The idea of creating daylight at night was surely shared by thousands before Edison finally flicked a switch. Love and storytelling co-existed before Shakespeare. Every editor lusts after the photograph that not only sells every printed copy of that issue, but which will have broadcasters and publishers all over the world digging deep into their pockets.

The question is: who should get the credit and therefore the financial reward, for the light bulb, for *Romeo and Juliet*, and for the photograph coveted by every newspaper and TV station? Who “owns” the result, the end product of the idea?

Consider the following scenario:

Three writers sit together at an event such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings. One is an experienced court reporter. Employed to record literally every word said, at the end of this month and every month for decades thereafter, he will take home a salary befitting an expert and specialised court official.

Sitting next to him is the reporter employed by the biggest daily national broadsheet. She will report to the readers the events she is witnessing, the words she is hearing. She will assess which events to write about, she will apply skill and experience crafting a story which will hold its own on the front page. At the end of her day, she will rush to meet a deadline and if necessary, she will rewrite the story. She too will be paid a salary, and

possibly a bonus if her copy consistently informs and pleases the readers over the year. Like the court reporter’s recording ribbon, the finished page of words she produces belongs to her employers.

The third writer is a freelance journalist. In all likelihood, she arrived without a mandate from any publication. She is there to find a story. To seek out an angle that will only reveal itself to her in the course of the proceedings. She must dig deeper than the news reporter and come up with more than just the newsroom version. She must be original, inventive, resourceful and entrepreneurial in her approach.

On a good day she will take away notes and ideas or outlines of stories or articles for four different editors who sell their publications to a variety of carefully targeted audiences. She will pitch those stories to the editors she has spent years cultivating, and hopefully she will be commissioned to write three or four very different stories based on the same facts and events.

Incidentally, this is a great deal more satisfactory than when she was a novice, forced to prove her ability by writing “at risk”, submitting finished articles to editors who knew nothing yet about her or her work.

It may well be that all her notes will be filed away with the outline of new idea for a novel or film script that came to her as she sat listening to the day’s proceedings.

Over the years, our freelancer has dealt with

several overseas magazines that buy her articles around specific subjects from time to time, so she always keeps those customers uppermost in her mind. Not surprising really, as not only do international publications usually pay better, they also treat her work with more respect. Because their readership is completely different, she can ethically sell very similar articles into more than one international publication over a period of time.

This typically resourceful freelancer has also developed a good relationship with an advertising agency for which she occasionally writes specialised copy. Anything from a six-word billboard slogan that will stop you in your tracks, to several hundred well crafted words on a web page. This is good business when she can get it, as her per word rate is two to three times her normal journalism rates. Marketing words are worth more than story words to the customer, and not many writers can produce the quality of original clean copy that she does efficiently and professionally on an ad hoc basis. Her hard earned experience is at last paying some dividends.

The question by now is clear. Who owns the freelancer's work? Who retains copyright of the various articles and stories she will generate? Exactly what is copyright?

Without being trite, copyright is the right to copy. It is a form of intellectual property (IP) and South African law regulating the rights and obligations arising from IP are laid out in the Copyright Act 1978 (as amended) together with the Berne Convention which dates back to 1886 and specifically protects copyright across borders. Authors of creative works worldwide must thank Victor Hugo for instigating the movement which resulted in the Berne Convention.

Returning to our freelancer: the answer is easy. Without exception, in every example shown, the freelancer's work is copyrighted. It remains her property until such time as she decides to part with it and has been paid. The only way to get it for nothing, legally, is to wait until she has been dead for 50 years.

In terms of both South African and international law, she retains copyright on all her work; even when she agrees to publish it in a publication for an agreed fee.

- If an editor commissioned her to go ahead and write the suggested article, she was (in legal terms) selling the publisher the "right to copy" the work for an agreed fee, but only once. She was not parting with her intellectual property and all the accompanying rights.
- Almost certainly, she will agree to sell her copyright on the advertising copy, but at the higher price she negotiated.
- If any of the local or overseas magazines want to use her work in another publication in their stable – that must be negotiated honestly and fairly.
- International syndication without equitable copyright negotiations is illegal.

Of course, a simple contract can change all that. But then the price must change accordingly. Here we come to the nub of the copyright wars. The lines drawn around the broad-based, commercially relevant topic of commissioning are not well understood by everyone. Conveniently so, maintain some.

Freelancers are all entrepreneurs and most of their copyright is for sale. They live and work for just that opportunity. However, they need not justify insisting on a market-related price. A scoop or an iconic photograph is worth more than normal, sometimes a great deal. The law of supply and demand applies.

Both the Berne Convention and the Copyright Act make allowance for the commissioning of works and the sale of copyright. That's the law, but the reality is that David only got the better of Goliath on one occasion. The bald fact is big media houses world wide regularly abuse their bargaining position apropos single entity freelancers.

Do any of the following sound familiar?

- "You must sign this letter transferring full copyright to us and return it before we can include your piece."
- "But ad agency clients always get full rights to any photographs we have freelancers take of their products."
- "But I got it off the web."
- "We paid you, it's ours, so you have to take it out of your portfolio."

What the media managers and bean counters fail to recognise however, is that they are alienating a viable resource. The difference between good, mediocre and plain lousy publications is always a matter of copy and content. The content tail wags the advertising dog every time.

Treating freelancers badly has driven the best of them into other fields and industries, leaving the new inexperienced hopefuls scrabbling for a measly per-word rate that hasn't changed much in at least a decade. You only get what you pay for.

A true example. In the plethora of child and baby magazines, new subject matter is hard to come by. Imagine, if you will, the freelancer's astonished response to the following statements made by an editor recently. "Yes, I know. R1.50 was too little three years ago when I stopped freelancing to have a baby" followed by the stipulation that the freelancer in question was expected to swear that she had written no other articles (on any topic whatsoever) for competing magazines in the previous six months; and nor would she in the six months ensuing. "We cannot have our writers' names popping up everywhere!" The article never saw the light of day.

That's the law, but the reality is that David only got the better of Goliath on one occasion.

In South Africa, for reasons unknown, the copyright of commissioned photographs is assigned to the person(s) who stipulate the composition of the photograph, unless otherwise agreed. Photographers are banding together to change this. Their web site is www.c21.org.za

This is contrary to international norms where the law dictates that copyright rests with the artist – the photographer. Freelance photographers have therefore to protect their copyright by means of a contractual arrangement with the commissioning principal, unlike the default situation with all other forms of intellectual property.

Perhaps this is the rationale behind the undue and excessive abuse of photographic copyright in South Africa. Routinely, freelancers' photographs are blatantly over-used and syndicated, either illegally or in terms of contracts forced on photographers with the inelegant negotiating stance of "sign it or shove it". This smacks of bullying. In many cases the freelancer's objections are met with the more daunting response "see you in court, little guy".

Two typical case histories are worth examining further: The R3-million photograph: Chris Fallows' famous close-up photograph of a great white shark breaching was sold to a local newspaper in 1980 for once-off usage. The newspaper however archived the picture and has since used and syndicated the picture widely without renegotiating with Fallows. He is asking the courts to enforce his R3-million claim.

eTV News occasionally "lifts" photographs from the front pages of newspapers when they do not have visuals of their own. The Cape Town small claims court recently ruled against the broadcaster twice after it breached the photographic copyright of the freelance journalists who sold single usage rights of their photographs to these newspapers.

The bitter truth however, is that the freelancers themselves must accept some of the responsibility for these abuses. You get whatever deal you settle for. Collective bargaining works, and when all else fails there is always the class action legal alternative. However, even a bold, strong writers' guild is going to have its work cut out bringing the big international media houses and broadcasters to book.

The Southern African Freelancers' Association (Safrea) is an organisation for freelance media specialists. It is home to a highly effective networking centre with a very active chat group. It is a valuable resource for editors and the freelancers themselves. The www.Safrea.co.za web page lists 12 categories of skills and a quick search will put visitors in touch with the freelancer they need.

The Safrea committee is mandated to engage with

publishers and other media in the event of unfair treatment of Safrea members. A sensible protocol is followed whereby members are required to do all they can to resolve their disputes before the committee sets up a meeting with the relevant managing editors. The objective is to come away with a win-win result, and to date that has always been the case.

In such cases, the publishing house is mentioned expressly on the home page. Freelancers predictably give preference to those publications agreeing to adhere to Safrea's mutually beneficial "recommended best practices". Mentoring, self regulation and general information-sharing takes place on an ongoing basis.

Probably the most regular complaint shared by freelancers is payment, or rather non-payment. Freelancers are surely among the most vulnerable and frequently abused subcontractors to fly-by-night magazine start-ups. New members soon learn to check with other members before working for unknowns.

Another common abuse of the freelancers' rights results from the cash flow policies of publishing houses. The following analogy was made by one of the members.

Would anyone expect their butcher to pay cash for, transport, cut up and pack meat before selling to a customer who then took it home and froze for x number of months before finally eating it, then finally paying for it a mere 30 days thereafter? After deducting the weight of the uneaten bones, of course. Well, that is what the bigger media groups think they can get away with.

Over time the Safrea committee has intervened on a number of occasions where payment has not been forthcoming from the larger publishing houses. They recently squared up to the highhanded attitude of one publishing house in particular when the freelancers' rights regarding prescription were unilaterally revoked.

It was travesties such as this that gave birth to Safrea. Almost without exception freelancers work in isolation, whereas the South African media world is driven by big oligopolies and monopolies. Business plans reveal blatant exploitation of writers to be a matter of course. Cash flow strategies unashamedly result in freelancers subsidising the hungry giants. When several well-respected senior journalists and their editors recognised that the freelancer was on the endangered list, they rallied round to protect a valuable resource. They drew a line in the sand and the top freelance journalists agreed to band together and stand up for their rights. That spirit of community is what makes Safrea a haven for freelancers.

Media and communications specialists are actively encouraged to regard Safrea as a professional resource and to recommend membership to all the new freelancers that pop up from nowhere, eager and wet behind the ears, ready to push weary subeditors all the way to the edge. At Safrea new members are welcomed into the fold, their endless basic questions answered, relevant business and marketing logic explained, and professional attitudes imbued. Education and mentoring is ongoing.

The quid-pro-quo asked of publishing houses includes agreeing to negotiate honourable professional rates, equitable recognition of copyright and intellectual property rights, prompt payment and fair business practices all round. Safrea's goal is to imbue the industry with professionalism – professional remuneration balanced with professional conduct. This can only happen where there is mutual respect.

The logical conclusion is that freelance journalists must individually and collectively protect their interests. It is in no one's interests to undervalue or exploit freelancers. Copyright is one of the only internationally universally accepted legal principles.

Victor Hugo knew what he was doing.

It was a tough assignment. Mail&Guardian editor Ferial Haffajee had asked me, as the paper's ombud, to join her in a visit to the mother of murdered actor Brett Goldin.

... — by Franz Krieger

In its end-of-year edition, the paper had referred to the murder of Goldin and his friend, designer Richard Bloom, in its "A to Z of cultural catastrophes". She had written to point out several inaccuracies in the brief reference, and was particularly – and understandably – upset by the comment that there was speculation about "who was more trashed", the victims or the murderers.

Most tragically, she felt that the reference had contributed to the death of her husband. When he saw the note, she told us, he hit his head on the steering wheel of his car and would not let her see the paper. He died of a heart attack soon after.

We sat at her dining room table, piled high with scrap-books, letters of condolence and photo albums. She set out her objections to the reference again at length, shared mementoes and talked about her searing grief. What was there to say? Haffajee made an unequivocal apology, saying the incident had taught her to weigh the possible effects of a piece of writing more carefully.

In the next edition, my column dealt with the issue, while Haffajee wrote a short piece about Brett Goldin and restated her apology.

It was the strongest, clearest apology I have seen. Normally, journalists find it hard to admit mistakes. As Elton John sang, sorry seems to be the hardest word. In many news organisations, there is still a sense that a correction is to be resisted at all costs. When all else fails, it will be published in a remote corner of the newspaper. Like doctors, we like to bury our mistakes.

Bring up the question of errors, and many journalists will point to the fact that a daily newspaper contains as many words as a sizeable novel. No wonder there are mistakes. That's fair enough, as far as it goes. But it can't mean that we shrug our shoulders and carry on regardless.

Audiences take mistakes very seriously. Ask almost anybody who has found him or herself as the subject of a news

report whether the story was accurate, and they are likely to have some reservations at the very least.

In a survey conducted for the Freedom Forum, Bob Haiman collected some comments from readers: "Those two streets don't even intersect. How could two cars collide there?" asked one. "That's not even the correct name for the hospital. I know because my sister works there," said another. And most tellingly: "I knew that was wrong the minute I read it... and if they got that wrong, it makes me wonder what else they got wrong." That's the point. One mistake spotted undermines trust in a thousand reliable facts.

Readers care deeply about accuracy. According to the outgoing South African Press Ombudsman Ed Linington, accuracy "is nearly always a factor" in complaints before him.

In fact, admitting and correcting mistakes builds credibility. It may be deeply uncomfortable to draw attention to mistakes, but it's better than trying to pretend nothing is wrong. There are too many people who will know anyway.

If a newspaper builds a reputation for correcting mistakes, its readers will be more inclined to trust it. Ian Mayes, the *Guardian's* soon-to-retire public editor, writes most of the paper's corrections – and has published a few book-length collections of the funnier ones. He comments: "To err is human and to correct, if not divine, is always the best thing to do."

But how to handle them? First there is the question of placement. *Business Day* bravely took a decision some time ago to give the correction as much prominence as the mistake being addressed. So when it was forced to withdraw a lead story that said that President Thabo Mbeki had clashed with his party deputy, Jacob Zuma, at an ANC meeting, the paper twice ran a prominent box on the top of page one. It must have hurt.

Ken Fuson, staff writer on *The Des Moines Register*, says: "I like having (corrections) right out front. We got it wrong;

How to regret

... — by George Claassen

It is a very radical move to place even a few inches of your own newspaper beyond your direct control.

The international Organisation of News Ombudsmen (ONO) was established in the early 1980s as a discussion forum to enhance the standard of ethics in journalism. It now has members from six continents across the media disciplines of radio, television and the printed media.

At ONO's conference hosted in May by the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University, more than 50 ombudspeople discussed various ethical aspects. The keynote address was given by Alan Rusbridger, editor of the London daily *The Guardian*. His paper was the first in the UK to appoint an internal ombudsman, called a reader's editor, a decade ago, but only one other UK newspaper followed the same route, *The Observer*.

In the US the same lack of ethical transparency is reflected in the fact that only a little more than 50 news organisations regard the appointment of an ombudsman (reader's editor or reader's advocate) as an important method to raise ethical awareness in their journalists and transparency, accountability and responsibility with regard to their readers, listeners and viewers. Important news organisations in this country which follow the ombudsman route, are *The Washington Post*, National Public Radio, Public Broadcast Services, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Boston Globe*.

The New York Times appointed its first internal ombudsman, called the public editor, in 2004 shortly after the Jayson Blair scandal of story manufacturing and plagiarism rocked this prestigious publication.

In South Africa only two news organisations have had, until very recently, internal ombuds: the Western and Eastern Cape daily, *Die Burger*, and the *Mail & Guardian*. In April Media24 decided that other newspapers in the company

we want you to know we got it wrong.”

The Guardian has a different approach: there is a daily column of corrections in a fixed place on the leader page. That way, argues Mayes, people will always know where to look.

Then there’s the question of who takes the rap – does the correction name and shame the writer or editor? Pressure to allocate blame sometimes comes from a writer whose byline appeared on an article into which an error was introduced in the editing process. Corrections are sometimes formulated accordingly, not to point fingers at a sub as much as to exonerate the writer.

In general, Mayes says, blame and retribution is not the point of the exercise. Except for unusual circumstances, the paper takes responsibility – the operative phrase is “*we* made a mistake”. He writes: “The column is called ‘Corrections and Clarifications’, not Crime and Punishment.”

Does everything deserve a correction? Skip Foster, editor of *The Shelby Star*, says: “There is a ‘basement’ to something correctable. There is a land of miniscule errors that would not be corrected.” However, the cut-off line should be fairly low, I think. Most errors matter to somebody, who would appreciate the correction. On some big papers, it becomes a matter of capacity. *The Guardian’s* column carries around 1 500 entries a year. Mayes says there is simply no space or time to carry more.

Corrections online have their own complexity. There is always the temptation to simply fix the error or remove the incorrect article, and pretend it never happened. But more responsible sites add a note to the original article explaining what was done and why, to preserve the public record accurately.

A research report by Wits University journalism programme postgraduate student Bev Tucker found generally poor practice around corrections on SA news websites: “It ap-

pears that the ethical details of error and correction have been skimmed over by most South African online news media,” she writes.

When we think of corrections, we think of a name misspelled, a person wrongly identified in a photograph, a garbled number. And the generally accepted format to deal with a slip of this kind is a small box, headed something like “Matter of fact”.

But there are other tools available, particularly where it is not a simple matter of fact that is at issue. The simplest and least painful way of accommodating somebody who is unhappy with an aspect of coverage is to publish a letter from them. It signals that the paper acknowledges the person has a viewpoint, but does not admit any wrongdoing.

The next step up would be a “right of reply”, a device the *M&G* uses more than other papers. This is similar to a letter, but is given additional weight by greater space and prominence, and is accompanied by a “right of reply” strap headline. Important stakeholders who dispute the interpretation given to a report about them are usually given this kind of facility. The paper does not usually reply to the reply.

Occasionally, more prominent treatment is in order – when things have gone badly wrong.

Probably the biggest correction in living memory was carried by *The New York Times* in the wake of the Jayson Blair affair, the young reporter found to have invented stories on an industrial scale. A team of reporters picked over Blair’s reports in minute detail, and the paper published a painfully detailed analysis of what had gone wrong in their organisation to allow such gross misbehaviour.

In the wake of the Iraq war, there has been significant introspection by US papers about the ease with which they fell for the myth of Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction. It’s not known whether any apologies have resulted, although *The New York Times’s* public editor called it “very

bad journalism”.

US papers have also recently woken up to the fact that their coverage of the civil rights movement may not have been up to scratch. A fascinating website, regrettheerror.com, provides some examples. Craig Silverman, who set up and edits the site, says he collects corrections to help journalism. “I work in the press and my motivation is to make it better. I think that’s a big difference between Regret and a lot of other sites. When I discover an instance of plagiarism it honestly upsets me. I don’t get off on it,” he said in an interview with the site Media Orchard.

According to his site, the *Tallahassee Democrat* last year put together a special section to mark the 50th anniversary of a local anti-segregation bus boycott. One of the articles was headed, “Fifty years in coming: our apology.” It said: “Leaders in that journey toward equality should have been able to expect support in ending segregation from the local daily newspaper, the *Tallahassee Democrat*. They could not. We not only did not lend a hand, we openly opposed integration, siding firmly with the segregationists. It is inconceivable that a newspaper, an institution that exists freely only because of the Bill of Rights, could be so wrong on civil rights. But we were.”

In 2004, the *Lexington Herald-Leader* published this correction: “It has come to the editor’s attention that the Herald-Leader neglected to cover the civil rights movement. We regret the omission.” The Regret the error website commented on the Lexington correction: “Simple, elegant, brave. Better late than never.”

One wonders whether any SA newspaper might be moved to deal with its role in the apartheid years in this way? But no, not one of them was ever racist. Silly idea.

In any event, if they find it so difficult to correct simple matters of fact, imagine what it would take to tackle bigger mistakes.

the error

should preferably also each have an ombudsman. Most of them are in the process of appointing them.

At the ONO conference at Harvard University Rusbridger tried to point out the reason for news organisations’ lackadaisical attitude towards ethical openness and accountability. He gave two reasons why editors or managers are unwilling to take this plunge:

“The first is that the editor him/herself is responsible for the content and that outsourcing the complaints department is a way of outsourcing responsibility. I don’t think this is a negligible argument. The editor is, indeed, ultimately responsible – morally and in law – for everything published in his or her name. It would be wrong if s/he washed his hands of all incoming complaints and concerns, or became distanced or anaesthetised from what readers felt by not having day to day dealings with them,” Rusbridger said.

He said the second explanation why editors resist having an independent ombudsman or equivalent is doubtless the loss of control implied. “The traditional model of a newspaper over the centuries is usually a top down one – with a proprietor or publisher at the pinnacle. This model gave the editor an immense amount of power. Of course, there has always been recourse to the law for people who were unhappy about what had been written. In Britain we have a form of voluntary self-regulation. But (depending on the owner) editors have been omnipotent figures, in sole charge of who is allowed a voice in their newspaper and who isn’t.”

Rusbridger equated the functionality of an internal ombudsman to greater transparency. “It is, I now appreciate better, a very radical move to place even a few inches of your own newspaper beyond your direct control. It does mean

that your judgements, actions, ethical standards and journalism can be held up to the light. The more space you allow, the more prominent you make it and the more you give licence for someone to make their own judgements about the journalism, the more you lose your previously omnipotent control.

“And, of course, it makes you think twice in advance. All reporters will tell you: if they know their work and methods are going to be held up to independent scrutiny it makes you think twice. That, of course, is the very argument we, as an industry in Britain, make for self-regulation via the Press Complaints Commission. The fear of an adverse adjudication keeps people on the straight and narrow. But there’s a difference in some minds between a centralised mediation service and the much more devolved form of regulation or scrutiny involved in having an ombudsman.”

For the past six years *Die Burger* has been applying the internal ombudsman principle with obvious success. An ethical code of conduct was drawn up and the ombudsman makes corrections regularly on page 2, and his telephone number, inviting complaints and comments, is published every day. He writes a regular weekly column about complaints.

It leads to a transparent and accountable form of journalism. And research has shown that an internal ombudsman can drastically reduce libel suits and other similar actions against the paper.

As Rusbridger explained, “the existence of an independent ombudsman within a news organisation speaks to recognition of a profound shift in how we – and the wider public – think of journalism... I think a refusal to have some kind of independent system embedded within news organisations, as we all come under more and more intense scrutiny, looks increasingly odd.”

THE ERODING STATUS OF EDITORS

... by Raymond Louw

When I became an editor, that legendary editor of the *Rand Daily Mail* Laurence Gandar, who had been in the hot seat for some 11 years, told me that life as an editor was very different from that of our predecessors. He said that G Rayner Ellis, who was editor from the early 40s to the mid-50s, wielded considerably more power than he did or I was likely to be able to command. He mentioned that Ellis could – and did – request the advertising department to remove an advertisement from a page so that he could use the whole page for an editorial display. “Not a hope of an editor being able to do that today,” observed Gandar wryly.

We were in the mid-60s so it showed how the power of the editor on that newspaper had been eroded in something like two decades and, of course, the reason was quite simple. In Ellis’ day the fight for financial survival, though a factor in the life of the newspaper then, was not as intense as it had become during Gandar’s tenure and certainly during mine (1966-1977). Also, the editor then, especially on the big name titles, had an almost godlike status. They tended to isolate themselves in their ivory towers communicating with the rest of the paper through their secretaries or senior assistant editors.

I started my career on the *Mail* during Ellis’ editorship after he had overcome his aversion to my Afrikaans name. He was highly regarded by his peers and senior staff. He would frequently change the content of the front page on deadline, or even rewrite his leading article on deadline and pay no attention to the anguished cries of the production staff watching the clock, deadlines and the production and distribution schedules. An editor of the grand old order who, however, as many of his successors were to, and some of his predecessors did, suffer the ultimate diminution of his status in the conclave where ultimate power and status were wielded, the boardroom.

But, since then, even while acknowledging that there has been no change in the ultimate power of the boardroom, the status of editors has declined. The editor is now part of the staff and the once single-minded devotion to news of the day and the other editorial features has been expanded to take note of the demands of the new aristocracy, the advertising department and the other closely following in its tracks, the circulation department. Editors now have to take especial cognisance of the commercial side of their paper and of managerial demands to

ensure that not only financial viability is maintained but profitability is boosted.

The editorial requirements have been increased to encompass a lower form of “adverto-rial” – the place where the despised adage that the news is used merely to keep the ads apart is actually practised and where lofty ideals of editorial independence and objectiveness are seriously bent. That Chinese wall between the commercial interests of the paper and the editorial has been slimmed down and though the editor may try stoutly to maintain it between his staff and the advertising sellers, s/he has had to mould himself or herself into a kind of multi-faceted person staring at editorial integrity with one eye and the cash register with the other.

And what is the status of this multi-headed person? No revered godlike figure here. The management looks upon him or her as a workhorse in a profit centre while the advertising and circulation departments see the driver of the vehicle which enables them to increase their successes and break sales records which have little to do with editorial excellence.

And in the overcrowded part of the building, still overcrowded despite the staffing cuts that have taken place while news coverage demands have grown and the gaps continue to grow between what can be covered and what reporters would like to cover, are the journalists. They anxiously watch the editor, the senior assistants and departmental heads and see their standing in the editorial sphere diminishing – and with it their own.

In a brief SA National Editors’ Forum survey conducted on how editors felt about their status, three replies were received. One editor complained about the intrusion of the managing director into his newsroom, questioning reporters about what they were doing. The MD may have been motivated by sheer curiosity but to the journalists this amounted to unacceptable conduct; it is a clear case of the management not only intruding on the editor’s domain but reducing his authority and thus his status. In another newspaper, the management decreed that the human resources department of the paper would interview and hire journalists, not the editor; yet another instance where the editor is not given command his or her operation and again status diminished.

One editor found that when he was appointed he reported to the chairman of the board, but gradually that changed until he was reporting to the managing director. Of course, there are issues that need the managing director or the publication manager and the editor getting together for a discussion, but there are certain areas such as policy where that kind of discussion should be with the chairman of the board.

Then there is the question of advertising supplements or other advertorial operations. While on papers such as London’s *Financial Times* these are regarded as they are elsewhere as income-generating operations, they are also regarded as flagship, high-quality, editorial surveys of countries and companies which add stature to the paper. Those supplements enable in-depth assessments of countries and companies to be made with an allocation of editorial space not available otherwise.

But in South Africa, these features are generally purely money-making operations with editorial content verging on puffery rather than informed critical assessment. And editors watch the proliferation of this material noting that it absorbs staff resources that could be used for important news gathering.

The question that is raised, and which editors are reluctant to discuss, is whether they really have control of their staffs when these supplements are prepared, or does it lie with the advertising department? Another question that arises is whether an editorial department has the quality of staff with the skills, experience and background knowledge to do a survey of a region, or a country or an industry or commercial sector of the economy in an informed manner as it is done on the *Financial Times*.


But that’s print journalism. In broadcasting there are several editors at the SABC but the chief executive officer is the editor-in-chief to which all controversial editorial discussions are referred for final decision. Apart from the ethical and professional considerations involved, there is the effect on the staff who see their hands-on editors diminished. And then there are executive producers who in many instances act as editors. Does this enhance their status or detract from it?

On pure creature comfort points do editors of major newspapers fly business class or economy? Surely a major title editor should fly business class in the same way as the managing director of the company? Is the pay gap between the managing director and the editor too large? And does one drive a top-of-the-range car and the other a middle-range? Such personal job add-ons as cars should reflect the status of the editor as being as senior as the managing director and if they don’t, does this detract from the status of the editor?

The journalists anxiously watch the editor, the senior assistants and departmental heads and see their standing in the editorial sphere diminishing – and with it their own


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MONDI SHANDUKA
NEWSPRINT



Poets, editors, essayists and novelists

by Raymond Louw

Over the last year the SA Pen Centre – Pen is the acronym for Poets, Essayists, Editors and Novelists – has been trying to increase the number of such literary institutions in South Africa.

Last year after three years of trying, its proposal that the Pretoria Pen centre be established as an institution for Afrikaans writers and recognised by International Pen, the London-based centre which acts as the mother body of the 144 autonomous centres throughout the world, was accepted.

The opposition to the Pretoria Pen was based on the thought that the South African Pen centre, which is based in Cape Town and is largely English-speaking should be a multi-language centre. There was also some opposition on the ground that Afrikaans was the language of the oppressor in South Africa.

The first argument was countered by the claim that people felt at home and preferred an institution where they could speak freely in their own language and the second by the argument that when one spoke of the language of the oppressor in an African context one was referring to English, French, Flemish, German, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and Dutch and in a world-wide context to many other languages as well.

Another argument advanced by supporters of the Pretoria Pen was that more writing in SA is done in Afrikaans than in any other language.

The figures that illustrate the extent of Afrikaans writing were compiled in 2000 (Source: Francis Galloway *Statistical trends in South African book publishing*):

Language	Poetry	Drama	Fiction	Total
Afrikaans	283	53	2 464	2 800
English	302	127	545	974
Multilingual	34	20	109	163
African languages	342	283	635	1 260

There is a move to start another language-based Pen for Zulu-speaking writers. When established, it will be called the Durban Pen.

In the rest of Africa there are 18 Pen centres of which 15 are active. A leading figure in the Sierra Leone Chapel, Mike Butscher, was elected to the International Pen board in Dakar in July.

Pen's mission is to promote literature, to defend freedom of speech and to build a community of writers.

Essay continued from back cover

Recreating celebrity status

In African culture, the poet has always been a sort of “celebrity”. Within the scope of mass media, s/he is faced with the challenge of recreating this status or being faced with the limited vision of the media institution. The poet as teacher and advisor has to advocate her/his space within this framework of conformity and packaged images – while artists are there to *unpack images*. Mass media tendencies include that of framing and institutionalising even the most radical of voices. If poets don't fit this framing they are marginalised. This marginalisation however, doesn't present much of a challenge to the practice as poetry has gained a following beyond media institutions. Through a limited view, poetry or spoken word might be presented as “new” while it is actually the continuation of a tradition of praises, memories, and knowledge given to us long before today's spoken-word artist got hold of the microphone or TV slot. It is therefore up to the poet to create a continuum. If these artists are not conscious of their socio-cultural role, mass media could end up creating agendas away from the value of their texts – taking advantage of the “in thing” and the longstanding celebrated status of poets.

Poets as journalists

Today, wordsmiths are not only made by television, they too contribute to making television. This is meaningful if their vision is not blurred or lost through the lens. Poets do not cease to make us aware that words, history, politics, (of self and of a nation), and social issues, exist interdependently. This is proven by the award-winning and outspoken Lebogang Mashile on her popular TV show *L'Attitude* where she visits (among others) the lives of ordinary women and the spaces they occupy, with creativity that weaves poetry into everyday life. There is much vision and purpose in her work. However, television can be dangerous if underlying messages of consumerism are “sold” through poets' voices. Kgafela oa Magogodi, Ntone Edjabe, and Kojo Baffoe among others, have seen poetry's underground movements rise as a force to be reckoned with, and these poets are among the creative and independent thinking producers of powerful mass media messages, both mainstream and alternative. Popular TV shows are also beginning to weave poetry into their scripts. However, the poet has to be “relevant” to the

script and this might not necessarily be true to her/his vision.

Through various channels, poets can set agendas (or so it seems) for what will contribute to serious public opinion about our state of affairs as Africans. But “who foots the bill?” might force many to censor themselves, because after all, “this one is for television,” we might say. This poses a real threat to achieved or perceived powers, as unlike any other “journalists”, spoken-word artists tend to be “too free” with their views (which are vulnerable to being captured, owned and altered for status quo and commercial purposes).

“Style” as poetic essence

On an aesthetic level, viewers are often presented with packaged images, especially of young women. Stereotypes – of the skinny, western look – are however being broken down by images of voluptuous, “unladylike” black women with “un-relaxed” hair, contributing to a cultural revolution that is going the mainstream route. Nthabiseng Motsemme's great work on the *Politics and poetics of dress among young black women* and Napo Masheane's poems and stage play *Bum*, confirm that we are articulating our beauty and renewing our sense of style. These renewed images are commanding space through media lenses. They could however, become commercialised within a constraining capitalist framework – and out the window goes the value of culture and knowledge production. Mashile's poem *Style (is in the essence of my people)* can be misappropriated if interpreted as fashion-orientated, while she is inspiring and challenging young black women to be self loving and confident.

Therefore, poetic expression should be valued beyond corporate and media interests, and this can only happen when wordsmiths set their own agenda by allowing themselves to write and perform as a reflection of the society and personalities they live in.

Creating representatives

Whoever makes decisions about which poetry to review or publish, should have enough insight about the concept, as South Africa is draped by a fabric of talented poets who speak on various issues (some not very desirable to newspapers and/or screens). The Lentswe Poetry Project on SABC 2 presents various poetic issues, (from known and unknown poets and in various languages) themed according to national Youth Day, Heritage Day, Women's and Valentine's day etc. These go through some evaluation by someone, and only those deemed relevant will be

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Essay continued from page 72

in the magic box. Poets have to gear their verses to fit in. Such projects and mediums can prove positive, as long as poets are allowed to represent themselves without being trapped to conform to particular expectations and limitations. Otherwise, they face the danger of becoming imposters for profit-orientated “variety” that leave us in boxes – becoming part of the problem rather than of the solution.

Mass media as “keepers of gates”

In the past, black poets and their words never saw the light of day. Leading poets like Keorapetse Kgositse and Mzwakhe Mbuli were banned because they were considered radical by the apartheid media. Today the likes of Lesego Rampolokeng and Vonani ka Bila – some of the most important voices of Mzansi’s poetry – are often not presented to the masses of poetry-lovers through mass media. These poets go beyond institutional frameworks, with words that might be too piercing to the powers that be. Poems such as “Mr President let the babies die” might never see a newspaper page or prime TV slot. Hence such artists resort to alternative media circles.

In today’s mass media-dominated society, many poets still speak from the edge. They take it upon themselves to criticise and force the powers that be to move their focus from the centre. This depends greatly on how much power poets possess to open gates for other poetic issues to flow in, with a strong refusal to fit in.

Some feel that alternative media is the answer. “Leave mainstream media to do their thing, we’ll do

ours”. But why not penetrate both? There is no doubt that poetry has enticed the appetites of mainstream viewers. Therefore more space is required for expressing these voices. Those who uncompromisingly created their own space – such as the acclaimed feelah sistah collective and Uju – commanded media attention, both mainstream and alternative. Alternative media remains safer though: *Chimurenga*, *Botsotso*, Timbila’s *Journal of Union Skin Poetry* and *BKO* magazine are some of the few representative pages for poets, where toning down to fit in doesn’t exist. These publications are consciously seeking and retaining audiences in places often not penetrated by mainstream media. Poets are also creating websites and blogs. But these remain out of reach for ordinary, unemployed youth in Tembisa or Gugulethu. Internet access, literature through public libraries and book stores remain a scarcity for many people. It is thus up to the poet to raise awareness on such issues through mass media channels in order to help transform poor, yet highly-consumerised, minds and communities.

Concluding thoughts

Never before have we seen so much poetry through mass media lenses. This is affirming but can become misappropriated if commercialised. Viewers can be bombarded with poetic images to the extent where they stop wondering and exploring other voices outside the box, because it might seem as if the revolution is televised!

Like the shaman, the poet has always held a crucial position as teacher among our people – and this will not cease. It is therefore the poet’s duty (even at the hands of mass media) not to become a consumer item or “anybody’s official poet or puppet” as Kgafela oa Magogodi’s poem states. It is not easy though, as many have tried but failed, simply because someone else covers production costs.

Every poet – especially those seen as celebrities and “representatives” – is (or should be) politicised in their message, be it about black women’s bodies and space, language, poverty/Aids or about opposing politicians. In this manner, mass media channels can be made (for the first time) to work for and not against us.





Mzansi's poets through mass media lenses

Essay by Natalia Molebatsi

Long before media houses “discovered” poets (of the post-apartheid era), a whole movement had been growing, a tapestry of rich voices woven by meaningful messages, far out of the realm (or interests) of mass media. Today, poetry is a rising phenomenon on our TV and radio channels. So much that we often have to scrutinise the criteria used in the “quest” to conscientise audiences about poetry – South Africa depends (too much) on what is dished out by mainstream media. This is caused by various factors such as the lack of a reading culture, and the inaccessibility and exclusivity of alternative media. Young people watch too much television, so it is important for those who produce poetic culture to emphasise the importance of *critical reading* as a principle – going as far as recommending literature and providing access information.

Essay continued on page 72