

RJR 22 September 2003
<http://www.rjr.ru.ac.za>

The Quest

Special Edition on the Training
and Education of Journalists

Editor:

Anthea Garman

Commissioning Editors:

Sonja Boezak and Sarita Ranchod

Design:

Brian Garman and
Jeanne Louise Moys

Illustrator:

Novak Miler

Image technician:

Marilyn Parr

Advertising:

Bryan Robinson

Administration:

Gwendolyn Johnson
and Sonwabo Niwa

Mailing list:

Camilla Perks

Proofreading:

Camilla Perks

Publisher:

The Department of Journalism &
Media Studies, Rhodes University

Publishing Group:

Rod Amner, Guy Berger and
Nixon Kariithi

Special thanks to:

- The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung for financial support for this edition
 - NiZA media programme for financial support for this edition
- Sappi Fine Paper for providing us with the paper to print Review

All correspondence to:

The Editor

Rhodes Journalism Review
Department of Journalism
& Media Studies

Rhodes University

Box 94, Grahamstown 6140
South Africa

Tel Department: 27-46-6038336/7

Direct line: 27-46-6224577

Fax: 27-46-6228447

Email: a.garman@ru.ac.za

Annual subscription:

R100 international

R60 Southern Africa

R30 for students

Advertising queries:

Bryan Robinson

Tel: 27-12-2051991

Cell: 27-82-8527807

Email: bmkrobin@mweb.co.za

African Time

While the process of putting together this edition of Review has revealed many lessons, a key lesson has been the value of taking time, and having the patience to respect that things take as long as they need. It has shown us, again, that real and true change cannot be forced. And in taking stock of the project of training and educating for media transformation, we have learnt that although we are not where we would like to be, we are not doing too badly either.

We are not where we want to be in terms of skills levels in newsrooms, black participation and leadership in creating media, in ensuring that our teachers, trainers, 'knowers' reflect a diversity of experiences and a diversity of knowledges. But at the same time, the picture is changing: we are seeing black (male) African editors and women in some senior positions in newsrooms, academic and training institutions; still while knowing that simply replacing one set with another is not transformation. What needs to change are institutional and organisational cultures and practices that continue to hamper the process of real change. A simple racial changing of the guard is not the answer.

Once we realise that transformation is a process, not an event, not a deadline, not a quota; once we look at what we have indeed achieved, the roads we have indeed travelled, we start being able to change, and to prepare for what will follow. In acknowledging where we are on the road to uhuru, we open up the possibility for reflection and the continuation of the conversation we have started.

This Review is a showpiece of a brave new world, of African innovation, of thinking and storytelling. It does not fully reflect our dreams of an African ideal. As we have said, fundamental transformation of our media is in process – it has begun. We have a long and exciting journey ahead – one in which we determine the route, without forgetting where we come from. This is a brave new world where Africa takes its time to look itself in the mirror and be itself. This is an opportunity to show courage to be true. And to have the courage to be African.

Because things take time, because thinking and writing takes time, we would like to thank all of the contributors for taking the time to reflect and tell their stories.

Conversations that some of our brothers are having (and it is still the brothers doing the talking and writing) are beginning to define what it means to be African, engaging on issues of African first, or journalist first. Creating and choosing to be a part of building a new African media requires a taking on of the responsibility of seeing that process through by continuing to engage in every space and standing up to be. This kind of engagement takes time.

The continued absence of a critical mass of black voices in any of the spaces considered in this Review, puts a great deal of pressure on the few black editors, executives, thinkers and writers to be the (black) writers, speakers, thinkers, leaders in a multitude of spaces – leading to some very over-extended, determined bright stars in a lonely sky, now suffering a poverty of time. This situation is neither desirable nor sustainable, but gives us a sense of what still needs to shift.

The kind of honest reflection required at this point does not allow space for window dressing. It does not allow us to paint over the cracks and pretend that the real challenges do not exist. Africa can no longer afford to have its cracks painted over. We simply cannot afford to have cracks in our foundations either. There can be no shortcuts here.

This edition of Review on training and education for media transformation reflects critical voices, celebratory voices, voices of concern, creative voices – that reflect the innovation in classrooms and newsrooms, demonstrating the directions and shifts our media and society are undergoing. All indicating, one way or another, where we are on our African media transformation journey, honestly.



Sonja Boezak



Sarita Ranchod

Why we need Di Versity the Superjourno

Training and education is a serious subject, and there are thousands (millions) of words to be said about it. But when you're putting a magazine together you need visuals too, and how do you illustrate this subject?

When we put our heads together on the issue we started to feel that some of the wish lists out there for newly-qualified journalists were verging on the extreme; in the line of: "Journalists should have newsgathering skills, and experience and good language skills and creativity and analysis and know how to research and interview and have historical knowledge and literary knowledge and be able to situate things sociologically and and and..."

It started to resemble a quest for the Holy Grail and that's when we came up with Superjourno – the hero to save the day! And we invented a team of baddies for her (of course she has to be female) to battle. This does not mean we don't take the issue seriously, we do. We hope you will enjoy the visual tongue-in-cheek commentary running alongside the articles in this edition, which we have called The Quest.



Anthea Garman