

Southern Africa Media Training Needs Assessment

Key findings

- ★ There are about 15 000 journalists in the SADC region – a rapid increase following the 90s wave of democratisation.
 - ★ More than half have no formal qualifications.
 - ★ There is a great demand for media skills development.
 - ★ At least 48 institutions in the SADC region offer journalism training.
 - ★ The demand, however, is for more and better quality training.
 - ★ Journalism schools are gradually increasing their entry levels and there is also a gradual increase in the number of journalists holding university degrees.
 - ★ Existing media standards are perceived to be low.
 - ★ Courses on offer are variable in quality and impact. They are often short, once-off courses without any accreditation or effective follow-up.
 - ★ While some larger media organisations offer on-site training that is cost effective, this approach can limit interaction with journalists from different contexts and experiences, critical to stimulating debate and thinking.
 - ★ There appears to be more of a demand for skills training than knowledge-based (issue-based, contextual) training. But what industry demands is not necessarily what it needs.
 - ★ A general lack of focus was found in training institutions, most of whom are trying to do “a little of everything”.
- Gaps identified**
- ★ In-service training focuses on junior reporters and ignores managers, editors, photojournalists and community media.
 - ★ Training in new media skills and use is in its infancy.
 - ★ Men are the majority of recipients of training.
 - ★ While a number of training institutions offer specific courses on covering gender issues, few have grasped the importance of mainstreaming gender in all training.
 - ★ Training remains a high cost area, often

depending on donor funding. Donor agendas change, and this dependence could impact negatively.

★ Media training in the region is highly fragmented and could benefit from greater co-operation.

Recommendations

- ★ Centres of excellence should emerge rather than every institution trying to do everything.
 - ★ Entry-level training needs to be focused on solid skills training.
 - ★ The dearth of relevant media analysis and research is a major gap universities should be filling.
 - ★ Regional-level training is expensive and should focus on advanced skills and knowledge areas.
 - ★ Media management courses need co-ordination, sharing of resources and development.
 - ★ Human resource management is a critical lack and the environment within newsrooms does not encourage trainees to implement their newly-gained skills.
 - ★ Coaching and mentoring training is offered by only one institution.
 - ★ Community media training is an important new challenge.
 - ★ New media training needs to move from single courses to building country capacities.
 - ★ More attention should be given to using the Internet for training.
 - ★ Mainstreaming a human rights perspective into all training is critical.
- Targets**
- ★ Women.
 - ★ Managers – both editorial and business.
 - ★ Trainers – to achieve greater multiplier effects.
- Effectiveness**
- ★ Training must be linked to an overall HR development strategy.
 - ★ Courses should have selection criteria.
 - ★ Donor- and NGO-funded courses should be channelled through local institutions.

- ★ Courses should be structured as modules – many courses are too short and one-off to have long-term impact.
- ★ Innovative uses of information technology need to be explored.
- ★ Assessment and standard-setting is important.
- ★ Monitoring and evaluation must take place.

Areas for collaboration

- ★ Building a database of training opportunities; trainers; training materials; documented best practices; electronic discussion groups.
 - ★ Study materials – not many texts are produced locally.
 - ★ Curriculum development.
 - ★ Standards and accreditation.
- www.genderlinks.org.za/pubs.htm

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South African National Journalism Skills Audit

The audit focused on determining the level of reporting, writing and accuracy skills among reporters with two to five years' experience working in the mainstream media.

Issues to be addressed by tertiary education

- ★ Basic reporting and writing skills: accuracy, interviewing, research, spelling and punctuation
- ★ Language skills plus the acquisition of African languages
- ★ Conceptual skills: analytical and critical skills, creativity, general knowledge, a culture of reading
- ★ Life skills: communication, motivation, professionalism and a work ethic
- ★ Media ethics and media law knowledge
- ★ Regular interaction with industry: internships, advisory boards

Issues to be addressed by media management

- ★ Top-down management styles do not motivate staff

- ★ News management: defining news within a developing democracy, and developing news policies
- ★ Human resource management: affirmative action, mentoring and support structures
- ★ Personal development: training and courses to enrich abilities

Recommendations

- ★ There needs to be structured and improved interaction between the media industry and tertiary institutions.
- ★ A well-regulated system of internships should be put in place.
- ★ Trainers need training – working in media environments.
- ★ Curricula need attention to close the gap between what is taught and what is expected in newsrooms (reporting, writing, accuracy, language, general knowledge, media law

- and ethics).
 - ★ Development of a new style of management – life skills, interpersonal and intercultural communication, this should be taught in tertiary institutions as well.
 - ★ A proper national accreditation system.
 - ★ Centres of excellence, co-ordination of who teaches what.
 - ★ Attention to training for community radio and newspapers.
 - ★ Mid-career training needs attention.
 - ★ Sub-editing is a key area needing intervention.
 - ★ The role of Mapp Seta, SAQA/ETA not well enough known and understood.
- www.scribe.co.za

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