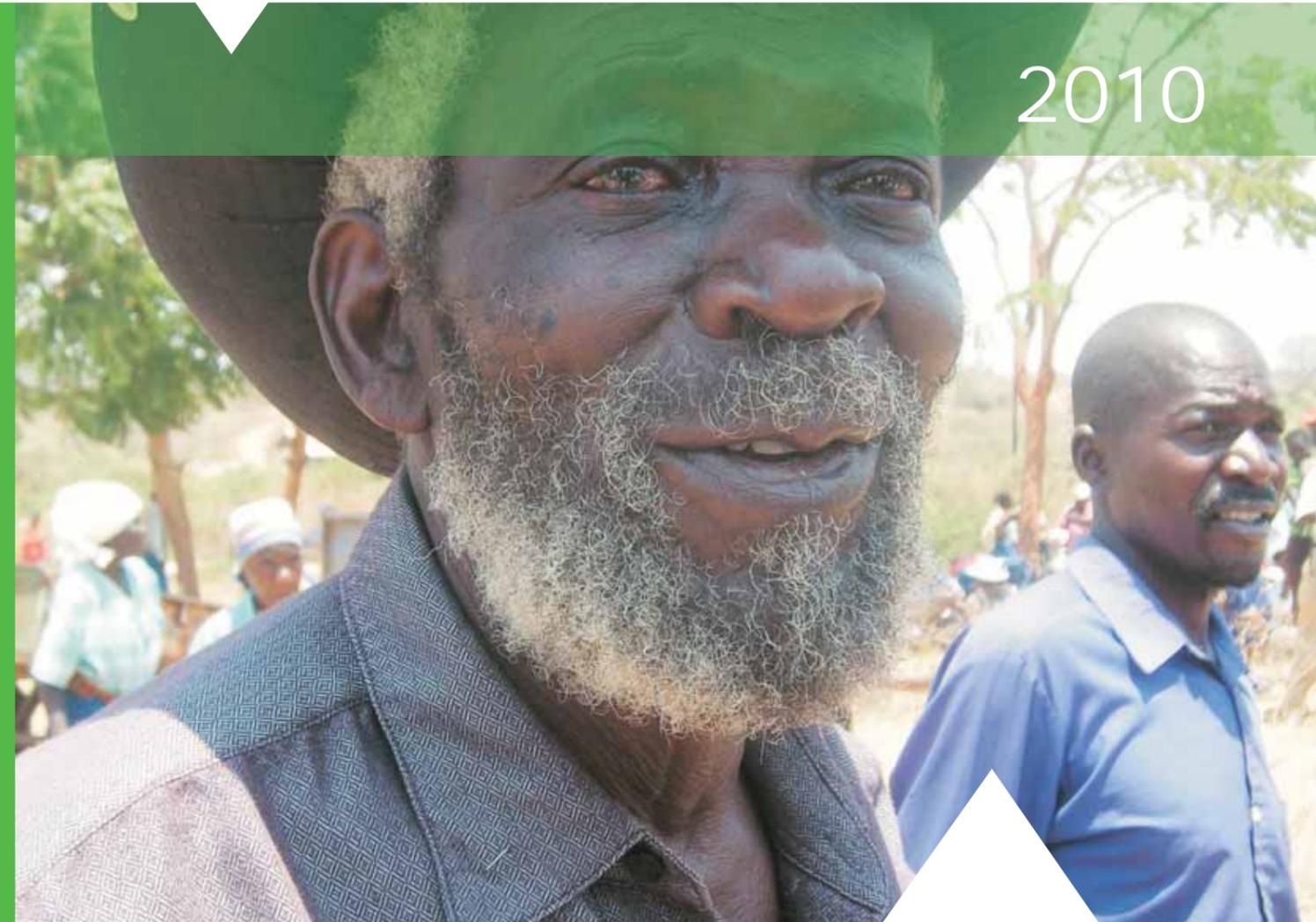


# Citizens, Media and Good Governance: Guideline for Journalists

2010



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**MWANANCHI**  
STRENGTHENING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

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# MWANANCHI

STRENGTHENING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

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# Foreword

by Professor Fackson Banda



I want to start by expressing my thanks to the Mwananchi programme for according me an opportunity to write a foreword for this booklet and to say that there certainly

exists a positive correlation between good media and good governance. But it is just as difficult to quantify *good* governance as it is to measure *good* media, given the differing cultural environments within which both concepts manifest themselves.

Most African countries are embroiled in their own politics, deconstructing imperial definitions of media and society and reconstructing new ones. Reconstruction is proving a little more successful in some but not all instances. For example, the reconstruction of South African public service broadcasting along lines of 'nation building' and healing 'the divisions of the past' is fundamentally different from the reconstruction of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings along lines that reinforce political monotheism and constrain journalistic autonomy.

Given this dichotomy, it is perhaps advisable to start by posing the question: What media and what good governance? This question assumes that there is a problem with the way contemporary media tend to operate. It also assumes that there is a problem with the type of good governance often idealised. To me, the meaning of good governance is summed up in Benjamin R. Barber's 'strong democracy'. To quote Barber at length:

*Strong democracy urges that we take ourselves seriously as citizens. Not merely as voters, certainly not solely as clients or wards of government. Citizens are governors: self-governors, communal governors, masters of their own fates. They need not participate all of the time in all public affairs, but they should participate at least some of the time in at least some public affairs. Watchdogs, voters, clients — these are inadequate conceptions of the democratic citizen...Effective democracies need great citizens. We are free only as we are citizens, and our liberty and our equality are only as durable as our citizenship. We may be born free, but we die free only when we work at it in the interval between. And citizens are certainly not born, but made as a consequence of civic education and political engagement in a free polity.*

Viewed in terms of strong democracy's emphasis on engaged citizenship, good governance should refer to those formal and informal, institutional and non-institutional arrangements which guarantee the active participation of citizens in the political community. Barber seems to characterise this type of civic engagement in terms of participatory action, public or community creation, necessity or inevitability of conflict; deliberative and autonomous choice; contextual reasonableness; transformation of conflict into cooperation; and independent deliberation and reflection.

It is clear, then, that the public manifestation of good governance is centred on the citizen. In other words, strong-democratic good governance becomes operational through citizenship.

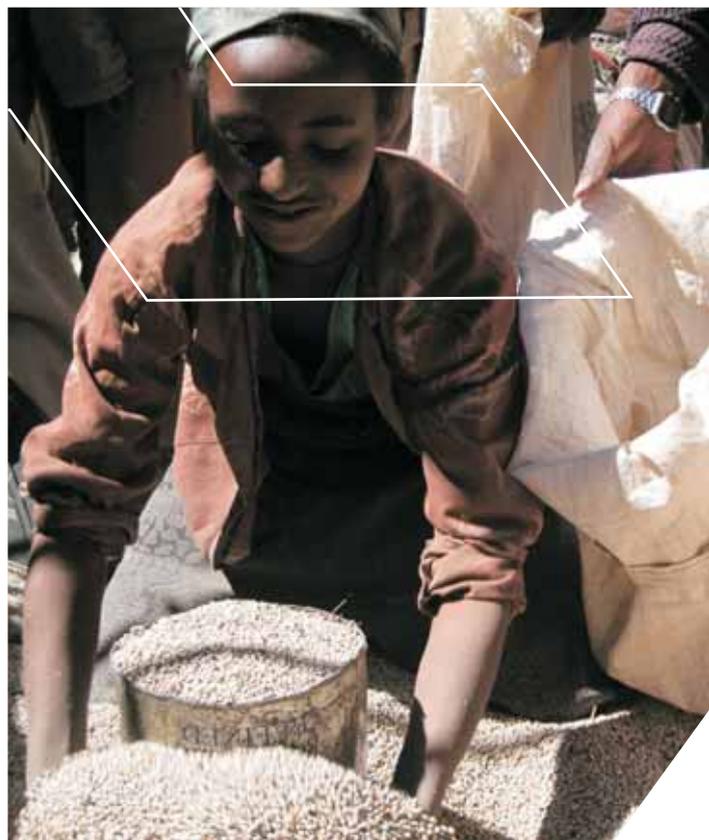
The best measure of how democratic a political community is lies in the extent to which it inspires the citizen to participate in the civic life of the community. Under the principle of popular sovereignty, citizens collectively occupy the supreme office of democracy and hold its ultimate authority which includes not only final decision-making power over who holds political office, but also the power to make and reconsider political choices.

As such, citizenship is more than a legal status; it is an ethos that guides relationships among persons and fires individual and community commitment to the fundamental principles of democracy and good governance.

Clearly, to realise this ideal of good governance, some demands must be made of the media. It is evident that most media practice is caught between 'the hammer of the state and the anvil of the market'.

The 'hammer of the state' in the post-postcolonial societies endures in at least three ways: the archaic policy and legal regime; the absence of enabling legislation; and the extra-legal manoeuvres of the state.

The deployment of extra-legal tactics is common as some African states continue to employ a variety of political strategies and manoeuvres to cripple private media, including withdrawal of state advertising from such media, harassment of reporters through ruling party



cadres and state police and tax on the means of media production (e.g. import duty on newsprint).

The 'anvil of the market' is intricately bound up in the 1990s mantra of globalisation, with its associated discourses of liberalisation, deregulation, privatisation and commercialisation, presented a different set of possibilities for media regulation. For one thing, most states, fearing loss of hegemony, reasserted themselves. Rather than 'privatise' state media, they 'commercialised' them. They also adopted market-based forms of regulation, signalling the injection of private capital into media business.

The market presented both opportunities and threats for media freedom. On the one hand, a liberal-pluralist view might suggest the following as opportunities: the promise of media plurality and diversity; the promise of fair competition and quality media content; the promise of expanded communicative space for the citizenry; and the promise of greater liberal democracy.

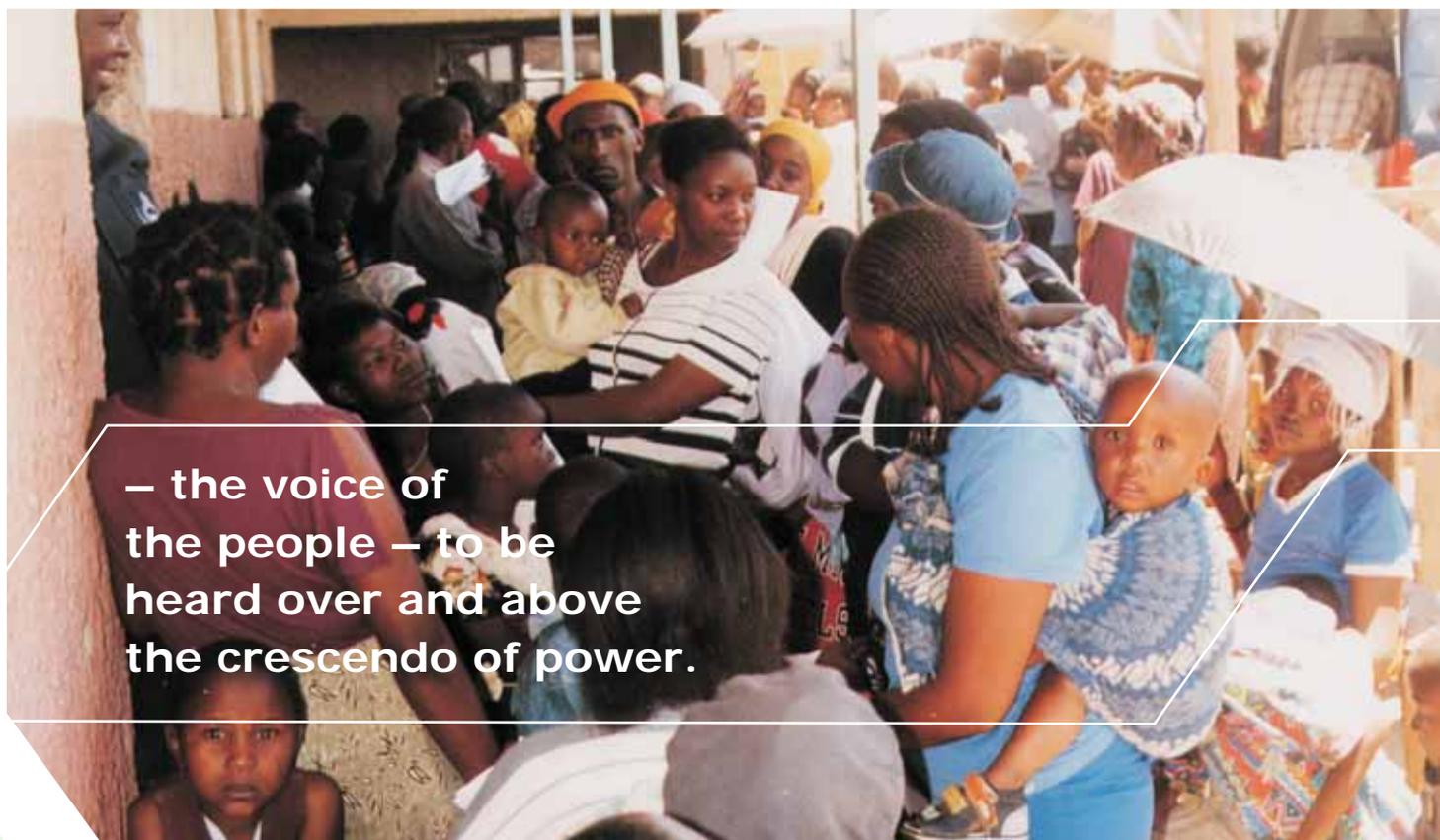
On the other hand, a political economy view might identify such threats as: reduction of the use of independent media producers; media concentration on the largest markets; avoidance of risks; reduced investment in less profitable media tasks; neglect of poorer sectors of the potential audience; homogenisation of media content; and less investigative reporting.

An indisputable fact is that, as competition intensifies, media content is increasingly being shaped by the demands of advertisers and sponsors rather than public interest factors. In fact, it might even be argued that such market-driven media content tends towards the 'tabloidisation' of broadcasting, targeted at satisfying the lowest common denominator of human curiosities and pleasures, and not necessarily at serious deliberative programming that can fuel citizens' democratic impulses.

Caught up in this cocoon of mercantilist exploitation, the media, unwittingly and wittingly, tend to define their role in terms of the profit motive. As such, even their definition of 'self-regulation' entails accountability to themselves

and the market imperative. Although notions of 'social responsibility' and 'public interest' are invoked, there is evidence to suggest that the media are, for the most part, keen on playing the 'watchdog' role, rather than being 'watched'. While the media *do* have a 'watchdog' role, this individualist-libertarian view tends to neglect the broader participation of the citizenry in media work, leaving all the 'journalism' to be done by 'media professionals'.

This 'professional' trajectory reifies the 'objectivity' of the media. There is a de-emphasising of the journalist's civic and political engagement. The journalist's so-called professional disinterestedness borders on passivity. Thus, in the 'natural' scheme of things, the media become associated with elites, mostly those with links to political, economic, coercive and symbolic power (the politicians, the wealthy, the police, the clergy, etc.). In all this, it becomes difficult for *vox populi* – the voice of the people – to be heard over and above the crescendo of power. It becomes difficult for alternative forms of journalism to emerge and entrench themselves.



– the voice of the people – to be heard over and above the crescendo of power.

However, despite all the problems I have mentioned, I know that media can play a potentially influential role in enhancing the kind of strong-democratic civic which is highlighted in this booklet.

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As I conclude, I want to leave you with one fundamentally important thought. Another journalism is conceivable – a journalism whose ethos is people and not profit. What this needs is a deconstruction of conventional ways of *seeing* and *doing* journalism. The public (civic) journalism movement, albeit heavily criticised, is a welcome contribution to the strong-democratic process of citizen empowerment. Envisioning *another* journalism is not necessarily a radical thing; it is, in fact, located in the idea that all mediation is a political activity.

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For example, it can be demonstrated that the 'news' practices of the media are intrinsically political, such that they present a definitional flexibility for media professionals to reconsider 'news' in terms of its potential to enhance civic and democratic expression. It is important to emphasise that it is possible to construct normative roles for the media - ideal-typical functions that people, at various points in their history, would like to see the media perform.

This opens up avenues for negotiating what the media can do to deepen the democratic experience of developing countries and to conceive the place of civic education in newsrooms which might serve the aims of:

- ▲ *Raising greater civic consciousness* among media professionals about the democratic role of the media in the transitional democracies of the developing world;
- ▲ *Enhancing the civic competence* of media practitioners to aid them in their analysis and reporting of civic affairs; and
- ▲ *Encouraging greater prioritisation of civic news* among media institutions.

This is not only possible, but also desirable and this booklet begins that conversation.

*Professor Fackson Banda is SAB-UNESCO Chair of Media and Democracy, Rhodes University, South Africa*

# Introduction

This booklet is a resource guide for journalists working for newspapers and radio and will be of interest to civil society actors with an interest in development journalism. It places special emphasis on how journalists report on the role played by citizens in demanding good governance in Africa. It is a guide for the Mwananchi: Strengthening Citizen Engagement programme (*mwananchi* is Swahili for citizen).

The booklet has five chapters and each chapter has a governance story that was published by IPS Africa in 2009. These news features serve as illustrations on how a governance story can be structured.

The main thread running through this booklet is that journalists play a crucial role in governance. They do this by being actors in the building of citizen agendas and by amplifying demands for good governance within country contexts. Journalists also highlight reliable reports, portrayals, analyses, discussions and debates on social issues, promote rule of law, civic culture, participation and accountability.

The booklet also highlights the role of the media in a democracy and how it is a key player in informing citizens, supporting group identities and providing public spaces for discussions and dialogue.

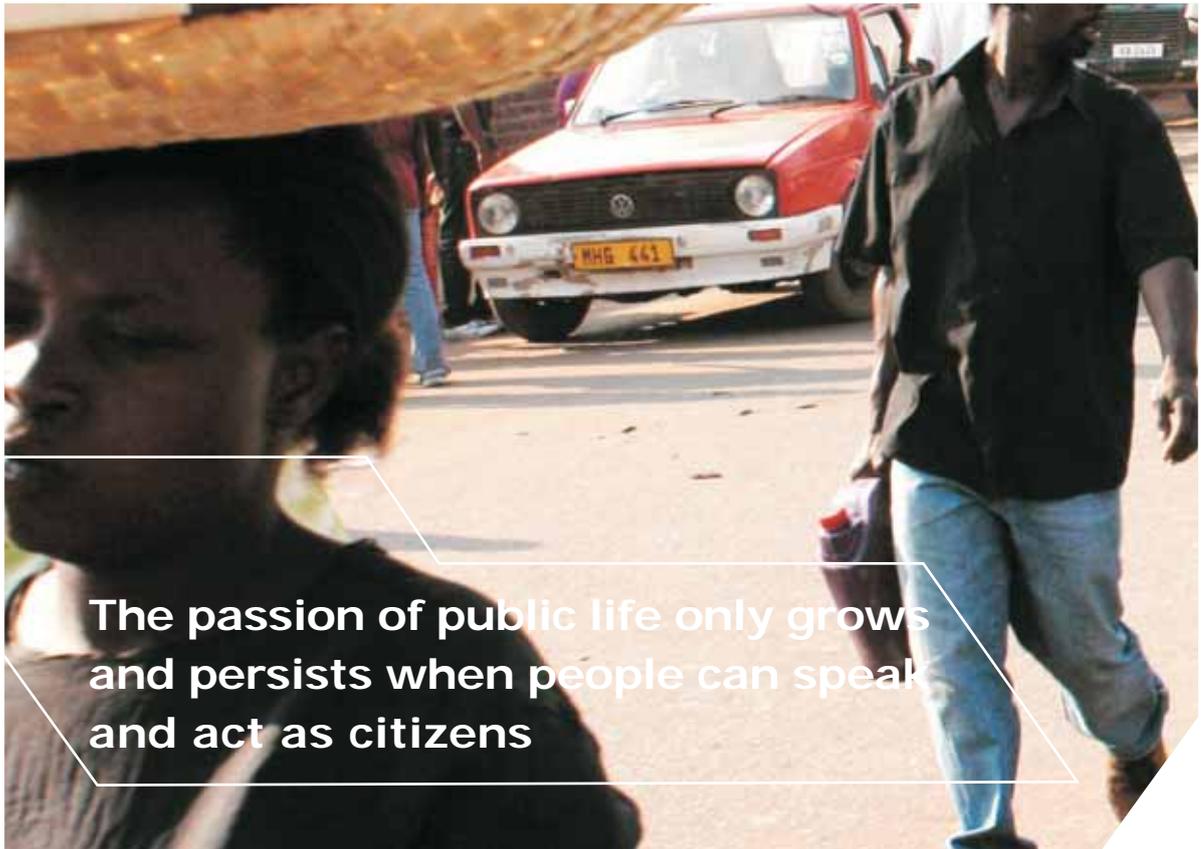
It is also an attempt to explain capability, accountability, and responsiveness in relation to good governance.

Journalists carefully select and make choices about the stories they write. This process involves interpreting information they collect. Considerations are also made on what issues to follow up and perspectives to ignore. Choices are also made on words, language and style to write in.

Media analyst Peter Parisi sums this up as follows:

- ▲ News writing represents a set of choices that define an issue as newsworthy and certain questions as relevant.
- ▲ Journalists make choices by accepting or rejecting information, sources and perspectives.
- ▲ News writing involves deciding the level and extent of detail or colour with which to portray a community, region or issue.

Highlighting key issues and players in governance is one of the roles played by the media. This research tool aims to share ideas on how the groundbreaking work or actions of ordinary citizens to change policy can be a source of good and original stories. It will also make suggestions on how to reflect the work and critical role of civil society organisations (CSOs) in governance and development. It also seeks to find a place to showcase the achievements of elected representatives and government institutions. These are the kind of stories that the media needs to take up if it is



## The passion of public life only grows and persists when people can speak and act as citizens

to be effective in its role as gatekeeper, advocate and watchdog.

Journalism and the media have an important role in promoting debate and providing oversight in the drive for good governance in Africa. The stories that journalists produce are like people's diaries, enabling citizens to better understand their lives and the world they live in.

The media should serve society by providing information that arms people to become alert and watchful citizens. This kind of citizenship requires a media that reflects the democratic aspirations of all sections of society. The media should foster dialogue on public issues and provide a forum for interest groups to engage each other.

The passion for public life only grows and persists when people can speak and act as citizens, and have some guarantee that others see, hear and remember what they say. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen explains this as strengthening the responsiveness and accountability of government to all citizens – an essential element of democracy.

# About Mwananchi

The Mwananchi programme works to strengthen citizen engagement with governments across seven African countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Southern Sudan, Uganda and Zambia. The five-year project, which is funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), aims to increase transparency and holding governments to account by focusing on key interlocutors in the citizen–state relationship, particularly the **media**, **civil society organisations**, and **elected representatives** at both the local and national levels.

**Mwananchi** (mwah-nah-‘nchee), is the Kiswahili word for ‘ordinary citizen,’ and emphasises the hard working common woman or man. This is an important distinction from other citizens whose socio-economic background leads to different levels of power and engagement with the state. A focus on the *wananchi* (ordinary citizens – in plural) also allows investigation into the different forms of citizenship as the basis for meaningful good governance interventions in diverse country contexts.

## *What is the relationship between citizens, governance and accountability?*

Although traditional approaches to good governance tend to be technically focused on institutional reform for increasing government effectiveness and accountability, there is a growing recognition of the importance of active, engaged citizens in holding governments to account. In order to do this, there needs to be both willingness and enthusiasm among citizens to participate and an environment that allows this to happen. This programme promotes institutional channels and mechanisms that enable constructive citizen-state engagement on a sustainable basis.

The ‘democratic representation’ model of good governance is a traditional linear model, where citizens express their interests or concerns, through their representatives who act on their behalf. Accountability comes during elections, where citizens express their satisfaction with elected representatives by re-electing or rejecting them at the polls. This form of accountability is problematic in that it is a reactive ‘after action’ process. Citizens only express approval or disapproval with their representatives after they have already decided, and possibly even implemented, a course of action.

Accountability is also possible before a mandate is given or before a policy is made. For example, citizens can be asked to check the plans of a construction project before the representative submits them for inclusion in overall government plans. In this case, citizens can argue for input or plans for managing the project that fit better with their circumstances, before the representative in question presents them to parliament or directly to the civil service for policy-makers to use in their general plans for the constituency. However, in most African country contexts, this prior to action accountability rarely happens because patron-client relationships follow immediately after elections and the rules of engagement between

the elected and the supposedly 'principals' are unclear and unregulated.

In order to increase opportunities for accountability before action and on a day to day basis, governance programmes must develop interventions that provide political leverage to the *wananchi* in the relevant places and spaces for citizen–state engagement. This can be achieved through working with key interlocutors of state-citizen relationships.

### *Why focus on interlocutors?*

Interlocutors work on both the articulation of citizen voices – the mobilisation of identified citizen strategies and providing channels of this voice into policy, and to directly influence policy change on their own. In a particular governance context, these are the active groups that work on 'hammering out the terms of the social contract' between the governors and the governed, making them a strategic entry point for empowering citizens.

### *What activities will the programme undertake?*

The Mwananchi programme rolled out project activities in a cascading style, starting with Malawi, then adding two Zambia and Ghana before reaching all seven countries by the end of 2008. In each country, a coordinating partner is identified, at which point three parallel processes begin in order to understand more clearly the governance context, major issues and key entry points: an initial face-to-face consultation with key in-country governance stakeholders; a baseline context survey; and a stocktaking of existing governance initiatives. These three sets of data are used to generate evidence for choices to be made of the key country-specific governance issues and for devising necessary strategies for supporting greater citizenship engagement in addressing these issues. Potential activities proposed in

these strategies include: media capacity development, producing and disseminating news stories on good governance (see [mwananchi-africa.org](http://mwananchi-africa.org)), civil society working with parliamentarians to enhance accountability to their constituencies, innovative ways of budget tracking in key citizen sectors of concern (e.g. health), and bringing media, parliament, traditional leaders, and local government actors together to address access to productive land.

### *Who is involved?*

#### **Coordinating Partners**

**Overseas Development Institute (ODI)** – London, UK – Leading agency

**CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS)** – Johannesburg, South Africa

**Inter Press Service (IPS) Africa** – Johannesburg, South Africa

#### **Country Coordination Partners**

**Development Research and Training (DRT)** – Kampala, Uganda

**PANOS South Africa** – Lusaka, Zambia

**Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)** – Lilongwe, Malawi

**Participatory Development Associates (PDA)** – Accra, Ghana

**New Sudanese Indigenous NGOs (NESI)** – Southern Sudan

**Greener Services** – Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



Campaign for Good Governance (CGG) –  
Freetown, Sierra Leone

## Defining mwananchi

*Mwananchi* (pronounced *mwah-nah-'nchee*) is a Kiswahili word meaning 'citizen', particularly emphasising the common woman or man. It implies a responsible and hard-working member of the society – exactly the type of person this programme will benefit. As Masolo (1986) explains, *mwananchi* is 'a term designating a class of people considered as "ordinary" because they do not have any outstanding (political and/or financial or administrative) powers and privileges in public or private sectors'. This is an important distinction from other categories of citizen. In Kenya, 'the public discourse distinguished *wananchi* [the plural of *mwananchi*] and *wenyenchi* (owners of the nation). With the endemic corruption, a new category was introduced, the *walanchi* ('eaters of the nation). This distinction has been especially used to express popular disillusionment with the elite who continue to live luxuriously, in spite of the dire economic conditions of ordinary citizens' (Kagwanja, 2003).

## Overseas Development Institute

For the Mwananchi programme, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) provides overall leadership and technical support on the use of evidence-based approaches in engaging citizens and the state for good governance. It provides analysis of the relationships and networks of civil society organisations, the media and elected representatives as key interlocutors of the good governance agenda. Formed in 1960, the United Kingdom-based ODI is one of the world's leading think tanks on international development and humanitarian issues. It works to inspire and inform policy and practice that contribute to poverty reduction through applied research, advice and debate.

## Technical Partners:

The technical partners for the project are CIVICUS and the Inter Press Service (IPS) Africa. CIVICUS supports capacity-building and networking among CSOs, exchange of global best practices and the development of multi-stakeholder communities of practice. IPS Africa provides capacity development for media actors and documents and disseminates lessons learnt.

**CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation**, an international organisation with members and partners in more than 100 countries worldwide, was established in 1993 to support the growth and protection of citizen action. It seeks to amplify the voices and opinions of ordinary people, and emphasises that for effective and sustainable civic participation to occur, citizens must enjoy rights of free association and be able to engage all sectors of society.

**IPS Africa** is a not-for-profit Section 21 organisation with its headquarters in Johannesburg, South Africa, and bureaus in Kenya and Benin. It has a network of over 100 freelancers in 50 countries and publishes in English, French, Portuguese and Swahili. IPS Africa is a member of the IPS Association, a global news agency that provides contextualised development-oriented features and content to mainstream and community media and CSOs. IPS Africa's key activities include capacity development for journalists, media organisations and CSOs, dissemination and networking. IPS, established in 1964, promotes journalism that enables citizens in developing countries to better understand and make sense of the world they live in and to be knowledgeable on opportunities that exist for their countries to develop. The Rome-based IPS International Association, an international non-governmental organisation, has five autonomous and locally owned entities in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America.

# 1

## Good governance and development journalism

*Good governance is not just about government. It is also about political parties, parliament, the judiciary, the media, and civil society. It is about how citizens, leaders and public institutions relate to each other in order to make change happen.<sup>1</sup>*

*Development news is the critical examination, evaluation and interpretation of development plans, projects, policies, problems and issues. It provides contextual and background information about development. It should refer to the needs of people, which may vary from country and region, but generally include food, housing, employment, transport, energy sources, cultural diversity, recognition and dignity.<sup>2</sup>*

This chapter looks at the relationship between good governance and development journalism. Good governance allows citizens to have a say on how they are governed and also how they would want their country to move forward and development journalism captures that spirit by looking at key elements critical to democracy. In a way one can say that good governance and development journalism share a similar agenda.

Good governance is concerned with citizenship and voice. In the Mwananchi programme emphasis is placed on ordinary citizens' experiences and how they exercise citizenship within their countries. The struggles for meaning, power and resources between the citizens and governments allow citizens to demand greater access to government's nation-building agendas. Demands for good governance are aimed at developing a country and are similar to the goals of development journalism, whose purpose is to motivate citizens to actively co-operate in the development and defence of their interests. Development journalism can be seen as a response to the gaps that exist

between government and citizens, and between news groups and audiences. It puts citizens first and does not treat them as consumers. It is a communication tool to share knowledge aimed at reaching a consensus for action that takes into account the interests, needs and capacities of all concerned.<sup>3</sup>

How *wananchi* are depicted in development news is important: are they portrayed as victims or as the main actors and agents? So too are the topics that are focused on. Take the economy: it is important because of its impact on politics, the military and cultural power. Analysis and understanding of economic data is crucial. The NGO sector has a wealth of information on, for example, the effects of structural adjustment programmes on African economies that could be used to look at alternative economic models.

Development journalism is about looking at the experiences of different social groups within a democracy. It can be done through investigating government and state institution failures and dismal performance, and by giving prominence to success stories where they exist.

1 *Making Governance Work for the Poor: DFID White Paper, 2006*

2 *Banda 2006*

3 *Banda 2008; Servaes 2002.*



Development journalism should allow people to speak. Journalists should enter into a dialogue with citizens on development, reflect diverse viewpoints and give people the opportunity to tell their own stories.

The media should be a forum where citizens can debate important issues about their lives.

Peter Dahlgren outlines the media's role in shaping civic culture as:

- ▲ Giving people access to reliable reports, portrayals, analyses, discussions and debates on social issues that cater for all social interests.
- ▲ Reinforcing adherence to democratic values and procedures by giving attention to virtues like tolerance and the rule of law.
- ▲ Highlighting practices, routines and traditions that underpin good governance and building them into a civic culture.
- ▲ Shaping public perceptions of citizen-ship in a democracy by advocating participation, accountability, solidarity, courage and community.

Important attributes of development journalism are to reduce issues to choices, listen to the public, promote core values, evaluate choices, bridge the expert-public gap, facilitate deliberation and promote civility.<sup>4</sup>

## Reduce issues to choices

The media can reduce issues to choices by setting up alternative agendas, even if these are not popular with the political leadership in a country. In civic journalism the issues relevant to citizens' lives and livelihoods are paramount. The media should represent the people and always be on their side.

## Public listening

Journalists should go to citizens and hear their stories. They should move away from current notions of what is news and build relationships with people. The journalist's traditional sources – official viewpoints – should be reflected alongside the needs and aspirations of ordinary citizens.

## Core values

In cases where there is conflict, journalists should be able to highlight higher values over disagreements and promote dialogue. Ordinary citizens have suffered the most during the many

armed conflicts in Africa. Promoting peace should outweigh whatever differences might exist between opposing groups.

## Evaluate choices

The values that people decide are important for them should be put in the public arena, debated and evaluated. People should always be in a position to look back at their choices and reflect on the decisions they have made to allow for learning and to build strategies for the future.

## Bridge the expert-public gap

One of the functions of journalists to demystify policy by writing and presenting it in a language which citizens can understand. Public documents, although meant for the layman, are almost always written in expert jargon which is not easy to follow. Simplicity and clarity in covering public matters make for good journalism.

## Facilitate deliberation

Journalists can encourage citizens to think and talk through issues and reach a resolution. The media becomes a platform for conversation through the pages of newspapers, radio phone-ins and television talk shows, and should also report on dialogue that takes place between citizens at public meetings and other social gatherings.

## Promote civility

The media can set standards for civility and open-mindedness by allowing citizens to put tough questions to governments. This is very important when citizens feel that their interests are under threat. Different points of view should be recognised and covered, with a focus on proposed solutions which are likely to succeed.



# Story One

## Airwaves Changing Lives of the Physically Challenged

**By Francis Kokutse**

**ADA, Ghana , Aug 19 (IPS) -** In the past physically challenged Theophilus Ayim would have been kept behind closed doors by his family because they feared he would be scorned and ridiculed by the community.

And if it had not been for a small volunteer-run community radio station things would have stayed that way.

But now, instead of spending his days closeted away from a harsh world, 24-year-old Ayim is free to manoeuvre his wheel-chair around Ada. He conducts interviews with a community that now accepts his physical challenges, and reports on stories around the area for the station.

“That is the change that Ada Radio has brought to the community when we hit the airwaves some 10 years ago,” station manager Kofi Larweh said.

In the mainly fishing and farming areas along the eastern coast of Ghana, communities are believed to be over 65 percent illiterate.

The farmers, fishmongers, fishermen, drivers and traders of these areas have little education or understanding for physically challenged people.

But since Ada Radio went on air in 1999, broadcasting to an estimated audience of half a million people, it has been unique in many ways. It was manned by volunteers drawn from the community and was the first station to broadcast solely in the local language of the people, Dangme.

Larweh said that the success of the station was largely due to the programmes it broadcast. “We cover the environment, issues on women, farming and fishing issues that affect the community as well international news.”

All programmes are locally sourced and produced by the volunteer members of the community it broadcasts to. The programming also includes a half-hour weekly programmes produced in towns and villages and with contributions by the local fishmongers, farmers and other main occupational groups.

Four years ago Ada Radio tackled the poor treatment of physically challenged people through the “**Advocacy through Radio**” project. This was an initiative financed by the Danish International Development Agency and contributed largely to the changing of attitudes towards the disabled in the community.

“The fact that parents no longer keep their physically challenged children away from the public shows that we have been able to change attitudes in the community,” said Emily Amerdzoe, a social worker and one of the volunteers at the station.

The station included the Ghana Association of the Blind and the Ghana Society of the Physically Disabled Persons in the advocacy project and trained 12 people in broadcasting.

“They went back to the community to mobilise their colleagues for drama and discussion programmes involving their lives,” Amerdzoe said.

Ayim was one of those 12 people. He agrees that perceptions towards physically challenged people are now changing.

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**“The local authority administration now sees the physically challenged people as part of the community and consults them.”**

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He said that before the project began, no one knew what happened to a percentage of a common fund for the physically challenged. The funds are used to improve the lives of the physically challenged and are allocated to the district by central government.

“Now, the authorities consult us on what projects they want funds to be used for. That is a big change in the community.”

Seth Amamotey, a driver working in Ada, told IPS that these programmes largely changed his perception towards the physically challenged, though he admits that initially he was not so receptive to the idea.

“When the station started its programmes, I did not take them serious(ly) because the first time I listened there was a drama programme on blindness. But, there was a follow up not long after that and I have since kept listening. This has educated me to treat physically challenged people better. I stop for the blind who want to cross the road when I am driving, which is something I never used to do. I even give free rides to some.”

Amerdzoe said the change in the attitude by the community towards the physically challenged has been overwhelming. But that is not the only area in which Radio Ada has made a difference.

“One of our main successes has also been with conflict resolution in the community. We bring out burning issues that create conflict and discuss them. People call in (to the station) with their views and it helps to bring about peace.”

Amerdzoe said the station also resolved conflicts between churches and traditional

worshippers in the district over cultural issues.

The success of Ada Radio has been recognised throughout the country and Larweh, who is now chairman of the Network of Community Radio Stations, has become a sought out person to help train other communities to set up their stations.

He said: “We have 10 such stations operating in the country currently. However, all these have their peculiar strength and it is therefore a difficult thing to compare how they work.”

Radio Peace in Winneba in the Central Region has been able to solve a protracted chieftaincy problem in the community.

“The station has involved the community to talk about what they want for (themselves) and settled on peace. (They) have worked on that, so we can say they have used the medium of community radio to solve a communal problem,” Larweh explained. ▼

# 2

## Some debates on media and democracy

*The media has not created a platform that enables citizens to make sense of their social experiences and to question the assumptions and ideas of those in power.*

In this chapter are sketches of thinking on media and democracy. One of the ways to understand the role of the media in building democracy is to look at debates that have taken place on this topic. It is not possible to discuss all the debates but to bring about this discussion we will focus on the following issues: media as public space and media and gender. We then also discuss DFID's capability, accountability and responsiveness framework and how it links to the debates.

Journalism is a 'site of struggle' for democracy in Africa. It is about defending media independence and battling pressure to become propaganda tools of the state.

The media became an important player in constructing the national identity of most African countries after they gained independence. It was seen as a vehicle for building a national culture and ideology. This often meant sanitising differences and social conflicts, and excluding social groups or interests that clashed with those in positions of power. As a result, the media tended to represent the interests of the state and those in control of government, especially the ruling parties. The state introduced laws and regulations that limited free expression.

In post-colonial Africa, the media has found it difficult to facilitate public dialogue that gives voice to a diversity of values and perspectives. The media has not created a platform that enables citizens to make sense of their social experiences and to question the assumptions

and ideas of those in power. The views of ordinary people on how to safeguard and advance their interests have been sidelined.

Media academic James Curran argues that the media should:

- ▲ Empower people and enable them to explore their interests.
- ▲ Support sectional group identities and assist the functioning of organisations necessary for the effective representation of group interests.
- ▲ Sustain vigilant scrutiny of the government and centres of power.
- ▲ Provide a source of protection and redress for weak and unorganised interests.
- ▲ Create conditions for real societal agreements or compromises.

### Media as public spaces

Public spaces can be imaginaries - perceptions of what citizens think they should be. They can also be symbolic in terms of what citizens' associate with the spaces: images, text and audio-visual. How do citizens negotiate in those spaces and how does the space communicate with people in them? What media technologies are accessible and affordable in those spaces? The media plays a dual role in public spaces as platforms and as an avenue in which the spaces can be created.

It is because of this role that the media is

important for good governance especially in its provision of information, knowledge and ideas, debates and negotiating platform between citizens and those holding the reins of power.

According to ODI, good governance operates in an all-encompassing environment, where citizens are able to organise, raise issues and share information and knowledge; where the public interest is taken into consideration; where bureaucracy is sensitive to citizen interests; and where the economy is geared towards national development.

The conception of good governance is built upon the rights-based approach to development, which uses human rights as a framework to guide development agendas. Good governance and human rights complement each other and include the principles of participation, accountability, transparency and state responsibility.

## Gender, media and governance

Gender can be explained as roles and relations played by men and women in a given society as determined by social contexts. Gender is not sex because the latter refers to biological characteristics which define humans as female or male. The difference between gender and sex is important for journalists and recognising

gender as a social construct allows one to understand why gender is important to governance. This understanding sees behaviour, attributes and power associated with one's sex as social products.

It is important to realise that economic, political and social contexts shape gender relations and journalists should not see the roles as 'natural' or even take them for granted. The roles could have been different and can be changed.

Gender is political and it is about power: one gender exercising power over the other. For example, in Africa gender constructs are rooted in patriarchal systems that stereotype and keep women subordinate to men. The constructs are visible in fewer women occupying executive positions in public and private sectors, and men's dominance of institutions of social, economic and political life including some women's organisations! An exception is found in the Rwandese parliament which has the highest number of women in the world. African traditional systems including religious organizations sometimes perpetuate this dominance.

Seeing gender roles as not cast in stone and as a human rights issue, journalists can investigate the continued marginalisation of



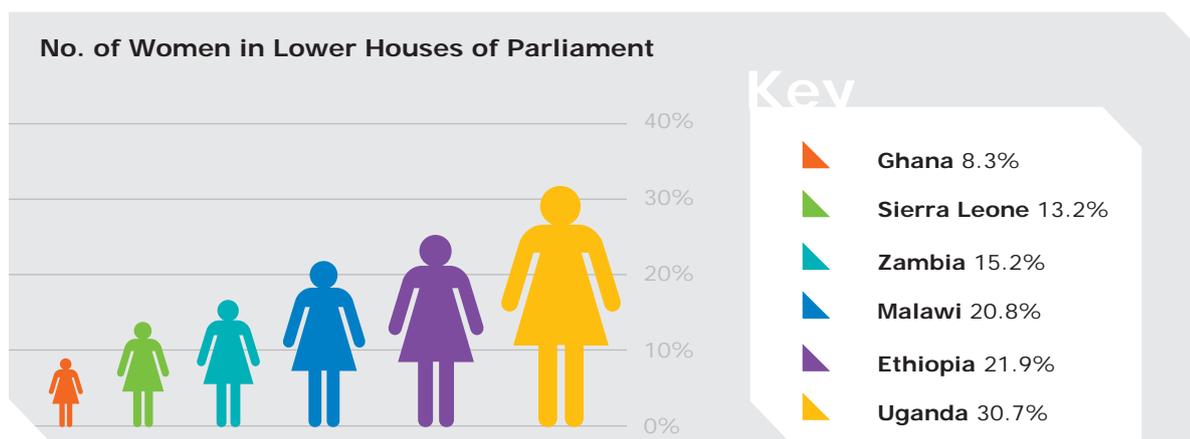
women and ask why most decision making positions in government, civil society and media institutions are occupied by men. What factors impede gender parity and push women to the periphery of social, economic and political life?

Despite enormous obstacles to gender parity in governance, bubbles of hope have emerged where government has conceded to quota systems as a result of sustained advocacy efforts from the women's movement. Women's quotas have been flagged as a positive development especially at parliamentary and local government levels but more needs to be done as few African countries have reached the gender parity target of 50% of decision-making positions held by women as recommended by the African Union's Protocol on the Rights of Women (2003) which corrects gaps in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and even goes beyond the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW 1979). Among other things, the protocol calls for an end to female genital mutilation, recommends 18 years as age of consent for marriage of women and guarantees abortion rights in cases of rape, incest or where the mother's life is under threat.

(44.5%). Of the Mwananchi programme countries, Uganda leads with 30.7%, Ethiopia 21.9%, Malawi 20.8%, Zambia 15.2%, Sierra Leone 13.2% and Ghana 8.3%.<sup>5</sup> South Sudan, which is run by the Sudan People's Liberation Army, is a semi-autonomous state which was born out of a deal to end a two decade civil war and is yet to hold elections and its independence will be decided in a referendum in 2011.

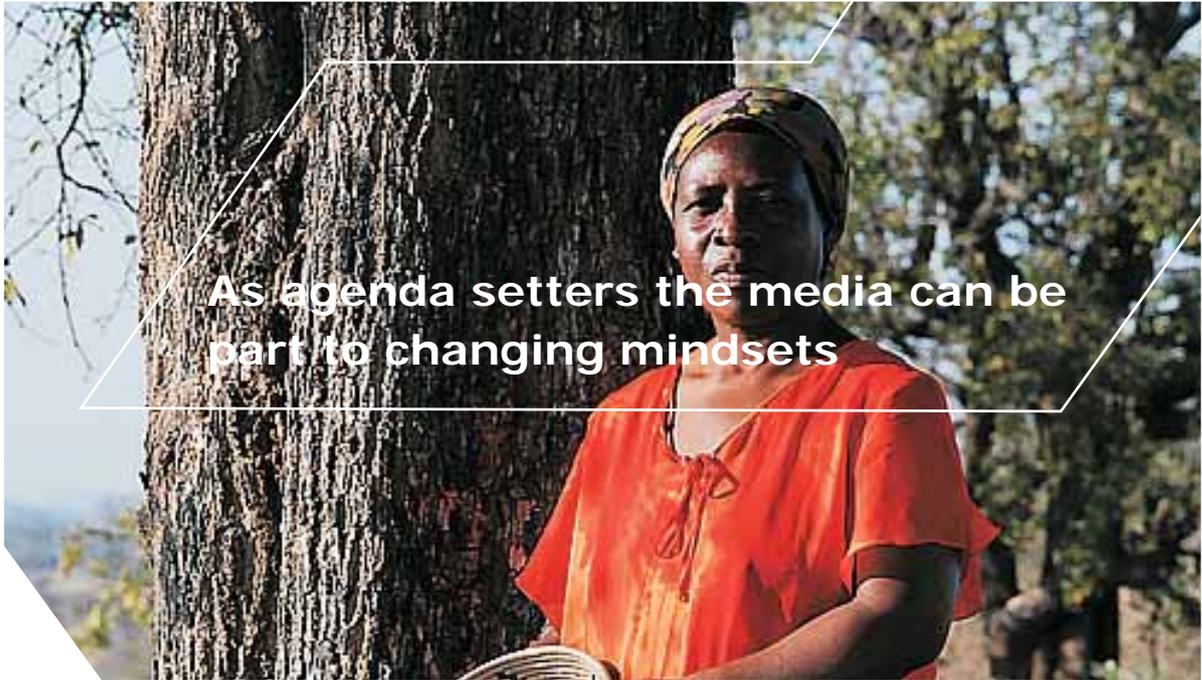
The AU, which has gender equality as one of its principles, recommendations go beyond elections by advocating for gender parity in governance institutions including the executive and judiciary. The judiciary, for example, should not be tied to the executive and this separation of powers allows it to be sensitive to women's rights and be on the forefront in the fight against corruption. Participation at this level means women representation in policymaking. Besides the executive and judiciary, other important institutions that are part of governance, and in which women should be represented, are civil society organisations and the media.

It is important for the media to identify what governance players can do to ensure gender parity and how gender-sensitive governance



According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union the country with the highest number of women in the lower house of parliaments in Africa is Rwanda (56.3%) followed by South Africa

can be promoted. What can be done to attain equality and how can women's rights to good governance be recognised by policies and legislation. What can be done to make the policy



environment more responsive by dealing with concrete things instead of non-tangible pronouncements? How can policies be aligned to international instruments that most African countries have signed including CEDAW or to the AU Protocol on the Rights of Women?

As agenda setters the media can be part to changing mindsets on women's participation in social life. A starting point will be to look at policies especially how their gender blindness is short changing women. Policies should identify women and men's needs, as well as promote transparency and accountability on gender inequality. They should also deal with structural features that stop women from taking leadership positions including rigid work routines and absence of accessible childcare facilities.

At political party level the African women's movement has raised the issue of the preferred women's representative instead of the one who is seen as a window dresser. The former champions women's issues and is an advocate whilst the latter dances to the tune of the political party that appointed her to be in that position. She listens more to the party caucus rather than sell the women's agenda. Strong ruling parties often dictate what the chosen women's representative will say in parliament. However, good governance requires a women's leadership that stands not for just numbers but those who are advocates of women's agenda.

# Story Two

## ‘Justice Prevailed’ – Says News Editor Acquited of False Charges

By Francis Kokutse

LUSAKA, Dec 9 (IPS) - Chansa Kabwela faced a five-year jail sentence when she sent photographs of a woman giving birth, without medical assistance while in the country's largest hospital, to government officials.

Kabwela had been trying to draw government's attention to the health crisis. But instead she was arrested for circulating pornography. She has been acquitted of all charges, but she says if she has a choice, she will do it all over again.

The recently acquitted news editor of the country's largest independent daily, The Post, says the case certainly will not deter her from pointing out wrongs or alerting the authorities to any public issue that she deems needs their attention.

Kabwela, 29, told IPS that she believes leaders are elected to serve the people and that they are paid tax payers money to look after the welfare of the people. As such, they should

not hide their shortcomings in the name of culture or the law.

“I have learnt a lot through this harassment. I have always believed that human nature is always tilted to justice and that was exactly what happened in my case. Justice prevailed,” she said.

Kabwela faced a five-year jail sentence if she was convicted of sending graphic images of a woman giving birth without medical help at the country's biggest hospital, the University Teaching Hospital, to various prominent people in Zambia. These included the minister of health and the vice president, who also doubles as the minister of justice.

“The case itself was a very big inconvenience but the most important thing is the lesson I and The Post have drawn from it. I sent the letter on behalf of The Post, asking the government to address a particular problem. My concern was about the poor that suffered during that period. It is a pity my intention was misunderstood and deliberately

so,” Kabwela said.

Although she did not publish the picture, she was charged with circulating pornography with intent to corrupt public morals after President Rupiah Banda raised alarm about the images during a press briefing.

Kabwela, who is chairperson of the Post Press Freedom Committee, had argued that she sent the pictures because she wanted to highlight the effect the strike had on the health care system.

In acquitting Kabwela, Magistrate Charles Kafunda said the prosecutors had failed to prove its case against her.

“The prosecution failed to establish an element of a prima facie case and I therefore dismiss the case and subsequently acquit the accused. The state has, however, the right to appeal,” Kafunda told a packed courtroom.

The Post editor-in-chief, Fred M'Membe, who is facing a contempt of court charge for publishing a story headlined

“The Chansa Kabwela Case: A Comedy of Errors”, challenged Banda to appeal.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said it is pleased with the decision to acquit Kabwela on the spurious charge of disseminating obscene photographs.

“The Zambian government must stop seeking ways to intimidate and censor the country’s leading independent daily,” CPJ’s Africa Program Coordinator Tom Rhodes said.

The Southern Africa Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (SACCORD) says the acquittal is a clear sign that trumped-up charges against innocent citizens by the state can never stick.

“Her victory is a victory for all Zambians, particularly the media fraternity. The judgment is a clear sign that trumped-up charges against innocent citizens by the state can never stick,” executive director Lee Habasonda said.

“The ruling should send a message to those planning to regulate the media using government instruments to oppress and suppress the truth. Hence any law they are planning based on targeting people and settling scores will

fail to stand the test of time and the victims will at some point triumph.”

Habasonda said government must have realised that it was an exercise in futility to waste such time and resources for a clear case. It did not even require a lawyer to know that it was damned, he said.

He urged government to ensure that they critically consider some of the cases before they are taken to court. He said it is not only a continuous source of embarrassment for government (to prosecute such cases), but also shows lack of proper priority setting in the country.

He said government legal advisors must begin to advise against some of these politically nuanced legal undertakings because they reflect badly on them in the final analysis.

“The manpower being used to pursue those with divergent views can well service the country to rid it of criminals and other people who are the real threats to the well-being of our society,” Habasonda said.

“To the media, we urge you to fight on and reject any manoeuvres to encroach on your freedom to tell the truth and improve our democratic dispensation. We are happy that

this in the end has made Kabwela a heroine of our time.”

The Paris-based Reporters Without Borders (RSF) says the Lusaka chief resident magistrate Charles Kafunda took the right decision to acquit Kabwela, as the charges against her were ridiculous and baseless.

“We nonetheless regret that the authorities subjected her to this ordeal for many months for no reason,” RSF stated.

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**And United Party for National Development vice president, Francis Simenda, said Banda’s directive for the police to arrest and prosecute Kabwela following his failure to address the desperate situation in the hospital was unreasonable.**

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“People were giving birth on the streets because no one was there at the hospitals to help them. Just (when you) tell them that the situation in the health sector is desperate they arrest Chansa and victimise and embarrass her to the levels of agitating for the people of Zambia to turn against her,” he said. ▼

# Story Three

## Journalists at War with Highest Court

By Mohamed Fofanah

FREETOWN, Oct 9 (IPS) - Umaru Fofana looks dishevelled. His hair is overgrown and people who do not know him could be mistaken for thinking he just joined an Afro band. And his hanging beard will surely solicit suspicious glances.

But Fofana is not some musician or an unkempt hobo. He is the president of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) and his appearance is all for the cause of media freedom.

“I will not have a haircut until the Supreme Court gives a ruling on our matter; as a result I have grown more beard and hair on my head than any other time since I was born.” The SLAJ is presently at loggerheads with the country’s Supreme Court – over the failure by the court to deliver a verdict six months after final arguments on the SLAJ’s case. By law, the court is bound to deliver a verdict in three months.

The association petitioned the

court for an interpretation and repeal of the criminal and seditious libel law contained in the Public Order Act of 1965.

**Under the current law a journalist or anyone who writes and publishes a story can be arrested and jailed whether or not what they published or said was true. Several journalist have been arrested detained or jail under this act.**

The SLAJ argued that this was detrimental to media freedom and freedom of expression. The SLAJ also argued that the Act contradicted the country’s constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech.

But the association is still awaiting a ruling on the matter, and the court’s delay, Fofana says, is unconstitutional.

“The court has still not given its verdict and this is a contravention of the 1991 Sierra Leone Constitution, which states that every court established under the constitution

shall deliver its decision in writing not later than three months after the conclusion of the evidence and final addresses or arguments,” said Fofana.

The SLAJ went as far as imposing a temporary media blackout on the judiciary in order to force the Supreme Court to rule.

But the association later dropped the blackout after the country’s President Earnest Bai Koroma promised judgment would be delivered in mid-September. But this is yet to happen.

Elwin Bailor, the Master and Registrar of the Courts of Sierra Leone told IPS that there is no problem or reasons why the court has not given a verdict up till now. Bailor refused to explain further.

When asked when the court will finally give its rulings, Bailor hesitantly said “soon, pretty soon,” and ended the conversation. President Koroma is on record as saying that government was interested in reviewing the criminal

libel law but could not do so while the matter is in court. “This is why I feel ashamed for the country’s highest court’s continued violation of the constitution by failing to give a ruling on the case,” Fofana sighed. Journalists and other citizens all over the country are questioning the separation of powers in the government; after President Koroma promised the verdict would be delivered last month.

Many are arguing that this ability of the president’s office to force the court to rule smacks of executive control over the courts. They pointed out that it is unsatisfactory that the Supreme Court can only be moved into action by direct appeals to the president. Rosemarie Blake, the programme director for Society for Democratic Initiatives – a non-governmental organisation that focuses on freedom of

information and expression – expressed similar sentiments.

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**“This standoff is totally undermining the fairness and independence of the Supreme Court. It is also affecting the of work journalists, especially in reporting sensitive issues that borders around government officials.”**

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“It is hard not to look at this situation as a ploy by government to continue to suppress press freedom.” Blake added. Fofana agreed saying that the current law allowed corruption to continue. “Journalists feel hounded by the existence of this law, which inhibits their freedom to checkmate public officials. So it is as much in the interest of (financial) donors as it is in the interest of Sierra Leoneans to get this law expunged and

have the Freedom of Information Bill passed into law.”

Blake said her organisation was also calling for the repeal of the seditious libel law and the passing of a Freedom of Information Bill.

Last year Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone in its State of Human Rights report in of 2008 also recommended that Parliament should take immediate steps to repeal the seditious libel provisions in the Public Order Act, 1965 and enact the Freedom of Information Bill. The report had stated the current Act was still being used to control the media.

In as much as the wrangling continues, Fofana’s hair keeps growing and only on the day the Supreme Court’s gives its ruling, will he set an appointment with the barber. How long that is nobody knows. ▼

# 3

## How to cover good governance

*Good research challenges things we take for granted and opens up our thinking to what things could have been and could be.*

This chapter is a discussion on what can be done to report on good governance in a deeper and interesting way. As storytellers journalists can find ways of bringing people back into the governance debate and make suggestions on how this can be started. Good governance can also be covered using the capability, accountability and responsiveness framework developed by DFID. This framework explains governance in a way that is easily understood.

Journalists can avoid reporting that favours the elites and adopt an approach that looks at what's been called "bottom-up reporting". Putting ordinary people in the foreground produces more memorable stories that give a human dimension to governance issues. By creating stories about ordinary people, journalists not only dignify the citizens but also bring their voices into crucial debates on national issues. Journalists can also bring good governance practices from other countries into their stories.

### Stopping citizen apathy

Apathy occurs when citizens lose interest in politics and governance issues. This happens when the media focuses only on prominent politicians, ruling parties and big business – marginalising the voices of ordinary citizens.

### Digging beneath the surface

Reporting using evidence-based approaches requires journalists to be multi-skilled with the ability to do investigative journalism. Rather than merely accepting information at face value, journalists should seek evidence to back up the

views being expressed and not take anything for granted.

### Analysing figures

Better analysis of statistics by journalists can improve citizens' understanding of how they are governed. It is not uncommon for governments, international institutions and development organisations to use statistics to argue their views, yet these are seldom analysed by the reporters covering the stories – many of whom are intimidated by bulky research documents. Being able to understand, analyse and interpret statistics is an important skill for reporters covering development issues.

### Making use of evidence

Evidence for good governance appears in many forms – including research documents. Good research challenges things we take for granted and opens up our thinking to what things could have been and could be. By so doing this kind of research provides alternatives and allows for focus on activities that bring tangible results and avoidance of practices and policies that are high sounding but with little impact.

Good research provides important information that citizens can use as a tool to demand accountability from government. This knowledge can be used to expose governments' lack of accountability and failure to respond to citizens' demands for better governance. Additionally, research allows for learning from activities and actions that have taken place in

one's country or internationally.

Journalists can also get evidence on an issue from well-informed advocates in civil society with knowledge that supports particular positions on social issues. For example, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (Zambia Chapter) can provide information and knowledge about a community radio project and how it has reached communities in remote areas of the country away from major roads and railway lines.

A country's policies can also reveal government strategies on how it intends to deal with particular social issues. To use the media as an example, the policies include country constitutions and regulations governing broadcasting, censorship, media licensing and ownership. Journalists can also follow up on international conventions that most governments sign but do not adhere to, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## Promoting dialogue

Good governance cannot exist in the absence of public dialogue between elected representatives and citizens. The media, especially interactive media such as community radio, can be used to promote dialogue that allows citizens to make sense of the role they play in governance and to act as agents for social change. As a voice of the people, radio can influence governments to adopt policies that respond to the needs of society.



## Capability, accountability and responsiveness

**“Good governance requires state capability, accountability and responsiveness.”**

The Capability, Accountability and Responsiveness (CAR) Framework was developed by DFID as a common language for people working in governance and to provide to parliament and electorate, among other stakeholders, with a simple understanding of what governance really means.<sup>6</sup> According to the framework, good governance requires state capability, accountability and responsiveness.

## Capability

State capability is the extent to which leaders and governments are able to get things done. On capability the first issue to consider is the acceptance of the government by the people. Is it a legitimate government; was it elected through a credible electoral process or did it come to power by undemocratic means?

Once a government is accepted by citizens, the issue is whether it can deliver on key issues of concern to citizens. Can it grow the economy and create employment? How will it perform on meeting the Millennium Development Goals to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and achieve universal primary education?

Are government policies pro-poor and understood by citizens? People want to know the benefits of policies that are made on their behalf. When there is mistrust, citizens will disown government policies. Policymaking that does not involve the public through consultation, dialogue and debate will result in poor outcomes.

## Accountability

Good governance is also about accountability – the ability of citizens, civil society and the private sector to scrutinise public institutions

and governments and hold them to account. As a public watchdog, the media must keep a critical eye on government performance. It can check on misuse of power, incompetence and corruption. There are many examples of how the media can put pressure on the government to reform and to act more responsibly. The media is one of the most effective ways through which citizens can hold their governments to account.

## Responsiveness

State responsiveness refers to how public policies and institutions respond to the needs of citizens and uphold their rights. The purpose

of a free and critical media is to make governments responsive to criticism of their policies and service delivery. Media exposés are meant to put pressure on the government to respond with speed to urgent social issues. Research has shown that countries with free media respond faster to crises like famines and floods than those in which the media is suppressed.

A critical part of this programme is made up of stories on citizen participation. It emphasises how letting ordinary people and civil society voice their demands is a way of making the state capable, accountable and responsive.



# Story Four

## Counting on Media for Good Governance

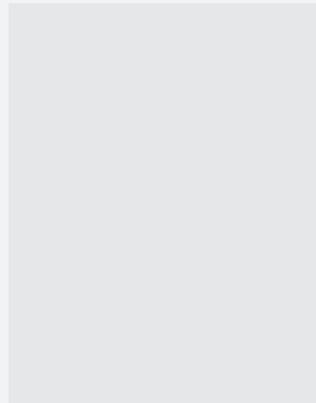
By Charles Mpaka

LILONGWE, Oct 21 (IPS) - While campaigning in the last election, Margaret Roka Mauwa, Member of the Malawian Parliament, did not promise her voters that when she won she would buy them coffins.

Currently in Malawi, aspiring MPs have offered to buy would-be voters things that they need, like coffins for their dead, as a way of getting votes. Some officials have gone so far as to start coffin-making workshops in their areas just so the villagers who vote for them can get coffins for free.

It is a common practice, but one Mauwa refused to follow. Instead, she promised her voters what she knew she would be able to deliver.

And as the deputy minister of agriculture, in a country that once was forced to import food, and now has a surplus of crops that it exports throughout the world, Mauwa has proved her point.



**Margaret Roka Mauwa**, the deputy Minister of Agriculture in Malawi, says she believes in working with the media

*Credit: Charles Mpaka/IPS*

Mauwa believes that in a democracy, it is important for politicians to tell people the truth. In that way, you avoid misunderstandings with the constituents and you participate well in making democracy grow, she says.

But she is painfully aware that however hard she tries, she may not escape from the critical eye of the media, especially because she is also deputy minister of agriculture. Agriculture has recently become one of Malawi's main sources of income.

She likes the media because,

she says, they are partners in shaping Malawi's political system and help public servants to inform the nation about what their government is doing.

However, she has also learnt that the media can be disappointing.

"I have noticed that often journalists wait until something is wrong and they come to you. Sometimes they bring provocative questions, may be with bad intentions (to put the officials in bad light as being inefficient). That is why you see arrogance on the part of some of the politicians when dealing with journalists," Mauwa says.

Mauwa is proof of the development of democracy in Malawi.

Malawi's president, Bingu wa Mutharika, is also the active minister of agriculture. And Mauwa, a female, is second in command in a department that has won Mutharika praises around the world for Malawi's improved food security situation.

*Continued from page 29*

She is among the 42 female MPs that made it to parliament in the elections. Of the 193 members that were elected to the national assembly in the May 2009 elections, 145 were new people. Mauwa was one of the new faces.

For the first time in the history of multiparty politics in Malawi, people did not vote for political parties and candidates because of the region from which the leadership of the parties came.

Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), one of the prominent civil society organisations in Malawi, says one of the outstanding features of Malawi's democracy to-date has been that voters have turned the corner from choosing people just because they have been around in politics for a long time and because they belonged to a certain region or political party.

“This recent election has shown how grown up Malawian voters are becoming. They are electing people based on issues,” says Christopher Chisoni, National Coordinator for CCJP.

The elections beat many bookmakers' expectations. It was not expected that Mutharika and his party would win with a landslide. It was also not expected that Malawians

would go for as many new faces in parliament.

“Citizens have come of age and politicians know now that voters can no longer be taken for granted. We have reached a stage where even ordinary Malawians are able to speak out loudly on issues that are affecting them,” says Chisoni.

CCJP gives thumbs-up to the media, among other key players, for keeping public servants on their toes. According to the organisation, Malawian media has been questioning the performance of public individuals and making them accountable to the people that elected them.

There are many such cases of this. A former minister is currently in jail after a newspaper revealed that he had spent public money on a wedding of his daughter.

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**And an investigation is reportedly going at the country's communications regulator after a news-paper investigation uncovered corrupt practices in awarding of mobile licences. The minister involved is Patricia Kaliati, minister of gender, women and community development.**

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The public officers have also been relying on the media to account to the nation about what is being done by, for example, publishing information like country's progress and shortfalls on reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

But the organisation observes that in the name of being seen to be doing a good job, some public officials are “exploiting the poverty” of some media to meet personal public relations matters rather than to bring worth to public debate and move development agenda for Malawi.

Not all media houses in Malawi are very profitable and not all journalists are well paid. There have been claims that some public officials give money to journalists so they can publish only the good about them.

However, there are some media houses that protect the independence of the fourth estate and have carried articles faulting public officials for failing to tackle real issues in their areas.

“As civil society, we are not interested in public figures who want the media when they are donating 20 balls to some barefoot young men in their village. That sounds like raising

a personal profile. We want them to use the media in a way that adds value to national debate on our politics and development,” says Chisoni.

Executive Director for Media Council of Malawi (MCM) Baldwin Chiyamwaka says the media, which played a crucial role in bringing democracy in Malawi in 1993 through publishing diverse views in favour of change, has been facilitating the growth of that democracy by being a place where people discuss failings and successes of the process and of those meant to drive it.

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**“The media has been there with us every step on the way. As an emerging democracy, Malawi will continue to rely on the media as a tool to make public servants answerable to the people because that is a sure way of making our democracy strong,” he said.**

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On whether the media in Malawi are too hard on public officials, Chiyamwaka said that at times, journalists have expected too much from politicians, even when they are new and with-out adequate information on parliament. He

said this has resulted in indifferent treatment of journalists by some politicians.

“Sometimes, in our hunger for news we seem to forget that politicians are human beings too. They experience what we experience. They have failings like us. They are not special machines to be producing miracles all the time. So, on occasions, it would pay to give them time. It would be worthwhile to put our pens down on them and look elsewhere where we can get better quality news,” Chiyamwaka said.

However, the authorities should not always expect the papers to be carrying positive stories only. He says it is the nature of the media to tackle both positive as well as the negative stories even if the public officials will not like it.

On her part, Mauwa said that the troubles that some Malawian MPs find themselves in are self-made.

A musician-cum-MP stirred anger among the people in his area when in his contribution in parliament last August complained that the music he had composed had been pirated. His constituents were angry with him, saying when he was campaigning, he did not say

*Continued from page 30*

that he would fighting against music piracy but that he would be building bridges and schools in his area.

But in Maua’s campaign for the elections, she told her voters that she would not tell them what she would not be able to do just for the sake of getting votes.

“I told them that my job as their Member of Parliament would be to facilitate development. I did not promise to buy coffins for whoever dies in the area because I knew that I would not do it and that it was not the job of an MP. Because I told them what they would expect from me, there is a good understanding between us so far. I think that in a democracy, it is important to tell people the truth,” she says.

Kaliati, minister of gender, women and community development, has held various cabinet portfolios since 2004. Since then she has been an MP and was one of few female MP survivors in the recent election.

One of the few public officials readily accessible to media in Malawi, Kaliati says her strength has been to be approachable to everyone.

“My policy is to be there for anyone, rich or poor, the media.

*Continued from page 31*

Democracy is about being with people. That has helped me to know my weaknesses and strengths and I think that is useful for our growing democracy,” she says.

Kaliati, who was minister of information before the elections in May, says media in Malawi has, however, been irritating with “their lack of judgement on what to publish and not to publish.”

She has been in the papers herself several times for wrong reasons including corruption allegations and fights with ordinary women she is claimed to have suspected to be going out with her husband, a business man in her home town. (Kaliati is the minister involved in the corruption scandal with the country’s communications regulator which is currently under investigation.)

“The greatest challenge that we have in our democracy is poverty and that is also affecting the way you people report. You concentrate on reporting on issues in urban areas because that is where people who can bribe you are found. These are only the people that will see the sense in democracy. You are leaving out issues in rural areas and people there cannot see any change,” she argues. CCJP is wary that most new, energetic and accessible representatives like Mauwa and Kaliati are now in a majority government.

According to CCJP, what has not ticked with Malawi’s emerging democracy is that demands from citizens are often sabotaged by political power.

“Citizens have often called upon government to explain on poor social service delivery in sectors such as health, education

and water development but government has not been forthcoming. The fear of CCJP as a representative of citizens is that a majority government would be as defiant as was the case with a majority opposition in the past five years,” says Chisoni.

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**MCM hopes though that the media in Malawi, in spite of the capacity and legislation problems that they face, will continue to play their role in bringing the MPs back to their constituents and to the service of the nation.**

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“That is the duty of the media, to make democracy grow and work for the people, to give people a continuous voice until somebody hears it,” Chiyamwaka says. ▼

# Story Five

## Anti Graft Now in the Hands of Civil Society

**By Mohamed Fofanah**

FREETOWN, Sep 30 (IPS) - The fight against corruption in Sierra Leone has taken on a new face. Government and civil society are now working together to stamp out rampant fraud.

The national anti-corruption agency, previously a toothless body with no power only recently bolstered by amendments in the law, has now invited civil society to play a significant role in ridding corruption in the country.

According to the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index Sierra Leone is still among the 70 countries in the world that are considered to have rampant corruption.

Civil society members, recently trained by the national Anti Corruption Commission(ACC), have been asked to monitor government institutions to make sure they are trying to be corrupt-free.

The ACC has been tackling fraud through a National Anti-

Corruption Strategy (NACS). The strategy means that the ACC works hand in hand with government institutions to identify corruption hotspots in their organisations and to also find various solutions to this. The documentation drawn up as a result of this process has been given to civil society so they can monitor government institutions.

Ngolo Kata the head of a leading coalition of civil society groups said they have always wanted to play a role in the fight against corruption.

Ngolo explained the ACC has already trained various civil society members in the process of monitoring. "Members were nominated by their different organisations all over the country to form a core of monitors."

This team of monitors recently completed the first and second quarter of the monitoring process and is now compiling their reports.

"To regulate our work we have signed a code of ethics that

controls the conduct of our members during the monitoring and among these rules maintaining a tight lip with the media is underlined," Ngolo said

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**Coordinator of the ACC project, Sholay Williams, explained that the monitoring reports will be put together at regional level and then presented to a steering committee that oversees the implementation of the NACS. "This core will make recommendations to government on what action to take against defaulting institutions," Sholay told IPS**

According to the new ACC Act defaulters will be fined up to five million Leones, (about 1,4 million dollars) fired from their jobs irrespective of the provisions in their letters of appointment.

In the past, the ACC has been

*Continued from page 33*

described as a “toothless bull dog”. But under the new regime of President Ernest Koroma – who came to power on a ticket of zero tolerance - it has been recovering its teeth. When Koroma’s regime took power in 2007, it was quick to review the Anti Corruption Act of 1991 and strengthen it with a new one last year.

The new act gave the ACC the power to send cases directly to court, for the first time. Previously the ACC was required to send all their cases to the Attorney General for approval first. As a result many cases against top government officials perished on the table

of the Attorney General who never prosecuted these matters.

The ACC had also lacked the capacity to thoroughly investigate cases. There was a lack of cooperation from civil society and the public in providing relevant information or tip-offs about corruption. This was because many mistrusted the commission’s ability to pursue corruption cases.

However, an invigorated ACC with new management and bolstered powers is anxious to effectively fight against corruption and redeem its battered image. The

commission is gaining the confidence of the people.

“The introduction of the NACS is a national orchestration, the broadest plan a country can have in the fight against corruption” Sholay said.

And no one will be safe from the new anti corruption commission. Government ministers will also be placed under the spotlight. The Information Minister Ibrahim Ben Kargbo said: “The President will also be looking at the reports closely and will be assessing the performance of Ministers based upon these reports.”

# 4

## Thinking through story ideas

*The news is not only reported, but it is also interpreted and interpreting any event ‘involves the beliefs, opinions, hopes and aspirations of those gathering, reporting and publishing the news’ and in that process ideology inevitably co-determines what gets published, when it is reported, and how the reporting is done (Thetela 2001).*

In this chapter we focus on story ideas. When journalists write a story they go through a process similar to that of a good cook who carefully selects ingredients and spices. The recipe is also carefully chosen before the meal is prepared. The same applies to story ideas. Good stories start with good ideas. When these are supported by a diversity of sources and evidence-based context and analysis, they blossom into stories with impact. Vigorous brainstorming is required to translate “intangible” governance issues into “tangible” stories that

allow the target audience to relate to the information.

The suggestions below act as a guide to where stories can be found. The questions, for example, are only for background purposes for a journalist to bear in mind when investigating their stories and are not necessarily prescriptive. For example, good governance is supported by solid institutions – such as the judiciary and security agencies – and the media can act as a watchdog to check if they are credible and serving their public mandate.

Institution	Possible Angles	Suggested questions/sources
<b>Executive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Executive Functions</li> <li>▼ Head of government/state</li> <li>▼ System of government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ What makes up the executive in your country?</li> <li>▼ Who sits on the executive? Number of women/men.</li> <li>▼ Is there separation of powers between the arms of government</li> </ul>
<b>Parliament</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Parliamentary oversight</li> <li>▼ Monitoring budgets</li> <li>▼ State of the nation – what do citizens say?</li> <li>▼ How laws are made?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ What oversight role is played by parliament in budget monitoring and ensuring citizen dialogue with policymakers?</li> </ul>
<b>Judiciary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ How effective is the judiciary in protecting the rights of citizens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ What laws are presently being discussed?</li> </ul>

Institution	Possible Angles	Suggested questions/sources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Is it carrying out its administration of justice function?</li> <li>▼ Is the judiciary independent of the executive?</li> <li>▼ Is the law applied fairly on all citizens?</li> <li>▼ Are law-enforcement agencies effective?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ How involved are citizens in law making?</li> <li>▼ What laws are being suppressed or ignored?</li> <li>▼ Is customary law in harmony with other national laws?</li> </ul>
<b>Traditional leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Is traditional leadership part of national/provincial/local leadership?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ What do the country's laws say about traditional leadership?</li> <li>▼ Do you have a law for traditional leaders?</li> <li>▼ How do traditional leaders interact with elected representatives?</li> </ul>
<b>Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ State broadcaster versus public broadcaster</li> <li>▼ Media/access to information laws</li> <li>▼ Community media</li> <li>▼ Professional organisations</li> <li>▼ Who owns the media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ How is the media regulated?</li> <li>▼ Is the media using Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs)?</li> <li>▼ Who owns/funds the media?</li> <li>▼ Do you have good/bad media laws?</li> <li>▼ What role is played by professional journalist organisations?</li> </ul>
<b>Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ State broadcaster versus public broadcaster</li> <li>▼ Media/access to information laws</li> <li>▼ Community media</li> <li>▼ Professional organisations</li> <li>▼ Who owns the media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ How is the media regulated?</li> <li>▼ Is the media using Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs)?</li> <li>▼ Who owns/funds the media?</li> <li>▼ Do you have good/bad media laws?</li> <li>▼ What role is played by professional journalist organisations?</li> </ul>
<b>Policymakers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Policy processes</li> <li>▼ Policy goals and objectives</li> <li>▼ Policy implementation/non-implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Who drafts policy and to whom do they listen?</li> <li>▼ What policy is being advocated and what is it on?</li> </ul>

Institution	Possible Angles	Suggested questions/sources
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Whose interests are being served by policy?</li> </ul>
<b>Government institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Are public institutions fulfilling their mandates in terms of service delivery?</li> <li>▼ Are citizens satisfied with the service delivery?</li> <li>▼ What commissions of enquiry have been set up and with what results?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ If public institutions do not perform, are there sanction measures in existence?</li> <li>▼ What are citizens' views to performance of some public institutions?</li> </ul>
<b>Elected representatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Are elected representatives keeping their election promises?</li> <li>▼ Are they exercising oversight over government institutions?</li> <li>▼ What is the level of interaction with CSOs?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Parliamentary debates, council minutes, citizens' views</li> <li>▼ CSOs' programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Civil society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Sectors in which CSOs are active</li> <li>▼ Agendas of CSOs in governance</li> <li>▼ Media ownership by CSOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Where are most CSOs active and why?</li> <li>▼ Who sets CSOs' agenda?</li> <li>▼ What media is owned by CSOs?</li> </ul>
<b>Private Sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Advertising industries</li> <li>▼ Conglomeration</li> <li>▼ Media content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Which companies dominate in adverts?</li> <li>▼ How many companies own the media?</li> <li>▼ How many local/international programmes on TV/radio?</li> </ul>
<b>Women's representation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Quota systems</li> <li>▼ Gender parity in legislation and policies</li> <li>▼ Strategies to stop violence against women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Does gender parity exist in governance structures?</li> <li>▼ Is there gender parity among interlocutors?</li> <li>▼ What factors are stopping gender parity?</li> <li>▼ What factors are promoting violence against women?</li> </ul>

Institution	Possible Angles	Suggested questions/sources
<b>African Union</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)</li> <li>▼ Commission on Human and People's Rights</li> <li>▼ New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ How widespread is citizen input into APRM processes?</li> <li>▼ What are citizens concerns with AU/APRM/NEPAD?</li> </ul>
<b>Multilateral organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ United Nations</li> <li>▼ Commission on Human and People's Rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ What role is played by UN organs and where are they most active in your country?</li> <li>▼ What are the views and opinions of the UN about your country, as found in such documents as the Human Development Report?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ World Bank/International Monetary Fund/World Trade Organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ What type of work are these organisations doing in your country and how have they contributed to poverty reduction and development?</li> <li>▼ What is your country's position on debt and has it undergone IMF/WB sponsored structural adjustment programmes?</li> <li>▼ Which CSOs are engaged in economic issues and what is their critique of organisations such as the WTO?</li> </ul>
<b>Bilateral organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ European Union</li> <li>▼ The UK Department for International Development</li> <li>▼ The Dutch Government's Development Research Council</li> <li>▼ The United States Agency for International Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ How are these and other institutions involved in development in your country?</li> </ul>
<b>International non-governmental organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Oxfam</li> <li>▼ Save the Children</li> <li>▼ Human Rights Watch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Which local CSOs work and with international NGOs and what are citizens' perceptions of these organisations?</li> </ul>

## Identifying your story

A good governance story should make citizens more informed about a situation so that they are able to evaluate and come up with solutions.

Good governance stories engage citizens in the process of how they are governed. Examples might include moves to change a country's laws to give citizens more rights and responsibilities; opening the airwaves to make media more accessible to citizens by promoting pluralism and diversity of ownership; the relationship between citizens and their councillors, members of parliament and even their president; and the involvement of citizens in policymaking processes; and service delivery.

A good governance story should make citizens more informed about a situation so that they are able to evaluate and come up with solutions. The story is a source of information and knowledge for citizens to position themselves within debates.

## Research

It is important to find out what has been written about any issue you are interested in tackling and research allows a writer to identify what was achieved and why an issue remains unresolved. Places to look for background information include public libraries or research institutions, the internet, CSOs, government institutions and media organisations. Citizens can also be sources for stories.

## Interviews

During interviews it is important to ask questions that help readers understand different points of view and that draw out deeper

responses than "yes" and "no" answers. Journalists should ask questions that solicit detailed responses.

## Analysis

After gathering information journalists can extract what they need from research notes by focusing on key issues. Analysis should explain why groups of citizens support particular viewpoints. What is the popular view and why?

## Writing

In writing the story, the journalist describes the issue for the reader and organises the data in a logical way by providing background to the issue and identifying how it affects citizens. How the issue links to government policy is critical. Are existing policies appropriate for the issue or do they need to be changed? If so, which arm of government can citizen advocates direct efforts towards? Which CSOs are involved and at what level? After painting the picture and giving it different textures, the journalist can allow readers to come up with their own solutions.

## Using knowledge from CSOs

CSOs produce diverse reports which are useful contextual information for journalists working on good governance stories. In most cases these documents are available from the CSOs at no cost. Most CSOs have advocacy departments that collect information and knowledge on governance issues they work on. In some countries CSOs have national associations with information on who is working on what, and these will be a good first port of call for journalists working on governance stories.

# Story Six

## Lost in the Tracking of Budgets

By Charles Mpaka

BLANTYRE, Oct 26 (IPS) - As Susan Muonanji and other vendors scrambled around one of the many transport busses to sell cabbages and tomatoes at a market along one of Malawi's key roads, a national budget session had just started in parliament some 100 kilometres away in the capital city, Lilongwe.

This year, like in the past five years, the minister of finance, Ken Kandodo talked about the need for Malawian farmers to be processing their produce for better value for money.

This, Kandodo said, is in line with the Millennium Development Goal to eradicate extreme poverty by 2015. Value adding is a key component in improving lives of Malawians, 80 percent of whom earn a living through small scale farming, he explained.

It is why government packaged a loan facility in the budget for farmers, especially rural women, to access capital to invest in food

processing, said the minister in his July budget presentation.

### Heard it all before

Now, it is not the first time that Muonanji, an active member of the village development committee and secretary of a local HIV/AIDS club, has heard about such "good statements" during the national budget sessions.

But she does not think that her business depends on it to grow.

"I have heard about budgets before, the good things that they say but I don't care because I don't know where those good things go. It does not make a difference," she told as she rushed to join the vendors swarming around another bus.

Every year, before national budget presentations, the ministry of finance goes around the country seeking contributions from various players which include private businesses, churches and economic and human rights organisations on what they would like to see in

their budget.

"Where do the consultations happen? Not at a place like this one. Ask these people (fellow vendors) and they will tell you they have never participated in such a discussion," she said.

She may not be at the consultation sessions but democracy ensures that she is represented by some civil society organisations (CSOs) during the consultations and by her member of parliament during discussion of the budget in the national assembly.

Such organisations have been compiling their own manifesto to try to press upon the government what the public would need to have in terms of education, water services, health and agriculture. They have also had their suggestions about what the national budget should contain in line with expectations of ordinary people they represent.

However, once they have made the pre-budget inputs, the organisations do not have control

even on their own suggestions because they do not participate in the key discussion of the budget in parliament, said economic analyst Mavuto Bamusi.

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**“We do make contributions about what the people of Malawi want to have in the budget. But we are often not part of the process of discussing the contributions in parliament during budget sessions which is a key stage in budget development,” he said.**

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Bamusi appreciates that in a democracy, by law members of parliament should be the ones to discuss the budget bill and make it into law in parliament. But he wishes the representatives were able to push through to have people’s requests reflected in the final budget product.

Bamusi, who is also national coordinator of the Human Rights Consultative Committee (HRCC), a grouping of over 50 human rights organisations in Malawi, says if anything it is the desire of civil society organisations to be part of the process of scrutinising allocations to different sectors to see whether the allocations

are in line with the demands of citizens.

“We do submit our reports to a parliamentary committee on budget and financing. But often they have been sources of little change to the debate over national budget discussion in parliament. I would say that windows are not open wide enough for us to be recognised at that point yet,” he said.

### **Citizens! Know your place**

The deputy minister of finance, Fraser Nihorya, said it was not possible for civil society to participate in budget discussion in parliament because that was the duty of the legislators.

But he said the national budget tries to be as representative as possible through welcoming contributions from individuals and groups not only during pre-budget consultations but at anytime throughout the year.

“What we present during budget session is an aggregate of views from various players. We analyse the views, working together with multi-sectoral partners such as the IMF and World Bank. But remember that in the end, we have to take a position as government in accordance with the agenda for development and the

resources available,” he said.

Asked whether citizens, through civil society organisations, are allowed to monitor how the money that reaches the Debt and Aid department in the finance ministry is factored into the national budget, Nihorya said the ministry is a public place and therefore accountable to its citizens.

“The ministry is open to share information. We appreciate the views that we get because we think the checks and balances that we are provided with are to the advantage of the office and of the nation as well. But it should be expected that we cannot divulge all the information,” he said

There are a few sessions that are held on information sharing between government departments and other outside players in a year. But not all information that civil society would desire to have is given, such as on how the five state houses spend the money allocated to them.

An official at the HRCC who did not want to be named blamed civil society for their inability to be able to monitor the Debt and Aid department and the general operations around the budget.

“Civil society is also supposed

*Continued from page 41*

to monitor that donors are keeping to the Paris Declaration on donor commitment and conditions and aid effectiveness. They are also supposed to make a local revenue audit. But there is not much that is happening in this regard. We often confine ourselves to consultations or to petitioning parliament when the budget is not being passed quickly," the source said.

Bamusi admitted there were lapses on the part of civil society in Malawi when tackling the budget development and implementation. He attributed it to lack of capacity in many organisations.

"Issues of budget are complex matters and we are limited on capacity to provide thorough tracking," said Bamusi.

He added that there was need for CSOs in Malawi to broaden their scope of budget monitoring to include issues of water, funding to governance institutions and operations of local assemblies instead of concentrating on key sectors such as health, education and agriculture.

But he squarely blamed it on

government as well for not been forthcoming on some matters.

"We often ask tough questions and that often puts us on a collision course with government. Angry with us, some officials have told us that we do not understand the psychology of government. In other cases, they tell us that they cannot give us information for fear of compromising state security and we think that is a blanket excuse," he said.

### **Reforms to strengthen accountability**

He acknowledged however that recently government has been responding silently to some of the concerns from the CSOs. It has strengthened the offices of the auditor general and of public procurement which, according to Bamusi, should lead to prudent use of public finances.

In his budget presentation last July, the minister of finance said government was developing a five-year programme of public finance and economic management reform.

The programme was expected to, among other things, improve domestic and donor resource

management, promote effective and efficient procurement and improve financial reporting and quality and timeliness of auditing processes.

While government is making such promises, ordinary people are waiting for the results to trickle down to them.

Muonanji said she did not believe in promises from politicians. Told that she could benefit from the youth loan facility or the Malawi Rural Development Fund (MARDEF) that has helped other women, Muonanji was not convinced.

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**"I have heard about MARDEF before on radios. But I would like to know who from this area is benefiting? All these women here have been selling tomatoes in small baskets for a long time and they too want to grow."**

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"And when that money comes here at all, we know that it is not going to get down to us," she said at Lizulu market in the Central region of Malawi.

# 5

## Ways of analysing the media

*“Free speech and a free press not only make abuses of governmental power less likely, they also enhance the likelihood that people’s basic needs will be met,” Joseph Stiglitz*

In this chapter we look at ways of analysing the African media environment through looking at the political and legal context of a country; ownership and type of media; and journalists working conditions and training.

### Political and legal context

The practice of journalism is determined, among other things by the type of government and political conditions prevailing in a country at a given moment. Is the country pre or post conflict and do ethnic and political polarizations exist? How do these conditions impact on Mwananchi and what important issues do they influence? The relationship between the media and elected representatives/government institutions is also important?

A country’s media laws have a bearing on how journalists operate - which agency regulates broadcasting and issues licences? Are laws used to stifle press freedom by jailing journalists or to protect them? Is there a forum for settling media disputes? Is there self-regulation or state regulation? In terms of the legal environment what spaces are available for media reform to strengthen good governance? Is there censorship of the media? What limits are imposed, how and by whom? How does the legal environment affect good governance?

### Ownership and media type

Media ownership is important whether it is commercial or state. Things to look at include

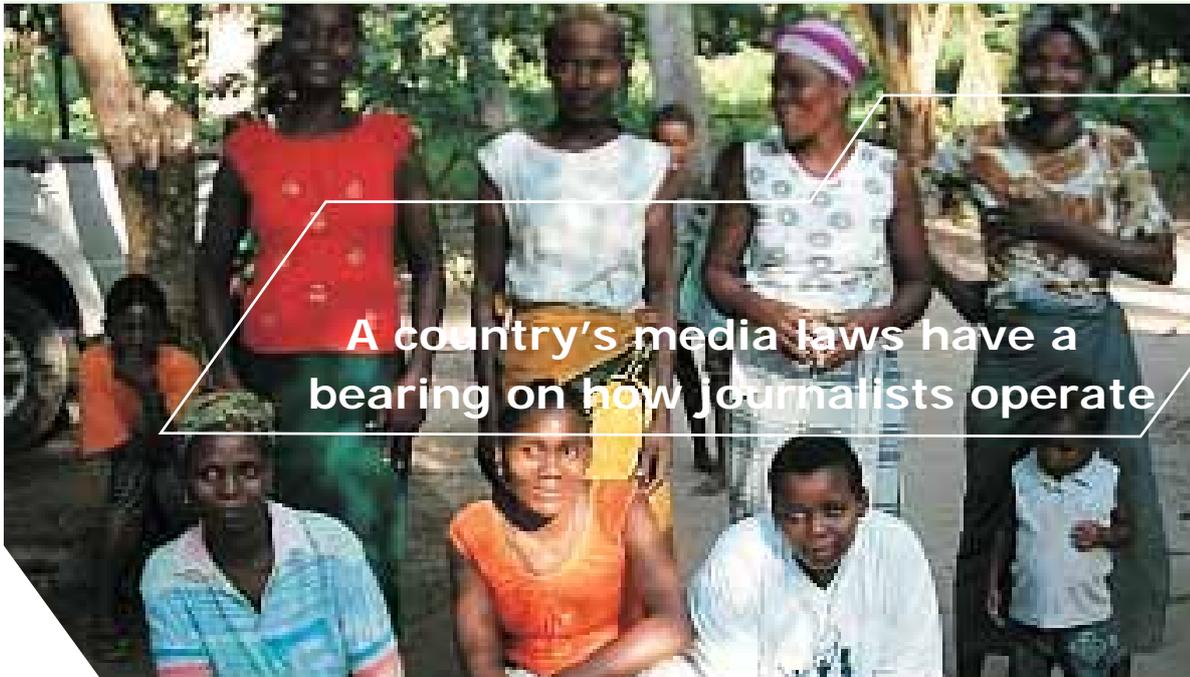
the ownership pattern over a period of time? The level of foreign ownership and its impact on programming or content is equally important? Are international broadcasts carried out on national radio or television and how does this affect governance?

Other aspects to look at are the number and type of media including the type of format being used and the media content. The history of the media and how it covers good governance is also important? The same can also be said of technology used by the media - Internet, mobile telephony and how is it used (issues of availability, accessibility, language, and cost). How many radio stations are licensed and their popular formats (music, sports, talk) and how much news does it carries? To which organisation is the station affiliated (political, commercial or religious)? What is the audience size? Are stations viable or sustainable in the long run and what type of media is available for rural communities as compared to urban areas?

### Training

Does journalism training in a country provide analytical skills and expose journalists to research methods and evidence based approaches. Are the courses practical or theoretical? Does the training favour particular political positions over others?

Professional training of journalists is an important measuring stick to understand the content being produced? Questions to be



pondered are the number of professional associations and journalists organisations in existence and how they are organised? Their appeal across political parties and generations and the opportunities they provide for Mwananchi are also important issues?

Other questions to answer include, for

instance, the drivers of investigative journalism in a country? What are the difficulties faced by investigative journalism and does this approach use evidence and what issues are popular? What about bribes or 'brown envelopes'? Do journalists accept payment or gifts in exchange for favourable stories of governments or clients?

# Story Seven

## Media Give Us a Fair Deal – Women

By **Miriam Gathigah**

UBA, South Sudan, Nov 19 (IPS) - The guns have gone silent – except for sporadic conflict in parts of the vast South Sudan region, such as the Eastern Equatoria State. It may not be the absolute end of the conflict in the region, but it is a reason for renewed hope.

It has been two decades of bitter civil war in Sudan, the southerners bearing the burden of massive destruction which has left an estimated 1.9 million people dead and four million displaced, according to United Nations agencies.

Although many of the estimated six million living in South Sudan are daring to expect a new dawn, the effect these expected changes will have, particularly on women, remains to be seen.

In many African countries women are in the majority, and South Sudan is no exception, with the national report on Millennium Development Goals

revealing that women make up 60 percent of the population.

“Despite democracy being understood to be a government of the people and by the people, the role that women can play in both the democratisation process of South Sudan, and the sustenance of this democracy, is still not clear,” says Alice Michael, executive director, Voice for Change, and a member of the Women Union, a movement which began in the 70s and commands a massive following.

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**“Media coverage of the coming elections (scheduled for April 2010), for instance, is usually supported by pictures of men seemingly caucusing, perhaps to create the impression that they are deep in serious political discussions.”**

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This, says Michael, makes

politics appear very masculine – and when it becomes a general public perception males find it difficult to view women as equal counterparts.

Her remarks are echoed by Mary Sadia, another member of the union. “The manner in which the media represent us (women) is key in deconstructing the perception that our roles are in our homes, to bear and rear children.

“A few months ago a woman leader worked so hard to put together a public forum, but when we watched its news coverage that evening, male politicians had been accorded centre-stage at her function, and she was reported only to have been there.”

She said the power of the media to perpetuate and solidify gender stereotypes could not be over-emphasised. “It is even more critical to bear in mind that the most powerful and memorable social changes are instigated by the media, usually in subtle

*Continued from page 45*

ways. Ways that nonetheless paint very powerful pictures in people's minds," said Sadia.

But the director-general in the ministry of information and communication in Eastern Equatoria State, Hon Alex Locor, counters these claims "There have been deliberate efforts to accord women as much media space as men, particularly in this highly charged political atmosphere."

"There are few media outlets. In Eastern Equatoria State we have only 97.5 FM, which means the media are still acclimatising themselves, and may not meet all expectations, but there are clear efforts towards equitable gender representation."

Lucy Lokololong, a businesswoman in Juba, in explaining the relationship between women and the media, says the injustice towards women happens at two levels.

"The manner in which women are portrayed, say in a photograph. Are they feeding their children and doing chores considered feminine? Then their reported opinions – are they often quoted as making remarks perpetuating gender

inequality?"

"In essence we are talking about gender as constructed by culture, but perpetuated by the media. All this can be in blatant or subtle stereotyping," says Lokololong.

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**"A photograph, for instance, is a powerful tool for subtle stereotyping. A news item that covers an entire political rally and gives not a single woman's voice making a contribution speaks volumes."**

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Lokololong also referred to 97.5 FM, as an example of a media outlet that has caused discontent, particularly with women. "The only programme for women, dubbed 'The Women's Programme', airs at 3 pm. how many women are in the house to listen at that hour?"

"That too is a way of trivialising women's issues. Other programmes that seem to target men, say on the economy and politics, air at prime time while people are home unwinding."

Pauline Luguma, a journalist, adds that women are under-represented in media

institutions as practitioners. "This has also compromised the manner in which women are portrayed in the media."

She said that out of the 11 journalists in Eastern Equatoria State, only two are women. "Women therefore are assigned 'soft news', on subjects such as lifestyle, while men cover 'hard news', such as the economy and politics."

The outcome, she says, is a very visible and imbalanced gender disparity, with men appearing as sources and key newsmakers while women are depicted as objects.

"This therefore sabotages any chances of women being taken seriously as leaders and potential movers of any political process."

John Kennedy Okema, editor-in-chief of 97.5 FM, said although there were challenges in changing from patriarchal news-making angles to more gender-representative ones, "there have been initiatives to drive this much-needed paradigm shift, such as deliberately incorporating women's voices in key headline news. But it is not a change that can happen

*Continued from page 46*

overnight.”

The editor’s remarks are echoed by the minister for I n f o r m a t i o n a n d Communication for Eastern Equatoria State, Bernard Loki.

“It is indeed a process that takes a bit of time. In my ministry, for instance, there is a lot of discontent on gender representation because of male

dominance.”

“The South Sudan story is more complex than this. We are talking about media that only just recently rose from the ashes of war. With time women will take much more media space than they do now.”

As women continue to stand at the periphery of news-

worthiness, the wheels of change are grinding and democratisation beckons with the coming general elections, as well as the referendum.

This therefore calls for a clear media transformation that accommodates more women, and the opinions they hold as inarguably equal stakeholders in society.

# Conclusion

*One of the remarkable facts in the terrible history of famine is that no substantial famine has ever occurred in a country with a democratic form of government and a relatively free press. Amartya Sen*

Simply put, the popular quote by Sen means that an accountable government will not let its people starve or risks being voted out of power. A government's accountability during its term of office is one of the things that make citizens re-elect a government into office. But this happens only in a democracy where elections are credible and the media provides early warnings about impending natural disasters. The government then responds to the warnings by taking precautionary measures. However, for the media to provide early warnings it needs evidence to use in reports.

Human Development Reports published annually by the United Nations Development Programme are an example of an evidence based approach. The reports emanated from Sen's theory of development which is centred on improving human lives through expanding people's choices in health and nutrition, knowledge, and participation in community life. The starting point in development is the removal of impediments to choice brought by poverty, illiteracy, ill health, lack of access to resources and absence of civil and political freedoms.<sup>7</sup> For most African countries the impediments can be traced to both the colonial era and how the countries have been governed after independence. So the evidence can come from historical and current policy documents. To give citizens an understanding of poverty in their countries, journalists can also rely on reports

published by CSOs including those that monitor progress towards meeting Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

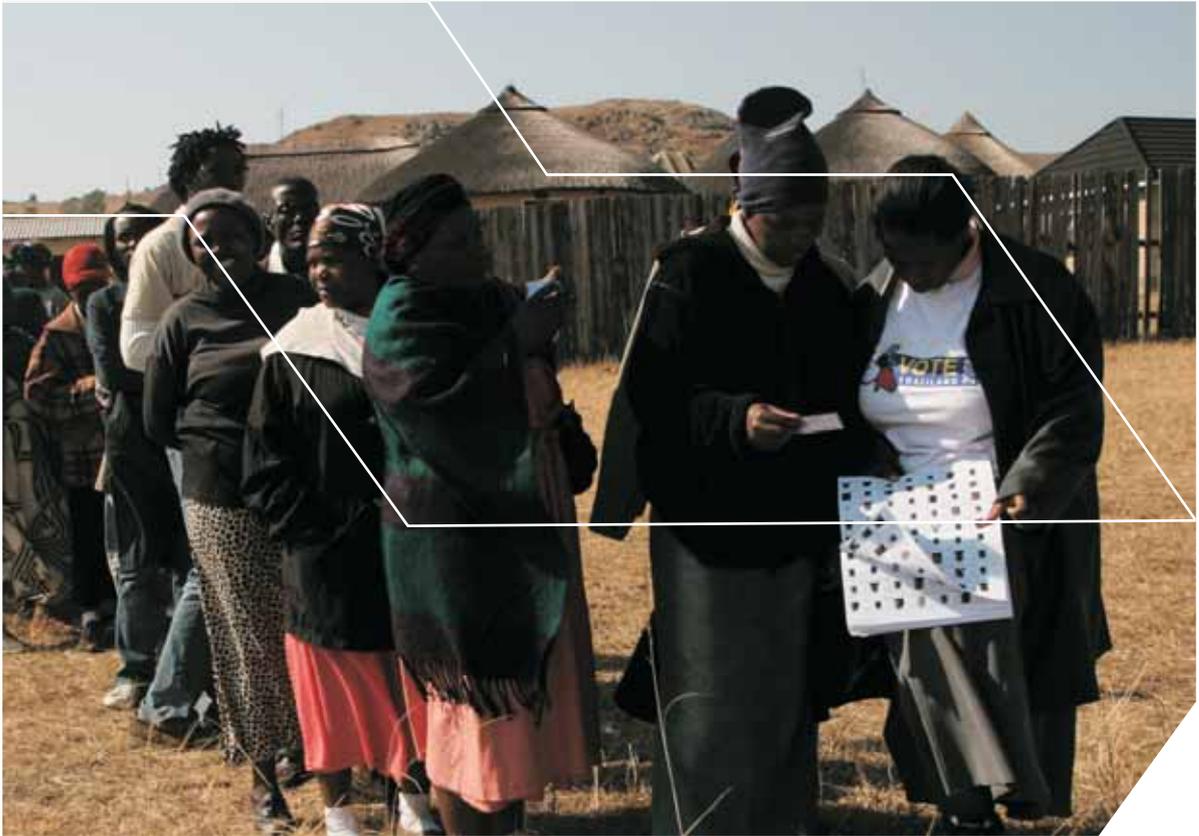
Journalism in support of good governance goes beyond simply telling stories. Instead, good journalists use evidence-based approaches – giving context analysis and background – to report in way that support citizen participation in governance. Evidence based approaches enrich policy making and planning processes based on principles shared by citizens. The approach gives citizens an opportunity to explore how government manages public resources and makes policy.

Academic research in the form of pilot projects, consultations, quantitative surveys, literature reviews, participant observations and evaluations that is found at national universities contain evidence on how society can develop. Unfortunately, in most cases very few people use this information.

An evidence based approach also means investigating, learning and producing knowledge and journalists can use this approach when they gather information and sift through it to identify how it can contribute to governance and improve livelihoods. Knowledge refers to usable information from available evidence that increases society's theoretical understanding and adds value to the way things are done. Knowledge also enriches experiences.<sup>8</sup> However,

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Fukudor-Parr 2003: 301



it should be borne in mind that knowledge use depends on how it is presented and communicated and the power relations prevailing in a particular country context.<sup>9</sup>

Formal rules and structures, institutions and procedures of governance influence the adoption of evidence. In this respect the type of government in a country – authoritarian or democratic – has an influence on how evidence is adopted and has a bearing on policy spaces that may exist. In most instances ruling parties promote evidence that works in their favour and identifies with their agendas. They prefer

evidence that allow them to remain in power and which does not challenge their authority. Since they are in control of governance institutions, governments tend to dominate social relations. Political will is also important as political leadership plays an important role in ensuring opportunities for state citizen engagement. This is critical as consensus is better than contestation.

This is the discussion that journalists should lead and the Mwananchi programme is one of the facilitators of this discussion. Let the conversation begin.

7 Jones et al 2009

8 Jones et al 2009

# Story Eight

## Female Circumcision Still a Vote Winner

**By Wambi Michael**

KAMPALA, Oct 19 (IPS) - Over three decades ago a 14-year-old girl, her sister and a group of young teenagers from Bukwo headed to the River Amana for a ceremony that would change their lives forever.

Since her childhood, Gertrude Chebet had been told of the day she would become a woman. She was led to believe it would be a great moment of change and it was something to look forward to with much joy.

As she and her sister began that early morning trek, from their village in eastern Uganda, in the cold and through the bushes to the place of initiation, she expected it to be the best day of her life. But she was wrong. It turned out to be the most harrowing.

“One of the elder women overseeing the circumcision took a sample of our saliva, urine and pubic hair and buried it. She then ordered us to lie on the

ground and after the first cut, I lost consciousness and cannot remember what happened next,” she remembers now.

Even after passing out she and the other girls were not allowed to use modern medicine to treat their wounds. Instead she was forced to use cow urine, prescribed by her elders.

Today Chebet is a primary school teacher and campaigns against female circumcision, otherwise known as female genital mutilation.

Chebet condemns it as unnecessarily cruel and inhuman. She is the chairperson of the Kapchorwa /Bukwo Women in Peace Initiative, a lobby group advocating for the enactment of laws to abolish female genital mutilation.

But it has turned out to be a long, hard battle to change an age-old tradition that involves the total removal of the clitoris and scraping of the female

private parts.

In fact, even those in positions of power are finding it difficult to change the culture of mutilation against young girls. While earlier this year President Yoweri Museveni condemned the practice, his government has been slow to pass a total ban on female circumcision, partly because his party needs the votes of those who largely support the practice.

The strength of the voters is especially evident in communities where female circumcision is a wide-spread practice. Here, women who have not been mutilated have difficulty being elected and some have lost elections because of their anti- female genital mutilation campaign.

Jane Frances Kuka, the former Gender Minister and former woman Member of Parliament (MP) for Kapchorwa district, an area that has laws banning female circumcision, lost her parliamentary seat

partly for having campaigned against female genital mutilation.

“My opponents used my stand against female genital mutilation as a weapon against me. Elders were saying who is this (she) to interfere with our culture?” she says.

Female circumcision is practiced among the Sabinu, Sebei and Pokot in eastern Uganda. It is conducted in various ways around the world, but in Uganda it involves the total removal of the clitoris and scraping of the female private parts.

“It is common for girls to bleed to death after circumcision. Others are infected with disease, some dying of tetanus. Many girls develop problems that affect them during child birth,” Chebet says.

In 2007 the district councils of Kapchorwa and Bukwo passed by-laws prohibiting female circumcision. However these laws are largely ignored and in December 2008 close to 40 girls in Kapchorwa and more than 100 in Bukwo were subjected to the ritual.

Chebet says the road to elimination of female genital

mutilation is long and hard. However a few strides are being made through the enactment of by-laws against practice by sub-counties in Kapchorwa and Bukwo. She says the key lies in a national law against female genital mutilation.

Chebet admits that there is great resistance to the abolition of the practice, because it is risky especially for those with political ambitions.

Although Uganda is a signatory to the Maputo Protocol, a charter adopted by the African Union that guarantees the rights of women including the right to end female genital mutilation, it has not passed a law outlawing the practice.

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**Museveni’s government has been hailed at international female activist conferences for advancing the emancipation of women but has been slow to pass a total ban to female genital mutilation.**

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Museveni and his party members have had the wider support of voters from Kapchorwa and Bukwo districts

partly because he has not interfered with their culture – especially the practice of female circumcision.

In April 2007 women activists under their umbrella body known as Law and Advocacy for Women in Uganda petitioned the constitutional court in an effort to ban female circumcision.

They argue female genital mutilation is a violation of women’s constitutional rights and that it is a form of torture that constitutes cruel and inhuman treatment.

The Attorney General’s Chambers headed by Attorney General also Ministry of Justice asked the court to dismiss the petition. The constitutional court heard the matter was yet to pass a ruling.

Rukia Nakadama, a culture minister in Uganda says the government was now resolved to work with communities where female genital mutilation was practiced in order to ban it.

She says government will also back the anti-female genital mutilation bill presented to Parliament by a back bench MP - who is a member of the

*Continued from page 51*

ruling National Resistance Movement party.

Kinkizi East MP, Chris Baryomunsi, a medical doctor from an area where female genital mutilation is not performed has tabled a private member's bill in the Ugandan Parliament to ban the practice. Ugandan MPs, under article 94 of the Constitution, can initiate a law (under the private member's bill) if they feel the executive arm of government has not initiated one.

Baryomunsi tells IPS that he feels obliged as a medical practitioner and a legislator to do something for girls and women in that part of Uganda.

"I feel pain and sadness that this is going on in Uganda. That women, willing or unwilling, are subjected to crude methods of having part of their bodies cut when there is no medical benefit. I had to take the lead to fight this injustice," he says.

Baryomunsi is backed by some female activists including Uganda's Parliament Deputy Speaker, Rebecca Kadaga, and he wants the law to criminalise female genital mutilation.

The bill proposes harsh penalties for traditional sur-

geons and parents who promote female genital mutilation; it suggests that they face up to 15 years in jail once implicated.

Baryomunsi also wants the law to provide that the consent of a girl or woman will not be valid defence, given the health risks associated with female genital mutilation.

The World Health Organisation in June 2006 released a first study to give evidence of the harmful effects of female genital mutilation. The study indicated that women who have had female circumcision were likely to experience difficulties during child birth and their babies were more likely to die as a result of the traditional yet gruesome practice.

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**Even male contestants in elections agree that the female genital mutilation has always come up as an issue among the elders concerned about preserving their culture.**

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Dr John Yeko, a MP representing Kween county, says the stand against female genital mutilation was not the only issue of concern during elections. It was the way people

spoke about the issue that also made a difference.

"I agree some people have lost (elections) because of the language they use against female genital mutilation. I have personally spoken against it by emphasising its negative aspects."

Yeko has three daughters and they have not undergone the practice. "I totally support the ban against (it) because it is a useless part of our culture which should not be tolerated at this point in time," he says.

The situation is no different in neighbouring Kenya. Linah Jebbi a MP from Marakwet in northern Kenya says the issue of anti- female genital mutilation has always come up during the two times contested the elections.

She says she may have lost the elections if she was not involved in other campaigns, like the campaign for peace among the pastoralist tribes. Even at the age of 46, many elderly persons view her as a child who should not be entrusted with leadership responsibility.

"Today I accept that I am a child according to their perceptions. But I tell them that

*Continued from page 52*

to be a leader –to be a member of parliament – is to be a servant. And whom do you send to be a servant? You don't send a grown up, you send a child," she says.

(She was referring to that fact that in most African cultures it is believed that it is easy to send a child to perform a task rather than an adult because a child is presumed submissive and easy to send.)

Kuka agrees and told IPS most times male politicians used the female genital mutilation and male patriarchal culture to undermine female politicians. If a female politician is not circumcised it would be used against her as a campaign issue.

"This may explain why women who have all the qualifications to contest for parliament find it easier to contest for a 'woman seat' in parliament even when they can compete for the main constituencies dominated by men in Kapchorwa and Bukwo districts," Kuka says.

In Uganda because of

affirmative action, each district has to have a district women MP elected to Parliament. This is called the 'woman seat'. For this seat, women compete with only fellow women. But a woman can compete for a constituency on the county level where she will compete with men as well.

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**But in areas where female genital mutilation is wide-spread, like the districts of Kapchorwa and Bukwo, women prefer to contest for the 'woman seat' rather than competing for constituencies to tussle it out with men.**

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Gertrude Kulany, also a former MP, says banning the practice through the law alone may not be the answer. She tells IPS that there should be affirmative action aimed at increasing girl-child education so that young girls themselves were educated enough to refuse to undergo the practice.

"I'm one of the lucky ones who escaped the practice

because I had support from my parents. Most of my contemporaries went through it because every girl in the village who attained puberty had to be initiated into womanhood through circumcision."

She explains that the issue of female genital mutilation used to come up at every campaign and she had to tell people the facts about it.

She adds that even women were prejudiced against women who had not undergone female circumcision. "Even some women have been discouraged from voting for women who have not gone through female genital mutilation. (It is) because they have been made to accept the (belief) that a woman who has not been circumcised is not yet mature," Kulany says.

Baryomunsi expects the bill to win the two-thirds support needed for its passage and for it to become law. Public hearings are yet to be held in Parliament but several MPs have already committed themselves to support its enactment into law.

# FAQs

## What is governance?

It is the process of decision-making and includes decisions that are implemented and those that are not. Governance is understood by looking at the individuals and institutions, both formal and informal, who are involved in the planning and implementation of decisions. One of the main actors is the government, including its elected representatives and institutions. Other actors are the media and civil society, including groups such as farmers' associations, co-operatives, non-governmental organisations, research institutes, religious leaders, financial institutions, political parties and churches.

## What is good governance?

The DFID 2006 White Paper explains good governance as follows:

*"Good governance is not just about government. It is also about political parties, parliament, the judiciary, the media, and civil society. It is about how citizens, leaders and public institutions relate to each other in order to make change happen."*<sup>10</sup>

Generally, good governance is a process by which governments are chosen, held accountable, monitored and replaced by a country's citizens. Both government and citizens are important players in governance. Important yardsticks for evaluating good governance include the state's capability, accountability mechanisms and its response to issues raised by citizens. Some characteristics of good

governance are participation, consensus building, transparency, responsiveness, efficiency, equality and adherence to the rule of law.

## What is citizenship?

Citizenship is the relationship between citizens and the state and includes the rights of individuals to be involved in governance. Citizenship also entails representation in the political and civic affairs of a country by ordinary people. The rights of citizens to take part in governance are enshrined in constitutions and laws which state that people have rights to be involved in decisions and processes that affect their lives.

## What is citizen participation?

Citizen participation is involvement of citizens in public decision-making. Participation is not only about taking part in elections. It goes beyond that. This explains why it has been described as the purest form of democracy in which the citizenry is not only a decision-maker but also a legislator. Examples include referendums and occasions when citizens organise themselves into groups to write petitions.

## What is the rule of law?

Good governance works well where there are laws and legal systems that are enforced without fear or favour and where human rights are respected. The rule of law requires a judiciary that is independent of the executive and a police force that is not corrupt.

10 *Making Governance Work for the Poor: DFID White Paper, 2006*



## Which institutions promote good governance?

Institutions that promote good governance include parliaments, whose function it is to make laws and hold the executive arm of government accountable to the citizens. The judiciary is another institution that administers laws and ensures that citizens' rights are upheld. Civil society organisations and institutions team up with citizens to ensure that government is accountable to the people who voted it into power. Some CSOs have monitored government finances and budgets; others have monitored adherence to gender and women's rights; media organisations are also part of civil society and specialise in the protection of the public interest.

## What role should the media play in good governance?

An independent media is important to good governance, especially the democratisation of countries. The media contributes to the upholding of freedoms of expression, thought and consciousness. It also plays a part in strengthening the responsiveness and accountability of government to its citizens through its watchdog role. The media can serve as a platform for diversity and plural political expression.

# Resources

In this section you will find web addresses for organisations working on the Mwananchi programme and also weblinks to organisations that you might find useful. As technology continues to make more resources available on the Internet the suggested sites are far from an exhaustive list and you can add more of your own to our suggestions. The sites are only a starting point for your research.

## Project Partners

### Overseas Development Institute

The UK-based ODI is a leading think tank on international development. The organisation has worked on a wide range of development policy issues and aims to inspire and inform policy and practice that contribute to poverty reduction through applied research, advice and debate.

[www.odi.org.uk](http://www.odi.org.uk)

### CIVICUS

CIVICUS advocates for citizen participation as an essential component of governance and democracy worldwide. The organisation seeks to amplify the voices and opinions of ordinary citizens and give expression to the enormous creative energies of the burgeoning civil society sector.

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

### Inter Press Service Africa

IPS Africa, a development news agency that prides itself as a voice of civil society, runs a news service of regular features from across the continent on citizens' and civil society organisations' interactions with policymakers

and elected leadership with the aim of promoting state capability, social accountability and responsibility.

[www.ipsnews.net/africa/active\\_citizens](http://www.ipsnews.net/africa/active_citizens)

## Resources

### African Media Barometer

The African Media Barometer, developed by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), draws from standards set up by the Windhoek Declaration (1991) and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights Declaration on Principles of Freedom of Expression (2002). The barometer covers freedom of expression; diversity; independence and sustainability of the media landscape; transparent and independent regulation; genuine public broadcasting and high level of professional standards.

[www.misa.org/mediamonitoring/index.html](http://www.misa.org/mediamonitoring/index.html)

### African Media Development Initiative (AMDI)

The African Media Development Initiative, overseen by the BBC World Service Trust in partnership with African universities, carried out research in 17 African countries, including five countries that are part of the Mwananchi project – Ethiopia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia. AMDI looked at the extent of the media sector (television, radio, newspapers, internet, mobile telephony), media support, including production agencies; market research companies; NGO activity; media legislation and regulatory reform; technology and equipment; professionalism and local content production.

[www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/specials/1552\\_trust\\_amdi/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/specials/1552_trust_amdi/index.shtml)

## **African Media Initiative**

The African Media Initiative (AMI) was created to improve the African media and its environment, and to stimulate investment in the media and communications industry. It intends to foster opportunities to strengthen the media's ability to supply independent and reliable information that will empower Africans, guide decision-making, and spur development and growth.

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

## **AMARC Africa**

AMARC-Africa is the African regional section of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC). AMARC brings together a network of more than 4 000 community radio stations, federations and community media stakeholders in more than 115 countries. Since its inception in 1983 it has been supporting the establishment of a global community radio sector as part of democratising the media.

[www.africa.amarc.org](http://www.africa.amarc.org)

## **Media Institute of Southern Africa**

The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) is a non-governmental organisation with members in 11 of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) countries. Officially launched in September 1992, MISA promotes free, independent and pluralistic media, as envisaged in the 1991 Windhoek Declaration, and seeks ways to support exchange of information and co-operation between media workers as a way to nurture democracy and human rights in Africa.

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

## **Media Foundation for West**

## **Africa**

The Media Foundation for West Africa is a non-governmental organisation based in Accra, Ghana, which was established in 1997 to defend and promote media rights, and to expand boundaries of freedom of speech and expression in West Africa. Its role includes monitoring and publicising violations of freedom of thought and expression; media law reform; defence and support of journalists and communicators against intimidation and controls that undermine freedom of expression; research into issues affecting media rights; and training and support for professional practice.

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

## **PANOS**

PANOS is involved in providing information and knowledge for effective debate, pluralism and democracy. *Reporting Research Using Evidence for Effective Journalism* is a briefing designed to help journalists understand and communicate research findings about important development issues that affect ordinary people.

[www.panos.co.uk](http://www.panos.co.uk)

## **Strengthening Africa's Media**

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's Strengthening Africa's Media (STREAM) was a consultation process to determine the priorities for strengthening institutional media in Africa. Emphasis fell on African ownership and developing a *Strategic Framework for Strengthening Media in Africa*.

[www.uneca.org/africanmedia/](http://www.uneca.org/africanmedia/)

## **Genderlinks**

Formed in March 2001, GL promotes gender equality through research, training and advocacy. Some of GL's key focus areas include strategic communication skills for gender activists and women in decision-making, gender and governance, and communications campaigns

linked to the Sixteen Days of Activism on gender violence.

[www.genderlinks.org.za](http://www.genderlinks.org.za)

## **The Communication Initiative**

The Communication Initiative Network has comprehensive information on media and development, including case studies, debates, blogs and strategies. It publishes Drumbeat – an e-magazine – on its activities.

[www.comminit.com/en.mediadev.html](http://www.comminit.com/en.mediadev.html)

## **The Global Forum for Media Development**

The Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) is a network of 500 non-governmental media assistance organisations operating in about 100 countries across Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Eurasia and the Americas. It supports the development of independent media at the community, national and regional level and aims to make media development part of development strategies. GFMD identifies free expression, media freedom, independent journalism and viable media as prerequisites for creating and strengthening democratic society and human development.

[www.gfmd.info](http://www.gfmd.info)

## **The Media Sustainability Index**

The Media Sustainability Index has been used internationally and in 37 African countries since 2006-7. It looks at five objectives that shape media systems: free speech and access to public information; professional journalism; plurality of news sources; sound management of independent media and editorial independence; and supporting institutions.

[www.irex.org/MSI/index.asp](http://www.irex.org/MSI/index.asp)

## **The Southern African Broadcasting Association**

The Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA) is a non-governmental organisation comprising commercial, private, community and public broadcasting enterprises in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Launched in November, SABA promotes the development of quality broadcasting and excellence in southern Africa through initiatives such as training, participation in new technologies and acquisition of sporting and other rights.

[www.saba.co.za](http://www.saba.co.za)

## **United Kingdom Department for International Development**

DFID's media and good governance briefing states that a free, independent and plural media provides a critical check on state abuse of power or corruption, enables informed and inclusive public debate on issues of concern to people living in poverty, and give greater public recognition to the perspectives of marginalised citizens. It emphasises that engaged citizens need information and knowledge that allows them to exercise democratic choices.

[www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/media-good-gov.briefing.pdf](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/media-good-gov.briefing.pdf)

## **United Nations Education and Scientific Organisation**

UNESCO, one of the biggest publishers in the world, is a wealth of knowledge on development journalism. Jan Servaes has edited books on approaches to development communication that can be downloaded from the UNESCO website.

UNESCO's set of media development standards is organised into five categories: conducive legal environment; plural ownership; democratic performance; capacity issues including skill and supporting organisations; and public access to media. UNESCO also carried out a survey of media legislation on the continent.

[www.unesco.com](http://www.unesco.com)

# Resources

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