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Table of contents

1	Exposé on bribes in medicine wins Manyarara award.....	2
	by Berendien Bos	2
2	Rapping for a reason	5
	<i>X Plastaz from Tanzania</i>	5
	by Koen van Wijk.....	5
3	Daily wages, donors and nine days' wonders.....	7
	<i>Journalism Training in southern Africa</i>	7
	by Berendien Bos	7
4	Girl power from South Africa.....	9
	by Jolanda Mels.....	9
5	Partner Profile	11
	by Wendy Willems	11
6	World Press Freedom Day.....	13
	<i>Celebrations leave a bitter taste</i>	13
	by Jeanette Minnie.....	13

1 Exposé on bribes in medicine wins Manyarara award

by Berendien Bos

“You can trust me; I’m a doctor.” After revelations about bribes paid to doctors by pharmaceutical companies, these words no longer sound reassuring to South Africans. The series of articles on this bribery issue won Lynne Altenroxel (29) the first John Manyarara award for investigative journalism in southern Africa this May. The award, presented annually, is an initiative of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and NiZA.

Credibility

On 3 May 2000, South African newspaper *The Star* published the first of a series of articles exposing the unethical practices of doctors and the industry.

Altenroxel revealed a list of nearly two hundred doctors who had taken bribes from pharmaceutical companies. Her study showed that doctors had standing contracts with clinics. Medical procedures such as blood tests or X-rays generated a great deal of income for the doctors.

Companies also paid for computers, office furniture and auxiliary staff.



Lynne Altenroxel

The bribery affair turned out to be only the tip of the iceberg, resulting in an official investigation by the Medical Tribunal. The Tribunal received as many as 2500 complaints a year, but there was no concrete evidence, according to their own reports. “Everyone suspected something,” says the reporter. “Even in the medical world, it is acknowledged, but no one wants to admit they had anything to do with it.” It was only due to “very courageous sources” that she was able to confirm the suspicions. As Ms. Altenroxel says, “As journalists, we too are more likely to believe the official sources than your average man or woman in the street.” Using the lists Lynne Altenroxel compiled, the Tribunal hopes to be able to prove more this summer. She expects that there will be sufficient evidence to prosecute at least one private clinic and a radiology lab.

Medical insurance

The disclosures have prompted furious reactions in South Africa. Few people have health insurance, so they pay all their own bills. Only the fortunate few can afford between 125 and 225 Euros in health insurance premiums each month. Even now, a year after the disclosures, patients approach Ms. Altenroxel with questions about their medical expenses: Are all prescribed blood tests really necessary? Did they have to be hospitalized for all those days? Despite all the publicity and the Tribunal’s investigation, the shady practices appear to be happening as frequently as ever.

Rewarding

Journalism was originally her second choice. Only after giving up her dream to become a ballet dancer did Lynne Altenroxel decide to study journalism. Despite her recent entry to the field of reporting, she has already won two awards for her work.

“Investigative journalism is the hardest profession, but also the most rewarding one,” she says, referring to the responses and the impact her work can have on society.

During her career, Ms. Altenroxel has always enjoyed the support of her editor-in-chief, something that is more the exception than the rule in southern Africa. Not every newspaper can permit itself the luxury of a lawsuit, nor do they want to risk it. And there is a serious risk involved. “In general, the governments in southern Africa are very hostile towards the media,” says Basildon Peta, jury foreman and chairman of the independent association of journalists in Zimbabwe.

Intimidation

The genre of investigative journalism has hardly been developed in the region. With the exception of reporters like Carlos Cardoso, who was murdered last year in Mozambique, many journalists consider it too great a risk to keep asking questions, to turn over that final stone. As Mr. Peta says, “Journalists work under very difficult circumstances. The people in power often intimidate and terrorize the reporters. If you live in constant fear, it affects your attitude towards your work.”

South Africa is still one of the positive examples for the region. According to Lynne Altenroxel, the intimidation that takes place is more subtle, but often no less effective. South Africa appears to be ruled by political correctness, and its impact can be seen even among her colleagues. Some reporters keep track of whether they quote an equal number of male and female members of parliament. Accusations of racism or the increasingly fashionable ‘unpatriotic behaviour’ fly fast and free. Last year, a (non-white) colleague of Ms. Altenroxel’s was accused of white racism. Her critics felt that she allowed her opinions “to be dominated too much by her white superiors.” Ms. Altenroxel explains, “Nearly every political party uses the race issue for their own ends. Black and white will control every discussion in South Africa for a long time yet.”

Difference

The media and President Mbeki’s government often find themselves at odds. The investigation into racism in the media, the critical commentaries on Mbeki’s position in the HIV/AIDS debate, and the recent statements by Minister Pahad have not helped the relationship between the government and some of the South African journalists. “I believe that there is a clear difference between Mbeki’s behaviour and that of his predecessor Mandela. Naturally the president has the right to criticize the media, but sometimes he responds too hysterically.”

During the interview, she regularly sighs that things were not that black-and-white. However, she feels she may be too pessimistic: “South Africa has great media laws. Our new law about access to information is very progressive. The government isn’t out to shut us up.” Journalists are not attacked physically, but at the same time, she says, the state tries to force journalists to hand over evidence. She is referring to photographer Benny Gool, who was present at the murder of gang leader Rashaad Staggie. Ms. Altenroxel: “They don’t even think about the consequences for the others present if his photographic material is released. We have to be vigilant and resist such subtle forms of intimidation.”

The Manyarara Award for Investigative Journalism is presented annually. The winner receives 2000 Euro and a study grant of 10,000 Euro, sponsored by PSO. The award is an initiative of the Media Institute of Southern Africa and the NiZA. It is a tribute to Justice Manyarara. As a radio journalist and judge on the Supreme Court of Zimbabwe, he was a passionate advocate of freedom of speech in Zimbabwe. Since his retirement, he continues to work to improve the freedom of the press in his country.



Justice Manyarana

More information:

Winning articles: www.veripath.co.za/art01.htm

2 Rapping for a reason

X Plastaz from Tanzania

by Koen van Wijk

Hiphop group X Plastaz, consisting of the Tanzanian rappers G'san, Ruf-nell and Ziggy-Lah, visited the Netherlands for two weeks in June, accompanied by the child rap group The Fortune Tellers and the Masai guest singer Yamat Ole Meipuko. Together, they performed as one of the acts at Festival Mundial in Tilburg, gave concerts in Utrecht, Maastricht and Antwerp and recorded their first CD. X Plastaz raps for a reason: to get the message across to the people.

With direct rap texts in Swahili that cut right to the heart of the issue, X Plastaz covers the social problems in Tanzania, such as broken families, street children, corruption and most of all AIDS. The way they convey their message is hard and confrontational, packaged in the contemporary music of the young: hiphop. "When someone dies, people are too embarrassed to tell anyone that AIDS was the cause of death. But we don't hide anything. We are clear about what is really going on. Although we do present the message in stages. That works better in our culture," rapper G'san explains.



X Plastaz

Alcohol and women

G'san relates: "There have always been problems in our lives. I went to school, but not for long. My father spent all his money on alcohol and women. He forgot to take care of his family." Because it is difficult for a Tanzanian to rebel against his father directly, he decided to express his experiences in another way. And not only for himself. "I see those problems throughout society. Many people recognize themselves in our rap music."

G'san and his fellow group members began looking for a medium to tell their story five years ago. They chose hiphop, which is particularly popular with Tanzanian young people in cities. However, the music is increasingly appreciated by an older audience as well, and even the president has listened to their performance with interest, the group tells proudly.

There is a lively hiphop scene in their hometown of Arusha, where the members of X Plastaz were introduced to the music of American rap groups and took it for their own, as a medium to express their dissatisfaction.

Metaphors

In the context of 'HIVhop', which uses hiphop music to inform the public about AIDS in southern Africa, in March 2001 the NiZA supported an exchange of Dutch and South African artists with Tanzanian hiphop groups like X Plastaz. If you use your imagination, the band could look like a group of rapping AIDS spokesmen, since

warnings about the destructive AIDS virus are a recurring theme in their performances – but not in the way we might think.

X Plastaz doesn't pull any punches, preferring the harshness of true stories. One example of this is a story in which a child is picked up and seduced is intended to make it clear how shameless it is to have sex with anyone and everyone. It is better to fall in love with someone first and to build a relationship. The group isn't afraid to explain the rest of the story, either: first have yourself and your partner tested for AIDS, and use condoms.

Cross-over

The music of X Plastaz links up to local religious and musical traditions. Their latest discovery in their musical quest is making a cross-over with the traditional culture of the Masai, represented by the presence of guest singer Yamat Ole Meipuko, who raps along with them and makes music with his jewellery while jumping up and down. “The Masai are nomads and take along very few material goods. Most of what they own is worn on their bodies. That is why they wear their ‘instruments’ as jewellery, like bells around their thighs,” explain G'san and Ruf-nell. Masai horns have also been incorporated into their music.

Stage act

The boys are very excited about their European trip. In a home studio in Tilburg, they finally had the opportunity to make recording for their own CD/cassette, and they learned how to make significant improvements to their stage act. Because the recording industry in Tanzania is concentrated mainly in Dar es Salaam, X Plastaz had not yet gotten around to making their own album. They also lacked sufficient funds; the rappers make a living from odd jobs as hairdressers or tour guides.

In addition, their Dutch and Belgian performances showed that the rappers needed to work on their performance. In Tanzanian shows – in clubs, hotels or on the street – the texts guaranteed that they would attract attention. That is not the case here, because who in the Netherlands will understand Swahili? The message alone proved insufficient for Dutch stages. “You can see right away what is missing: a bit of show, which we have now put into it. This trip has been a very good learning experience, and good for our self-confidence,” says G'san.

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More information:

X Plastaz: www.xplastaz.com

Hiphop in Tanzania: www.niza.nl/media/E.hivhop/E2.html

HIVhop: www.niza.nl/media/E.hivhop/E1.html

Africanhiphop.com: www.africanhiphop.com

Online database and platform on rap music from the African continent:

Hali Halisi: www.madunia.nl/projects/halisi.html

Video documentary on rap music in Tanzania (Madunia):

Rockers magazine: www.rockersmagazine.com

Centre of Tanzanian hiphop scene

3 Daily wages, donors and nine days' wonders

Journalism Training in southern Africa

by Berendien Bos

In southern Africa, journalistic training is booming business. The media are seen as a cornerstone of the democratic process, essential to good governance in southern Africa. Consequently, the international donor community is willing to invest a great deal of money in supporting the sector. A NiZA study shows that the journalists' level of training is rising. However, the available options for training are inadequate and unconnected, seldom reaching the right people.

Overlap

The need for training is great. In the colonial period and later during apartheid, education in journalism was reserved for a small (white) elite. When Zimbabwe achieved independence in 1980, there was not a single trained black journalist in the country. In Namibia, 65% of the journalists currently do not hold a diploma.

The quantity of training options does not appear to be a problem. By now there is a school of journalism or a university programme in mass communications in nearly every country. In addition, the media industry and the donor community offer a variety of courses, although they are often not officially accredited, ad hoc and brief.

Management

Unfortunately, the situation is less than ideal. Supply and demand do not mesh. The level of many journalism schools is low, and many university programmes like Mass Communications are too theoretical. There is too little consultation between training institutes. "Too many centres offer the same things. Why would a regional training institute include basic skills in its curriculum? A basic skills course could easily be given by schools," states researcher Colleen Lowe Morna at a meeting of training centres in Windhoek.

The study, commissioned by regional training centre NSJ in Maputo and by NiZA, also shows that managers and producers of community media get the short end of the stick, despite the fact that, in practice, they are precisely the people who need the training. "Many community radio stations go bankrupt as soon as the donor withdraws support. The guidance and training of the managers of a radio station is insufficient," says Paulina Shilongo of the Polytechnic of Namibia (higher vocational education).

The school offers one of the few programmes in the region with a curriculum that focuses particularly on community media. Management plays an important part. Community media have great potential, since it is able to reach the people who don't live in the cities, which is the case for the majority of the population of Namibia. Ms. Shilongo: "The need for information about their own world is great, particularly outside the cities. The rural areas hardly get any coverage from the national newspapers."

'Soft' items

In addition, the programmes on offer are not what the students and their editors-in-chief want. All courses on basic skills at the regional IAJ (*Institute for the Advancement of Journalism*) are full, while the content-oriented training courses about reporting on AIDS or the environment are not popular. This demonstrates the business-like approach of the editor-in-chief: such 'soft' stories don't sell. Lowe Morna: "The industry is more willing to pay for skills than content. This underpins the distinction between what the media want, and what the media need."

The 'soft' courses are often suggested by the other player in this arena, the international donors. They largely finance the training institutes. They want a lot of say in the curriculum, thus clouding the play of supply and demand. Jacob Ntshangase works at the IAJ. Ntshangase: "We base the courses we offer on the needs of journalists. But donors have their own agenda. Some will only donate money for a training course on reporting about human rights or gender issues. If IAJ refuses, the donor can always find some nine-day wonder to teach the ad hoc course." Training courses are lucrative and cover a considerable percentage of the staffing costs of the course centres. The study shows that regional centres like IAJ, NSJ and ZAMCOM are largely dependent on subsidies.

Spin-off

The study portrays a cynical situation. "The culture of daily payments is destroying journalism schooling in the entire region. The first question those journalists ask when they are invited to attend a course is how much the daily wage is and how the nightlife is," says Rino Zhuwarara from the University of Zimbabwe in the report. The behaviour is made easier by the ad hoc nature of many training courses. They are short, offer little follow-up and are hardly customized at all."

Once they return to work after the course, many journalists encounter resistance from their superiors. The spin-off for the rest of the team is limited. In his capacity as a trainer at the Zambian training institute ZAMCOM, Edem Djokotoe often sees it happen. Mr. Djokotoe: "The editor-in-chief of a newspaper is conservative. In his opinion, his journalists learn nice things, which unfortunately have no bearing on the reality of the editing room."

The study on the need for journalism training in southern Africa was carried out by the NSJ in collaboration with MISA, IAJ, Zamcom and NiZA. PSO financed the study. Based on the initial findings, a network has been set up to promote partnerships and improve the selection of training courses. This network for training centres will meet for the first time in Grahamstown this September, where the final report will be presented (Medianews@niza.nl)

In November, a delegation from the region will visit various Schools of Journalism in the Netherlands.

4 Girl power from South Africa

by Jolanda Mels

“Women symbolize eternal life. We bring children into the world, pass on knowledge and know the balance between emotion and analysis. This century, the female leaders will rise up.” This is the philosophy of the female hiphop group *Godessa*. For the past year, the three young women of this Cape Town band have been sending a wake-up call to young people, and women in particular, in the townships around Cape Town. During a visit to the Netherlands, *Godessa*’s songwriter and MC Eloise Jones explains about female rappers in South Africa. “We don’t rap about the normal bullshit.”

A female hiphop group in Cape Town is unusual; the scene is dominated by men. According to Jones (22) female hiphopartists are not tolerated. But that doesn’t stop *Godessa*. “There are other sisters who are working with rap, but we have decided to take this art form seriously,” says Jones, better known as *EJ von Lyrik*.

EJ met the two other women, who use highly significant stage names of *Lady of Shame* and *Eve of Destruction*, last year during recording sessions for a soundtrack for a documentary. Since then, they have worked as a trio. Their first album will be appearing soon. “*Godessa* produces numbers that have an impact on people’s lives. We want to use music to make something clear to them.”

“It’s critical, no doubt!
‘Cause there’s too many young sisters living in shame and shit –
Simply because of a coward who blames his dick!

Yes my streets should be called the chemist of Remnants;
The world’s biggest drugstore for the Menace to spread in,
And the tenants who get in
Are just defenceless against this,
They’re unarmed, yet gun-charmed –
Tremendous sense of ignorance!
You see your system doesn’t work that well for me as for you,
That’s why I chose to verbalise what I’m goin’ through.
But Yo, this is just the tip of the iceberg,
I’ll let the mind work to let my peeps know the truth!”

EJ Von Lyrik - *Godessa*

Forced pregnancy

Rape, poverty, drugs, gangsters and AIDS: for many, that is daily life in the townships of South Africa. That is what *Godessa*’s songs are about. EJ, who grew up there, says, “Our problems are ignored, but rap will open the eyes of the people.”

Women, *Godessa* feels, are the best people to rap about these kinds of issues. “Women have to put up with more than men, so they see things differently. In addition, women are creatures of emotion and can relate better to female victims. Men can rap about those themes, but who has more to say about forced pregnancy than the woman who carries the child for nine months?”

People respond positively to the rapping women. “We are something different for the public. And it’s all about presentation. We say it straight out, but without stepping on anyone’s toes.”

Release

EJ visited Amsterdam for two weeks with the NiZA’s hiphop exchange programme. She was a guest speaker at a conference at the School of Journalism in Tilburg, The Netherlands, on rap as a new medium. At the same conference, the CD *Overflow* was presented which she recorded together with Tanzanian, Dutch and South African hiphop artists. The group also performed at Festival Mundial.



EJ Von Lyrik

According to EJ, there are some differences between Dutch and African hiphop. “Hiphop is universal. The sound is the same everywhere. The main difference is the issues we rap about. There are different issues in the Netherlands, and you can see that in the texts.” You shouldn’t expect love songs from EJ, though: “For me, hiphop is a form of release. When something goes wrong in South Africa, I have to rap about it.”

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More information

Godessa – Brief biography of *Godessa*

www.africanhiphop.com/fem/godessa.htm

Female hiphop artists in Africa

www.africanhiphop.com/fem/fem.htm

Rap as a medium: South Africa

www.niza.nl/media/E.hivhop/E3.html

5 Partner Profile

by Wendy Willems

A Cog in the Democratic Wheel: this is the motto under which the Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe (MMPZ) introduces itself on its website. By monitoring Zimbabwean radio, television and print media, MMPZ attempts to assess the extent to which both publicly funded and privately owned media provide Zimbabweans with adequate and unbiased information.



MMPZ was founded in January 1999 by three organizations: the Zimbabwe chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ) and ARTICLE 19. These organizations, which are all strongly committed to the principles of freedom of expression, felt that maintaining a database of the performance of state-funded media in Zimbabwe would provide the evidence needed to lobby for reform of the structure of media ownership and regulation.

Public and private media

Andrew Moyses, known as the former editor of the popular Zimbabwean magazine *Parade* and currently project co-ordinator of MMPZ, describes MMPZ's mission as "encouraging the provision of fair and accurate information to Zimbabwean society in order to make people more informed about social and political choices." The project particularly wishes to focus on monitoring publicly funded media such as radio and television news bulletins of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation and newspaper articles in *The Herald*, *The Chronicle* and *The Sunday Mail*. Because public media are financed with taxpayers' money, MMPZ argues, they should provide Zimbabweans with adequate information, especially during an election period. In election times, the majority of people will be dependent on the media for facts on how, when and where to cast their vote, as well as on the views of different political parties on the main campaign issues.

In the run-up to Zimbabwe's parliamentary elections in 2000, MMPZ found that 90% of election campaign stories covered in ZBC news bulletins either favoured ZANU(PF) or criticized the main opposition party MDC.(1) Only 6 percent of the bulletins covered MDC statements and activities. Moyses: "A public broadcaster should provide a variety of opinions and perspectives on Zimbabwean society. It should not be a mouthpiece for one perspective. Currently, there is no avenue for alternative opinions." MMPZ also found that there was an almost total absence of voter education in the mass media. In practice, only two privately owned newspapers, *The Daily News* and *The Financial Gazette*, provided the most significant voter education.

MMPZ critically observes the private press, too. Moyses argues that most independent papers are doing quite well. "Without them, we would not be able to know more about the erosion of our democracy." Since 1999, Mugabe's government has increasingly attacked Zimbabwe's independent media. Moyses: "Independent newspapers are struggling in a hostile social and political environment. There is an ugly and vicious campaign to intimidate them. The bombing of *The Daily News*' printing press last

January was clear evidence of this. The free flow of information in Zimbabwe is eroded despite the existence of independent newspapers.”

Disseminating the information

2000 subscribers within Zimbabwe and abroad receive MMPZ’s weekly reports and specialized reports, e.g. on media coverage during elections or referenda. Moyses notes: “It is very difficult to measure the effects of MMPZ activities. The government has criticized the project on various occasions. However, media workers take us seriously. The media houses use our reports to test their own activities.”

Referring to MMPZ’s future, Moyses states that its biggest challenge is accessibility. “We need to encourage civic organizations to make greater use of us. This will be achieved only through collaboration and advocacy. MMPZ has a role in media rights, since it provides the evidence that the public media provides inaccurate information.” Recently, MMPZ joined the Civil Alliance for Social and Economic Progress (CASEP), a network of civic groups. Through this linkage, MMPZ hopes to ensure that civic organizations use its research findings to lobby for more enlightened and progressive media laws in Zimbabwe. MMPZ keeps the wheel on the path to democracy spinning...

(1) MMPZ (2000): Election 2000. The Media War, p.8.

*Wendy Willems is an independent researcher currently working in Harare, Zimbabwe. In 1999, Ms. Willems won the NiZA Thesis Prize, which enabled her to conduct her current research on the representation of the Zimbabwean land question in British and Zimbabwean newspapers.
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6 World Press Freedom Day.

Celebrations leave a bitter taste

by Jeanette Minnie

Freedom of Expression is deteriorating rapidly in some countries of the southern sub-continent of Africa. Zimbabwe is by now a well-known case, but the trend is also visible elsewhere.

The deterioration was starkly illustrated by two events surrounding May 3, World Press Freedom Day, which was celebrated by UNESCO at an international 3-day conference held in Windhoek, Namibia, this year. The purpose was to both celebrate World Press Freedom Day and to review the progress of press freedom in Africa ten years after the adoption of the historical 1991 Windhoek Declaration on the Promotion of an Independent and Pluralistic African Press.

Shortly before the conference, the Namibian government banned all government advertising, including advertising from any of the state-owned companies, in the country's biggest daily newspaper, *The Namibian*. The essential reason is that the paper is too critical. Shortly after the conference the Namibian government went further, despite international condemnation, and forbade the purchase of any copies of the newspaper by any government departments or organs of the ruling party. The president, Sam Nujoma, has encouraged the public and the private sector to follow suit.

Nujoma snubbed the conference by not attending, despite being present in the country, and despite the fact that the Namibian government was a co-host of this prestigious UNESCO event, together with the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA). In a speech read out on Nujoma's behalf by one of his ministers, he lambasted the independent (privately-owned) media in Africa by rhetorically suggesting that they demanded greater freedoms and more independence "to unscrupulously engage in sensationalism, misinformation, falsifications and lies to sell their products and build untouchable empires".

The ironies of the conference were great. UNESCO had appointed the editor of *The Namibian*, Gwen Lister, as the chair of the official opening ceremony. Namibia's minister of foreign affairs, Theo-Ben Gurirab, who read Nujoma's diatribe against the media, studiously avoided addressing her by name. He addressed her numerous times only as "Director of Ceremonies". The history of *The Namibian* in relation to the present government is also of interest to observers. Lister and her newspaper had been a staunch ally of the government in its former guise as a liberation movement before independence from apartheid South Africa in 1990. Ten years on they are at opposing ends on their views about the role of a free press.

On the same day (World Press Freedom Day) the government of Swaziland, another country in the sub-continent, chose to ban *The Guardian* newspaper, a new outspoken independent weekly which had been on sale for only a few weeks. The next day this

government also banned *The Nation*, a monthly magazine. The government was and is seemingly objecting to stories in connection with an alleged attempt to poison the king.

Swaziland is de facto and de jure ruled by an absolute monarch, King Mswati III. The country has no bill of rights and opposition political parties are outlawed. The banning of *The Nation* has been lifted after an out of court settlement. One explanation is, ironically, that the King, who rarely grants media interviews, granted an interview to the magazine shortly before its banning, only to find his freedom of expression inadvertently censored by the State's decision. The outcome of the High Court's decision on *The Guardian* is still pending.

But the Swazi government subsequently announced a state of emergency on June 22, which makes provision for the banning of any media without the government having to provide any reason and which outlaws any litigation against such bannings. Swazi media freedom activists regard this step as a sign of the government's determination not to be overruled by the courts. Like Nepal, Swaziland is ruled by a king and nobody is supposed to know what goes on in the royal household. And if you do, you should keep your mouth shut.

More information

UNESCO/MISA Windhoek Conference: _ Ten years on: Assessment, Challenges and Prospects: www.misa.org/windhoekseminar/index.html

The Guardian Swaziland: www.theguardian.co.sz

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