



Media News
Media Southern Africa

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Newsletter of NiZA's Media Programme
Edition: MediaNews 04 - December 2001



Netherlands institute for Southern Africa

Table of contents

1	<i>South African consultancy called in to design training for Namibian journalists</i> ...	2
	by Sanna Jansen.....	2
2	<i>Beware of the placebo effect!</i>	5
	The struggle for press freedom requires a new impetus.....	5
	by Jeanette Minnie.....	5
3	<i>The Chronicle:</i>	7
	Malawian weekly plays the devil’s advocate	7
	by Marcella Bos	7
4	Media training a merry-go-round run away with itself, says report.....	9
	door Kees Schaepman.....	9
5	<i>Interview: Sarah Chiumbu (MISA-Zimbabwe)</i>	12
	“We will record every lapse”	12
	by Marcella Bos	12
6	<i>MC Complex: Street violence is common practise in South Africa</i>	14
	by Sanna Jansen.....	14

1 South African consultancy called in to design training for Namibian journalists

by Sanna Jansen

The Polytechnic of Namibia in Windhoek will start training journalists as from early 2002. This is something new, for up to now only a small percentage of Namibian media practitioners have had formal training. This circumstance was given due consideration when the brandnew curriculum was being drawn up. A consultant from South Africa explored the needs of the media industry in Namibia and turned in a remarkable achievement.



“The South African consultant played a vital role in developing the curriculum,” says Emily Brown, Head of the Media Technology Department at the Polytechnic of Namibia. A programme in Journalism and Communication Technology will be launched at the start of the new year at the Polytechnic of Namibia. According to Emily Brown, “Dr Megwa’s advice and guidance resulted in a lot of extra work for us, such as extensive consultations with media on the content of the course. However, his advice served to be most beneficial in guiding us to the successful completion of the curriculum. Intensive networking has enabled us to get a journalism course of high quality off the ground.”

“I have focused on rallying broad support for the course,” says consultant Eronini Megwa. “From the outset Emily Brown, two of her colleagues and I have involved the staff of the Polytechnic of Namibia in the design process. This move brought us a lot of internal support.”

Professional needs

Megwa unfolds his further tactics: “We have used surveys, discussions and interviews to conduct field research among the media practitioners. In-depth interviews were conducted with editors and journalists of the electronic and print media to assess their need for media training. The situation in Southern Africa differs from that in Europe. In Namibia 65 per cent of journalists have had no formal training, but they have a wealth of experience, having practised their profession for ten to twenty years. A course designed for journalists should, therefore, fit in with their professional needs. For instance, don’t expect much enthusiasm for investigative journalism. The stories coming out of that are hardly profitable in terms of sales figures: it is simply too costly for most newspapers.”

Eronini Megwa heads the Department of Journalism at the Peninsula Technikon (Pentech) in Belville, South Africa. As part of the co-operation with the Polytechnic of Namibia, his department examined how ex-students rate their education at Pentech. Also, media training institutions and professional media organisations all over Southern Africa as well as, of course, the University of Namibia, were asked to give their views. "By involving all parties in the media world in the designing process with regard to the new curriculum, we have created the basis for a broad external support, and forged relationships for the future," says Emily Brown, who is clearly satisfied with the outcome.

National diploma

The three-year part-time Journalism and Communication Technology course - which is the first Journalism-qualification to be offered at the Polytechnic of Namibia - will be launched in January 2002. Upon completion, students qualify for a nationally recognised diploma. Evening classes will enable students to combine their studies with a job. The curriculum is geared at the need for training in practical skills. In this regard, the Polytechnic of Namibia wants to establish a number of campus media outlets, including a radio and television channel, as well as a newspaper and an internet site.

Emily Brown indicates that the Senate of the Polytechnic's approval will be sought by June 2002 for a fourth year to be added to the Journalism and Communication Technology course. A fourth year would result in a degree in Journalism and Communication Technology, and would open up the possibility for graduates to continue their studies elsewhere in Africa or in Europe and the United States. This would be a dream of Megwa and Brown come true: highly trained journalists giving a boost to the content of public media in Southern Africa.

Visiting lecturers

"Consultancy provided by NiZA partners is effective," claims Emily Brown. "To be able to co-operate with somebody who has an intimate knowledge both of administrative and governmental processes in the region and the profession, is a stimulating experience. The two Media Trainers' Workshops, aimed at media training institutions from member countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), also provided useful information and served to establish valuable contacts."

These NiZA-financed workshops have led to the formation of the Southern Africa Media Trainers Network (SAMTRAN). In Emily Brown's view, this network contributes towards the development of adequate media training courses: "Through visiting lecturers and curriculum material, we are able to build on the joint expertise of SAMTRAN participants - this is an absolute asset."

Magical transformation

Eronini Megwa emphasises that the development of the Journalism and Communication Technology course should be considered an innovation: "It is rather unusual to design a curriculum departing from the needs of the people in the field, as this is more often done in the seclusion of a training institution. The co-operation between Pentech and the Polytechnic of Namibia and the SADC Media Trainers, has magically transformed the existing competition between institutions into rather an exchange between them, which is a clear bonus, in my view!"

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Polytechnic of Namibia: www.polytechnic.edu.na
Peninsula Technikon: www.pentech.ac.za
SAMTRAN - Southern Africa Media Trainers Network:
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/staff/guy/sadc/>
IAJ - Institute for the Advancement of Journalism: www.iaj.org.za
MISA - Media Institute of Southern Africa: www.misanet.org
SAMDEF - Southern African Media Development Fund: www.samdef.bw

2 Beware of the placebo effect!

The struggle for press freedom requires a new impetus

by Jeanette Minnie

The struggle for the freedom of the press requires a new impetus. Many press freedom organisations, having pointed out abuses and written letters of protest, feel they have done a good job. However, much more is needed, writes NiZA consultant Jeanette Minnie.

"The Action Alert Network helps to turn the spotlights from around the world on those responsible for human rights violations. This can make a significant difference, as those who violate human rights often rely on the cover of darkness."

These telling words relate to an important interactive mechanism for the defence of the freedom of expression: the Action Alert Network of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX). Every day, the 55 IFEX member organisations monitor and report abuses, mainly of the freedom of the press, to the IFEX International Clearing House from their respective regions or areas of expertise. The Clearing House circulates the information to the other members and interested organisations all over the world. This often results in co-ordinated letter writing campaigns, which have, in the words of IFEX, "unlocked prison doors, lifted publication bans and even saved lives".

Some freedom of expression activists, however, are beginning to search for new strategies to make the Action Alert Network more effective. NiZA is one of the organisations involved in this new drive. NiZA is not an IFEX member as it does not monitor freedom of expression violations directly; it relies on its partner organisations, especially the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), a prominent IFEX member, to perform this role. NiZA rather wants to assist its media partner organisations in the Southern African region, helping them respond and react to press freedom violations in more concrete ways, and to find innovative ways of encouraging the Dutch public to play a stronger role as well.

One could argue that what the Action Alert Network essentially does, is to pump around a lot of information. Letter writing campaigns are important, but there are so many press freedom abuses being reported daily from around the world now, that it is impossible to respond to most of them. Reporting press freedom abuses has also become a placebo: many press freedom organisations, having reported the violation and perhaps written a letter of protest, feel they have done their job. But who is visiting that journalist in jail to check up on him or her? Who is contacting a lawyer? Who is talking to the family to give them moral support? Who is organising the colleagues in the media to stage a public protest? Who is initiating a protest meeting with the organisation that is perpetrating the violation? Some organisations are undertaking such actions, but many are not.

Perhaps press freedom organisations, in order to encourage supportive actions on the ground, should consider classifying their alerts, indicating which ones have 'high alert' status. They also should organise their members on a geographical basis and arm them with previously worked-out action plans on how to respond. Members can form response units in various towns and cities that will automatically swing into action when a 'high alert' is received for their area and undertake some actions along the lines suggested.

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Further action

NiZA has embarked on a further investigation of the above strategy. You could help by sending us your comments and suggestions. Go to: www.ifex.org and www.misanet.org to see what it's about.

3 The Chronicle:

Malawian weekly plays the devil's advocate

by Marcella Bos

The world of the media in Malawi is a strange one. The country's fifteen or so newspapers are dependent on political parties, financially and editorially. One weekly, *The Chronicle*, refuses to give up its independence in exchange for financial support. Editor Rob Jamieson: "If the worst comes to the worst we will continue as an illegal newspaper."



Rob Jamieson and his wife Pushpa started their weekly *The Chronicle* in December 1993, at a time when Malawi was going through a period of political liberalisation, much to the relief of the subjects of dictator Hastings Banda, who had held the country firmly in his grasp since independence in 1964. President Banda's conservative regime had curbed the freedom of speech and of the press. After almost thirty years Malawi had only two newspapers, both owned by the government.

Key question

The atmosphere improved in the 1990s. "By 1992 foreign governments in particular pressed for democratisation and an improvement of the human rights situation," Rob Jamieson recalls. "They threatened to stop development funding unless the government changed its tune. Banda was forced to assent to freedom of the press and to releasing political prisoners in order to retain foreign funding."

At that time opportunities for starting newspapers such as *The Chronicle* abounded. Rob Jamieson: "Due to the pressure from abroad a referendum was held in Malawi. The key question was: Do you want the Banda dictatorship to persist or do you want democracy? Almost 90 per cent of the population of Malawi opted for the latter. Elections were called and political parties founded. It was a marvellous time, with lots of new opportunities for independent and diverse media."

Mouthpiece

After the elections of 1994 the regime of Banda and his Malawi Congress Party came to an end. Bakili Muluzi, the leader of the United Democratic Front, became the new president. The new government worked hard to improve the human rights situation, but the censorship legislation from the Banda era remained in force.

Jamieson: "Many newspapers disappeared in the years after the elections due to high taxes on printing paper and advertisements and inadequate distribution networks. They couldn't manage financially to stay in business. So what happened? Parties and politicians started to shove money towards newspapers to keep them alive. As a

consequence the press lost its independence and became a mouthpiece for certain people.”

Corruption

The Chronicle, disposing of sufficient financial means, was able to keep its independence as one of very few papers. Today the weekly has to rely primarily on the sale of advertisements to private enterprises and human rights organisations, both at home and abroad. However, the situation is becoming increasingly difficult as the government is the biggest advertiser of all.

“It is the task of *The Chronicle* to raise national awareness on issues that are being ignored by the Muzuli government,” Rob Jamieson argues. “We are playing the devil’s advocate. In our articles, we address issues such as corruption, which does not necessarily go well with some. Every now and then charges are brought against us by the government.”

The Jamiesons have no intention to give up *The Chronicle*. “People in Malawi appreciate our paper. We get a lot of positive response. We know for instance that every copy is being read by twelve people on average, so the coverage is considerable. Besides, we are not only being read in the cities, but also by people in the rural areas. Every week, we send packages to our connections there. When all is said and done we earn more from selling 5,000 to 15,000 copies of our newspaper than from selling advertisements,” Rob Jamieson explains.

Underground

It will soon be clear whether *The Chronicle* will survive. In recent years Rob Jamieson was able to keep the weekly running by putting his own money in it, but that will give out some time. It is his expectation that the sale of newspapers and advertisements will suffice to tide over the period until the presidential elections of 2004 at least.

What the media landscape will look like after the elections remains to be seen. “We hope that in 2004 a government will be elected which will stimulate independent media. I am not talking about printed media only. Malawi’s only television channel is owned by the government, and radio channels hardly have an effect on the content of the democracy either. In the case of opposition, broadcasting licences are simply withdrawn.” Rob Jamieson, passionately: “Muluzi can keep bringing charges against us to the very end, but if *The Chronicle* disappears, the freedom of the press will be further undermined. It is imperative for one medium to survive to continue the fight; if need be, we’ll go underground.”

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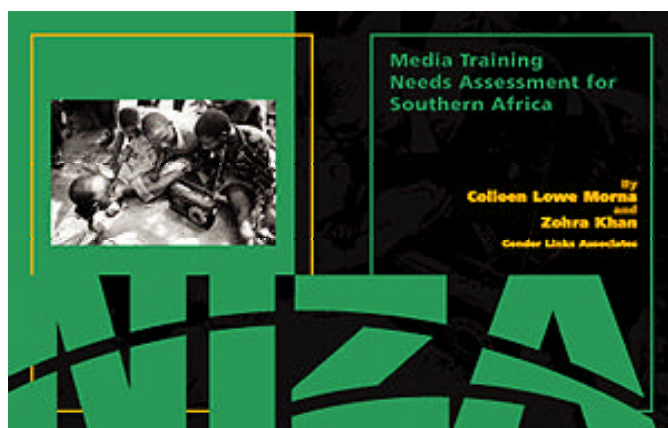
Or go to <http://www.ijnnet.org/News/Africa/Malawi/index.html>

4 Media training a merry-go-round run away with itself, says report

door Kees Schaepman

Training journalists has become an industry, in the words of a recent report on media training in Southern Africa. Costs are soaring, everybody is trying to re-invent the wheel, and depth is lacking in most cases. Fortunately, the authors of the report put forward some clear suggestions to improve the situation.

In Southern Africa there are approximately 15,000 professional journalists. That is a rather small number, compared with, say, the membership of the Dutch Journalists' Association of almost 10,000, with a lot of Dutch journalists not being associated. Yet the number of journalists active in the various member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has expanded strongly in recent years. Not all of these new journalists have had the same amount of training. Some are university graduates, others are amateurs "who write a letter and consider this journalism". The latter qualification is taken from a report entitled *Southern Africa Media Training Needs Assessment*, which was released on 9 November 2001 during a PSO symposium in the Congresgebouw in The Hague. "Studies in Namibia and Zambia have shown that over half the journalists in these countries have no formal qualifications," write Colleen Lowe Morna and Zohra Khan, the authors of the report.



Reporters gathering news not having a diploma should come as no surprise. Until recently those in power in Southern Africa used to regard a free press with disfavour. Journalism is an often dangerous and hardly well-respected profession in the region. The financial rewards are mostly modest.

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Drop outs

It should be borne in mind that the training of journalists is a rather recent phenomenon in Western Europe as well. The first Dutch school of journalism was founded in Utrecht in 1966. For a long time the profession had been the domain of failed novelists, university drop outs and (mostly) men that were jacks-of-all-trades and masters of none. It was left to fledgling journalists to learn how to write an article on the job. The elevation of the *métier* was stimulated by publishers and editors who started to need trained professionals.

Southern Africa is now going through the same process: it is the publishers and broadcasting bigwigs who call for more extensive and better training of journalists. What they are mainly calling for is improved skills; according to Morna and Khan, they

are less concerned for the training of their staff as regards content. Interestingly, most training is funded by donors that set great store by courses focusing attention on the reporting of social issues (human rights and gender are particularly popular themes).

Herculean task

The merit of the report is that it offers a clear insight into the supply of and demand for training, based on a broad survey among dozens of training institutions and interviews with dozens of journalists, teachers, publishers and donors – a truly Herculean task. This alone renders *Southern Africa Media Training Needs Assessment* an indispensable guide for anyone who is involved with the media in Southern Africa.

Morna and Khan do not shun sore subjects in their analysis of the training sector. They use the word ‘per diem training’ for courses where participants show greater interest in their per diem (and in the nightlife in the town where they get the training) than in the contents of the curriculum. “The per diem culture is destroying media training in the region,” says one of the interviewees, Mr R. Zhuwarara of the University of Zimbabwe.

Aid dollars

Training journalists has become an industry in Southern Africa, with the attendant proliferation of unsound practices, according to Morna and Khan. Often there is no careful selection of participants, costs are soaring and everybody is trying to re-invent the wheel. The result in most cases is that training courses “offer a bit of everything” and no subject is really being gone into thoroughly. The entire sector is “highly fragmented”. The picture arising from the report is that of a merry-go-round run away with itself, mainly kept up with aid dollars. Donors consider training “fashionable”, Morna and Khan write, because a free press contributes to democratisation and good governance – objectives that are all the vogue in the world of development co-operation.

In their recommendations the authors suggest that participants pay for the training themselves, if only in the form of a token payment. They further emphasise the need for a better division of labour between training institutions. Currently almost all of them are concentrating on professionals who have only just started their careers. There are hardly any training opportunities for managers, or, for that matter, for women – who are only gradually gaining access to editorial offices. Courses in the field of the new media are almost absent; the South African Rhodes University is a solitary trailblazer. Also – to force an open door – more attention should be devoted to training the trainers. “How to move from more to better is the central issue that this research set out to address,” Morna and Khan write. Their report clearly outlines the ways that can be followed.

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Order now

The report *Southern Africa Media Training Needs Assessment* has been commissioned by the Nordic Southern African Journalistic Training Centre (NSJ), in association with SAMTRAN (Southern Africa Media Trainers Network), and is published by NiZA.

Media professionals and journalists can order the report by e-mail to niza@niza.nl. The price is Euro 9.00.

More information:

SAMTRAN – Southern Africa Media Trainers Network : www.ijnet.org

5 Interview: Sarah Chiumbu (MISA-Zimbabwe)

“We will record every lapse”

by Marcella Bos



Zimbabwean reporters, accused of adopting a too critical stance towards the policies of the Mugabe government and the resultant abuses, have been arrested from their bed in recent months with clock-like regularity. Sarah Chiumbu works for MISA, an organisation that defends the interests of journalists. She watches developments closely.

The authorities recently arrested four journalists of the independent Zimbabwean newspaper *The Daily News*. The action got everything to do with the imminent presidential elections of 2002: Mugabe can't afford being portrayed negatively in the media at the moment. Sarah Chiumbu, director of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in Zimbabwe, explains the ins and outs of the situation as regards the freedom of the press, which has not always been as bad as it is now.

“After 1980, during the first years of independence, journalists worked in a liberal environment,” Chiumbu recalls. “Over the years, increasingly serious domestic problems such as corruption, nepotism and land reforms brought about a growth in the number of critical articles that were being published. Government policies and Mugabe's personal life also attracted growing media attention, which prompted the president to take action. The press had got too much freedom.”

No pryers

In the mid-1990s Mugabe put an end to media freedom in Zimbabwe. Foreign journalists were told to leave the country – the president didn't want people prying into what he was doing. Reporters from the country itself were no longer allowed to report negatively on the policies of the Mugabe government. Those who did ran the risk of being detained and taken to court.

“The government uses outdated legislation to deal with the media,” Chiumbu explains. “Charges against journalists are mainly based on laws from the colonial era. At the time when those laws were drawn up the rules with regard to the freedom of the press were rather different from the ones prevalent today. In co-operation with other organisations MISA tries to have the old laws removed from the constitution or to adapt them to current ideas regarding the freedom of the press.”

Hostility

Next to its lobbying for greater media rights MISA dedicates itself to improving the quality of journalism through monitoring, research, the dissemination of information among the media and, last but not least, training. Sarah Chiumbu: “We try to make reporters and other media workers aware of their position. They should know that they occupy an important, not to say essential position in society. We teach journalists how to handle this. Besides we train people in skills that are useful for media organisations themselves, such as financial management.”

MISA Zimbabwe is only able to perform these activities thanks to financial support received from similar organisations abroad. The government of Zimbabwe does not contribute a single penny, while national NGOs keep their distance. “We don’t get much support within the country itself, because we oppose Mugabe’s policies,” Chiumbu explains. “The work of MISA is certainly valued and supported by the population, but it is mainly politicians and other prominent figures that are afraid to support us. If their views become publicly known, they run a serious risk of losing their jobs. We are currently looking hard for more donors, but the hostility we meet with the government has rendered this much more difficult. We are increasingly forced to look abroad, whereas changes must take place in Zimbabwe itself.”

Exemplary state

It’s not only that a critical and independent stance entails a risk; MISA also manages to secure only limited support within the country due to the fact that many Zimbabweans simply aren’t aware of the institute’s activities. Chiumbu: “For instance, most people in the rural areas aren’t aware of our efforts in favour of independent media and greater democracy. That is why we want to focus more on people who have less access to media and information during the coming years.”

Zimbabwe may have passed for the exemplary new African state after 1980, yet promises regarding the freedom of the press have not been seen fulfilled under President Mugabe. Recent attacks on the media offer little hope of improvement either. Fortunately, organisations such as MISA keep dedicating themselves to democratisation and greater freedom of the press. Sarah Chiumbu is well aware of the current restrictions, yet she has no intention of throwing in the towel. “The Zimbabwean government and politicians would like to see MISA founder as soon as possible, but they will not get rid of us that easily. They should know we will monitor them closely. We will record every lapse.”



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MISA – Media Instituut voor Zuidelijk Afrika : www.misa.org
The Daily News : www.dailynews.co.zw
SACOD.: www.sadoc.org.za: Supports organisations which produce and distribute Southern African videos and films that contribute to democracy, peace, popular participation, race and gender equality, development and cultural identity.

6 MC Complex: Street violence is common practise in South Africa

by Sanna Jansen

What is the difference between a Dutch rapper and a rapper from South Africa? Rapper MC Complex from Amsterdam says the South African hiphop scene is much more involved in the realities of society. He visited his Cape Town colleagues, as part of a NiZA project. "I feel more competent in my writing now." Hiphop is a way of life for 25-year-old Adeiye Tjon Tam Pau from Amsterdam, alias MC Complex. "That is what Dutch and Cape rappers have absolutely in common," he says.

There was this immediate click during exchanges between rappers from the Netherlands and South Africa.

MC Complex: "Going into the background of another person gives you a better understanding of yourself. It has made me feel more competent in writing texts. The same goes for the South Africans. They were quite surprised to hear that part of my roots are to be found in Africa because I am from Surinam. It gave them a new perspective on Europe."

Townships

MC Complex feels that there are no basic differences between Dutch and South African rappers. He is, however, deeply impressed by the political and social awareness of his southern colleagues. "At the age of fifteen those guys are already rapping about the heaviest issues," he says. "They live in a much tougher society. They experience crazy things in my eyes. Street violence is common practice over there, with a roughness unknown to us here. Hiphop clearly gives them something to hold on to. They can put their emotions into it."

"South African rappers try to explain to other young people that it's not cool to carry around a gun," says MC Complex. "In this way they are able to give life in the townships a positive twist. In the Netherlands we also rap about violence, but the context is different here. In South Africa you can really feel the tension and destructiveness in daily life."



Poverty's Paradise

Wealth is relative
 Is we here at illustrate
 Share what's on your dinner plate
 Don't stuff yourself with the big
 cake
 With no loved ones around you
 Just thug ones that hound you
 When you flash past in your iron
 horse
 Spending fast cash, you acquired
 with force
 Who would you be, without no chips
 ta floss
 Like rezarection after the kross
 You'd be a newborn humble man
 Sharing inner light with your
 brethren

*Fragment uit 'Poverty's Paradise',
 geschreven door MC Complex en
 Rick D - 7th Foul (van 7th
 Foulnation)*

Greenpeace badges

“Rap is something you do, hiphop is something you live.” The famous phrase coined by MC KRS-One clearly indicates the difference between rap and hiphop. Rap is putting poetry to music: a technique.

But being hiphop is about your whole life, says MC Complex: “It is about being engaged in the issues addressed in your raps and making a real contribution to society. MC stands for Master of Ceremony. That is a well-respected hiphopper who hosts hiphop nights besides doing his own performances.”

MC Complex raps about things that occupy his mind. Most of his texts are about social and political issues. “I am the sort of guy one would expect to walk around covered with Greenpeace badges but I don’t feel at ease in a club like Greenpeace,” he says grinning from ear to ear. “I’d rather express myself in music. A rap such as ‘Poverty’s Paradise’, for example, is an indictment against superficiality and consumerism.”

Intense battles

“Sometimes I feel lonely being a hiphopper in the Netherlands today,” MC Complex admits. “At the age of twelve I already joined the Rhythm and Ramp Tour. That was in the 1980s. There were very intense battles between hiphoppers from Amsterdam and Rotterdam at that time.

Battles are aimed at outstripping one another in texts and rhyme. Or at commenting, in rap, on the subjects of another rapper. In the streets of South Africa you see many battles starting spontaneously. In the Netherlands performances are staged in clubs.

Hiphop is no longer as popular with the Dutch public as it used to be. They listen to the music and just give a nod. In South Africa the audience will cheer you on. They take notice of the texts; your text is what makes you succeed or fail in winning their respect.”

Inspired by his trip to South Africa MC Complex, together with friends, started his Live on the Low hiphop nights in the Café Winston in the Amsterdam Warmoesstraat: “You can only feel the typical hiphop atmosphere during the open mike sessions at the Winston.”

Sanna Jansen is NiZA information officer for the Media Programme.

More hiphop

- On the basis of the view that rap is an alternative medium for informing young people on HIV/AIDS, poverty and violence, NiZA has organised various exchanges. See:
[History of NiZA’s Hiphop Connection.](#)
- [Live on the Low](#)
- [7th Foulnation](#)

History of NiZA’s Hip Hop connection:

www.niza.nl/media/D.newsletter/D71_meerhiphop.html

Live on the Low : www.mixin.nl

7th Foulnation : www.artists.mp3s.com/artists/17/7th_foulnation.html