



**Media News**  
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**Netherlands institute for Southern Africa**

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## 1 News: Voice of the People

### Filling the gap through short wave radio

**Despite strict regulations, radio stations in Zimbabwe have found their way on the short wave, using transmitters from outside the country. Voice of the People (VoP) is one of them, operating fully from Zimbabwe.**



In September 2000 the Supreme Court declared the state monopoly of Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) over all broadcasting in Zimbabwe illegal and ordered the government to open the field of broadcasting to other players. In April 2001 the government of Zimbabwe forced the Broadcasting Services Bill through Parliament which it claimed would liberate the airwaves. However, the Act has been severely criticised for carrying numerous restrictions which in fact effectively bar investment in broadcasting. So far, no other broadcasters apart from ZBC have received a license. Despite these strict regulations, radio stations in Zimbabwe have found their way on the short wave, using transmitters from outside the country. Currently two radio stations, SW Radio Africa and Voice of the People (VoP) are operating in this way. Unlike Radio Africa which is entirely based in London and does not have correspondents in Zimbabwe, VoP is fully operating from Zimbabwe. The station has four journalists working in Harare and six in Zimbabwe's provinces. It made a commercial arrangement with Radio Netherlands to hire airtime on one of its short wave frequencies.

#### Accessing the rural population

VoP started broadcasting in mid-June 2000 before the parliamentary elections. The station manager explains the reasons behind the establishment: "Due to numerous incidents of political violence, we wished to offer information which could be disseminated to people in rural areas and to farming communities." VoP mainly targets people in the rural areas and therefore broadcasts its programmes in Shona and Ndebele. The station provides an alternative voice to ZBC which is generally considered to be a mouthpiece of the government. "Rural people only have access to the state broadcaster. Because of their illiteracy or semi-illiteracy, newspapers do not reach them. People in urban areas have a clear picture of what is happening in the country. They have access to independent newspapers and to CNN, BBC and SABC through satellite TV. We therefore wish to focus on the sector of Zimbabwean society which is closed out." He adds: "It has some funny aspects. There are in fact more short wave radios in rural areas than in urban areas because until the mid-1980s ZBC was only broadcasting on the short wave."

#### *Spreading the word*

Just how well-known VoP is among the urban population in Harare has yet to be seen. Initially, VoP's broadcasts did not cover Harare very well. Radio Africa seems to be more popular and it is quite a heavy advertiser in the printed media. But VoP too has

started a series of advertisements in the run-up to the elections. “We will soon introduce a morning programme in English”, the station manager explains.

Yet more critical is the fact that its programmes tended to be outdated. As a fledgling radio station VoP sometimes used to broadcast reports only two weeks after the event. This situation has improved considerably, however, since reports are now sent to the Netherlands by e-mail.

The station currently runs a programme on electioneering and peace in which public figures such as musicians, footballers and social commentaries reiterate the need for peace during the elections. However, as the station manager clarifies: “The political segment of our programmes is one fifth only. We also broadcast topics on consumer issues and social issues.” In order to increase its popularity in rural areas, VoP uses networks of civic organisations. The station manager argues: “It does not make a lot of sense to advertise in newspapers, since they will not reach the rural populace. Through the information officers of our civic partners, we hope to spread the message to rural areas.”

#### *Illegal broadcasts*

Reactions from the government have been less promising. The station manager admits that they receive general threats from the government every week. Although VoP wishes to cover all political perspectives including the views of the ruling party, the Zimbabwean government has often associated VoP with opposition politics. Both SW Radio Africa and VoP do not violate Zimbabwean law, still the Minister of State for Information and Publicity Jonathan Moyo recently condemned the ‘illegal broadcasts’ for ‘fanning tribal divisions and ethnic hatred among Zimbabweans’. Moyo added: “They have all the trappings of the genocide broadcasts in Rwanda.” However, VoP does not give up. The station manager reveals: “Within a year, if we can get our own transmitter, we hope to apply for a license again.”

*For safety reasons, the author remains anonymous.*

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#### *More information:*

Voice of the People

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website: <http://www.voxpop.co.zw>

Voice of the People broadcasts daily from 17.00-18.30 hours UTC on 7120 kHz (50 kW) and in the run-up to the presidential elections also from 4.00-5.00 hours UTC on the same frequency. VoP plans to start broadcasting on the Internet through its website.

## 2 Comment: Freedom can never come second

### Media freedom violations in Zimbabwe have a long tradition

by Jeanette Minnie

**Zimbabwe today is what happens when the world places development before freedom. Says Jeanette Minnie, who feels that Mugabe's true colours have been on show for a long time. But, the world for the most part shut a blind eye because it was expedient to do so.**

The last five action alerts on media freedom violations in Zimbabwe published on the website of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) today (19 February 2002) makes chilling reading:

18/02/2002 : Swedish journalist refused

accreditation [www.misanet.org/alerts/20020218.zimbabwe.1.html](http://www.misanet.org/alerts/20020218.zimbabwe.1.html)

18/02/2002 : Southern African media organisation to challenge Zimbabwean laws

[www.misanet.org/alerts/20020218.zimbabwe.0.html](http://www.misanet.org/alerts/20020218.zimbabwe.0.html)

15/02/2002 : Peta resigns from paper

[www.misanet.org/alerts/20020215.zimbabwe.0.html](http://www.misanet.org/alerts/20020215.zimbabwe.0.html)

14/02/2002 : School teacher beaten to death for reading independent newspaper

[www.misanet.org/alerts/20020214.zimbabwe.0.html](http://www.misanet.org/alerts/20020214.zimbabwe.0.html)

11/02/2002: Newspaper offices and printing press bombed

[www.misanet.org/alerts/20020211.zimbabwe.1.html](http://www.misanet.org/alerts/20020211.zimbabwe.1.html)

There will no doubt be fresh reports about more violations tomorrow and the next day ... and the next. This litany of human rights infringements in respect of the media did not begin recently, or only in the last year or two. The action alerts on the web site concerning Zimbabwe date back to 5 February 1997. The entry for this day reads: "Update: Medical report details torture of two journalists"

[www.misanet.org/alerts/19970205.zimbabwe.0.html](http://www.misanet.org/alerts/19970205.zimbabwe.0.html)

In fact, MISA's annual publication on the state of the media in Southern Africa published since 1995, and cynically but appropriately entitled "So this is Democracy?", demonstrates clearly in many analyses that the suppression of media freedom and speech in Zimbabwe is a long tradition. The tradition goes back to Ian Smith's apartheid 'Rhodesia' (Zimbabwe's former name under white rule) and was never broken – not even for a moment – despite the transition to black majority rule. One of the same prime instruments for suppression and control of a people is still being used today – denying people their right of access to independent information.

In the end, all despots are the same.



*Journalists protest against the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) in Zimbabwe. This law makes it a criminal offence to criticize the president and government. The photographer states that three journalists were arrested during this demonstration.*

*Photograph: Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi*

This sad story which is Zimbabwe today is what happens when the world places development before freedom, or perhaps more accurately, delinks the concept of development from freedom. There has long been an elitist view that freedom is only for people who are better resourced and better educated. Mugabe's true colours have been on show for a long time – his incrementally dictatorial tendencies, the nepotism and corruption of his government, the practising of democracy only in the most minimalistic of ways and only as a tool to cling onto power 'legitimately' in the eyes of the world. But the world for the most part shut a blind eye because it was expedient to do so. After all, Zimbabwe was one of the more successful countries in the developing world.

The world would also do good if it realised that democracy is not only served by the reporting of human rights violations, but that it is better served when attention is paid to these reports timeously as strong indicators of growing problems and mounting instability in a society. And freedom (a knowledge and acceptance of the supremacy of human rights) must be nourished and protected at all costs. It can never come second on any development agenda, and should never be placed second on the domestic agendas of superpowers – lest they too in time turn into dictatorships.

*Jeanette Minnie is an advisor to NiZA on the issue of freedom of expression. She has been a director of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI), South Africa.*

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*More information:*

MISA: Media Institute for Southern Africa : [www.misanet.org](http://www.misanet.org)

### 3 Partner profiel: Rural development

#### Liberation of the mind through community publishing

door Wendy Willems

**“The major impact of poverty is psychological. A development project with only material input does not change the situation. There must be a new approach to poverty reduction,” according to Kathy Bond-Stewart of ACPDT. This Zimbabwean organization attempts to empower village people, so that they can uplift their situation.**



Kathy Bond-Stewart, one of ACPDT's three managers, decided to establish African Community Publishing and Development Trust (ACPDT) in 1995 together with the late artist Chris Hodzi and two female ex-combatants from Zimbabwe's liberation struggle, Talent Nyathi and Lucia Chikuhuhu-Manyuchi. The team had already been working together since 1981, shortly after Zimbabwe gained its Independence. Kathy explains: "I started with community publishing in May 1986 in the Government's Department of Community Development and Women's Affairs. We were concerned with the process of community publishing development. We designed a manual for training of Village Community Workers. However, our goals and dreams became bigger than could be realised in the government sphere." The formation of ACPDT was regarded as critically necessary since there were no other organisations involved with community publishing in Zimbabwe.

#### *Grassroots methodology*

ACPDT's mission is "to enable marginalised groups to use their creative energies to build dynamic leadership, tackle poverty, take charge of their lives and make the decisions that shape their future". ACPDT clearly wishes to distinguish itself from other non-governmental organisations in Zimbabwe. "We are not concerned with the media as a goal in itself but more as an instrument of change This is unlike other NGOs concerned with media in Zimbabwe", the ACPDT manager elaborates. "Through full participation of local communities in the design of publications, people not only feel proud of what they have achieved, but they also gain many skills how to improve their lives."

#### *Local Leadership Programme*

One of ACPDT's activities is the Local Leadership Programme. The programme was launched in 1997 in three pilot areas in both Zimbabwe and Angola. It focuses on village youth from 18 to 25, particularly women. ACPDT attempts to empower village people, so that they can uplift their situation. Bond-Stewart clarifies why the programme was initiated: "In this way they can carry out their own research on local issues affecting their lives, produce their own books and plan how they could uplift their situation." A community leader participating in the programme, says the following on the website: "Those of us who were involved in the production of these publications ended up discovering within ourselves talents which had not been tapped. The world

began to open before our minds. We began to see more clearly, think more creatively, reason more logically and analyse facts more critically. Our minds became liberated”.

*Civic education*

Another essential activity of ACPDT is the production of participatory civic education training manuals, which are disseminated to communities across Zimbabwe. Bond-Stewart notes: “With our civic education, we target African citizens, and mainly the poor and those excluded from major decision making. Our manuals are used in at least 16 African countries.” In co-operation with the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), a conglomerate of a number of Zimbabwean organisations which initiated the debate on a new constitution, ACPDT has produced pamphlets to inform all Zimbabweans on the rights they have as citizens.

However, Bond-Stewart regrets ACPDT experiences problems as a result of the current tense political situation in Zimbabwe: “We distribute our material through a civic education network. Due to the hostile political environment, it is difficult. We have difficulties distributing our material. We now work to distribute our publications through strong, non-partisan groups in all wards, such as women’s groups, burial societies and churches.”

*Future challenges*

ACPDT’s main challenge for the future is to transfer its ‘unique’ methodology to other organisations. Bond-Stewart says: “We are now in our 17<sup>th</sup> year. We wish to develop a book on community publishing in which the philosophy, our experience and method, and applications are explained. We want to transfer our methodology through this book. Our methodology can be the source of a new national way of doing rural development and local government.”

Because ACPDT discovered there is even a global interest in its work, the book will also be published in French, Spanish and Portuguese.

*In 2000, Ms Willems won the NiZA Thesis Prize.*

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## 4 Discussion on report Media Training Needs Assessment for Southern Africa

### 'Snapshot of media training programmes'

door Gwen Ansell

**It seems as if the media training programmes in southern Africa are over-supplied, ineffective and corrupt. At least, according to Gwen Ansell, that impression is given in earlier MediaNews articles. All untrue, Ansell argues in her contribution to the discussion on the report Media Training Needs Assessment for Southern Africa [<http://www.niza.nl/media/D.newsletter/index.html>]. In conclusion, Ruth de Vries gives a reaction on behalf of NiZA.**

If I were a potential donor considering supporting media training in southern Africa, the way the Genderlinks report on the topic is summarised [<http://www.niza.nl/media/D.newsletter/index.html>] (MN.3,AUG) and reviewed [<http://www.niza.nl/media/D.newsletter/index.html>] (MN.4, DEC) on the MediaNews website would rapidly convince me to say no. It focuses strongly on negative aspects, without the nuances of detail in the full document. It presents a snapshot of the sector as over-supplied, ineffective and corrupt.

Apparent oversupply rests on the false assumption that all the courses listed are exact equivalents of one another, in every country in the region; that there is free choice about attendance and no problem about paying for travel or training.

All untrue, and in particular, pre-service and in-service training differ. The first prepares students straight from school and is of necessity broader and more theoretical because of the requirements of national education and examination systems. The second helps working journalists to fill learning gaps, grow into new responsibilities or keep up with change. In many countries in the region, there is an acute shortage of in-service training. And since writing an essay for a teacher or professor faces a writer with demands around writing strategy, linguistic code and literary structure wholly different from those of writing a news story, the need for (new) basic skills on journalism courses is real.

All media bodies - and not only community media - get less training than they need. In a changing climate, everyone needs to retrain. Bodies like the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism (IAJ) attempt, on a very small funding base, to meet that spectrum of needs, from on-site management support for community radio to newsroom leadership skills. So there are solutions as well as problems. The industry concedes it needs different types of training, but higher-than-inflation budget cuts make tough choices necessary.

But training bodies also need to recognise they are part of the service sector and do - as the IAJ does - market research to discover what the industry needs, wants and can pay for, rather than always blaming the customer.

It is simply inaccurate to conclude that ‘covering a considerable percentage of staffing costs’ equates with training being ‘lucrative’. If training courses cover only a percentage of costs, then they are making a loss. Their dependence on subsidies reflects this. Resistance from untrained senior staffers is a valid problem. But transferring learning between classroom and life is a universal educational problem, encountered in every discipline and at every level. Training is a process of partnership between the training body and the whole client organisation, and resistance can be minimised when training starts at the top and includes diagnosis and follow-up in the newsroom. Finally, most training courses - as opposed to conferences - do not pay lavish per diems or include tours of the nightlife. We work with under-resourced journalists hungry to learn, and have never encountered the kind of corruption the summary highlights.

*Gwen Ansell is Executive Director of the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism. She is also a freelance journalist and author or editor of several books, including the just-published Guide To Basic Journalism.*  
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### **‘Donors should not slip into old mistakes’**

#### **Reaction by Ruth de Vries (NiZA)**

**Gwen Ansell’s response to the review published by *Media News* clearly shows the importance of the issue of media training in southern Africa. At the same time it shows that the issue remains very much under discussion. NiZA considers it important that training institutes in southern Africa engage in the debate on the issue among themselves in the first place; NiZA has only a small role to play.** Rather than at institutes such as the IAJ, the criticism brought forward in the review to which Gwen Ansell referred was levelled at the approach to media training that is prevalent among a number of donors who develop and offer training courses themselves. NiZA considers it extremely important that these donors do not slip back into old mistakes. Media training institutes in the region should put their affairs in order themselves.

Cooperation is the only available option. The NSJ-commissioned study into media training supply and demand, *Media Training Needs Assessment for Southern Africa*, carried out under the direction of Colleen Lowe Morna, is intended to serve primarily as a handle for journalism training courses in the region. In a parallel development a regional body has meanwhile been set up, the Southern Africa Media Training Network (SAMTRAN). In the future, both the study and the newly-established network can help to prevent any donor going it alone.

For all the criticism that can be brought against current media training, as is done in the study, NiZA is in fact very positively disposed towards supporting media training. NiZA as a donor spends € 2 million annually on strengthening the media in southern Africa, a considerable part of which goes to training on different levels. NiZA considers cooperation between training institutes and coordination within southern Africa a precondition for specific support to the sector. As of 2002 NiZA therefore supports the consolidation of SAMTRAN and the extension of its network.

*Ruth de Vries is Project Officer of the Media Programme at NiZA.*

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The study *Media Training Needs Assessment* by Colleen Lowe Morna & Zohra Khan, commissioned by NSJ and NiZA, can be ordered from NiZA ([niza@niza.nl](mailto:niza@niza.nl)) at a price of € 9.

Further information:

Publications: [www.niza.nl/publicatie](http://www.niza.nl/publicatie)

SAMTRAN: <http://journ.ru.ac.za/staff/guy/sadc>

## 5 Interview: 'Proper synergy between government and media'

### The New Journalist in Swaziland understands *thikundhla*

door Montgomery Cooper

**Over 1000 journalists are now working in the media in Swaziland and over 90 percent of them have not had any formal training in journalism. Media trainer Crosbey Mwanza pleads for the training of the 'new journalist'. The first condition is understanding of thikundhla: the traditional rules of Swaziland.**

Crosbey Mwanza, a leading media trainer with the Swaziland Institute of Mass Communications (SIMACOM) with vast experience in dealing with the media was interviewed at the beginning of March in Cape Town about the recent turmoil and developments in the Swazi media. He maintains that there is a strong level of tolerance with the government since 1973, despite the recent clampdowns that were only temporary.



That is a remarkable observation. For instance, as can be read on the site of MISA; The Government of Swaziland on 3 May, World Press Freedom Day, banned the print version of The Guardian newspaper from circulating in the country, accusing it of operating illegally as it did not fulfil all the requirements under the country's media laws. The Nation magazine was banned the following day.



#### *Morality*

Minister for Information, Mntonzima Dlamini, at the time cited Section 3 of the Prescribed Publications Act of 1968. This gives his office unlimited powers to ban or suspend publications that do not conform with 'Swazi morality and ideals'. Both The Guardian and The Nation are known to support democratic government in Swaziland; both are critical of the fact that King Mswati III has governed by decree since the suspension of Swaziland's constitution in 1973.

Mwanza comments neutral on the turbulent developments that led to the closure of the Observer group. "They were shut, reportedly about disclosure on information that was not of the public interest." He adds: "The feuding newspapers, The Guardian and The Nation magazine went into battle and came to some terms with the government and have re-opened."

Thirty-one years of training the media in the region has led Mwanza to be a passionate believer in the rights of the media and a strong believer in the interrelationship between the government and the media. The media trainer discusses at

length the urgent need for the training institutions to train the ‘new journalist’. He highlights the three main institutions, SIMACOM, the UNDP/UNESCO project of the Swaziland Institute of Management and Public Administration - that will offer development communication and journalism courses course on a part time basis starting this month - and the University of Swaziland training schemes that have started to offer a three year diploma certificate in mass communications.

*Thikundhla*

The media trainer believes that these schemes will ‘assist greatly in the understanding of the political process’ by the media, and aid the further understanding of the culture and the dual system of governance. With that he refers the traditional ‘thikundhla’ system, that means following the traditional Swazi norms and customs and the modern system - the Western - Magna Carta parliamentary system. “There have been so many misconceptions through lack of training”, he observes. “I am concerned that the totality of the problems in the country are not clearly understood by the media and are often misinterpreted.”

More than 1000 journalists are now working in the media in Swaziland. “Over 90 percent of them have not had any formal training in journalism. And only a small handful of the total are women. Mwanza feels that there has to be a lot of investment in training. “So that the practitioners would be able to have a clear and full understanding of issues and dual system, and be able to process the information in ways to give the publication a clear analysis or understanding of the country. However”, he adds cryptic, “the government must also be supportive of this new process.” Mwanza finally, appeals for ‘better national cohesion, proper synergy between government and the media need to be forged’.

*Montgomery Cooper is a lecturer at the Department of Journalism & Media Studies at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa.*

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More information:

The Guardian: [www.theguardian.co.sz](http://www.theguardian.co.sz)

The Nation: [www.thenation.co.sz](http://www.thenation.co.sz)

Misa - Swaziland Action Alerts: <http://www.misa.org/swaziland.html>

## 6 Zapiro: open season



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