



Media News
Media Southern Africa

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Newsletter of NiZA's Media Programme

Edition: MediaNews 10 - July 2003



Netherlands institute for Southern Africa

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1 Zanzibar International Film Festival

The world for the visitors – The island for the people

by Klaartje Jaspers

From 28 June onwards Zanzibar is dominated for two weeks by the annual Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF). Its objectives are to promote social and economic growth in the region through cultural productions. In addition it wants to spotlight the Dhow culture. Has the festival so far succeeded in fostering her objectives?



www.ziff.or.tz

The festival of the Dhow countries, as the ZIFF is more aptly popularly called, has since 1997 annually been transforming the capital Stonetown into a cultural feast full of dance, film, documentaries, music and theatre for two weeks in July.

The festival is a colourful show for its visitors and a welcome diversion for the inhabitants who are able to benefit from the festivals activities and the additional income generated by the great numbers of visitors.

Additional source of income

In the park boys sell juice they have squeezed out of sugar cane, lime and ginger. An American hotel guest hesitates before buying a piece of lobster. On the quay a group of youngsters gathers around the tables where a wrinkly man serves the sweet and spicy Zanzibari tea.

Promoting the Dhow-culture

Unwittingly these sellers are the personification of the organisation's second objective: to promote the Dhow culture. The multi-cultural island of Zanzibar is supposed to be the shining example. According to the ZIFF, the dhow – the small single-sailed fishing boat the Arabs decorated the African shores with – symbolises cultural diversity, co-operation and individual integrity. The festival wants to be a breeding ground for a better understanding between the nations.

Cultural exchange

Looking into the festival programme, one finds a broad selection of African, Asian and Arab productions. In front off the Palace a group of Masai warriors, in the House of Wonders a white South African tells a Danish filmmaker how she is shaking off apartheid; band from Palestine knocks about the adjacent in the Mambo Club of the old Amphitheatre.

A colourful crowd is gathering on the field. Brilliant turbans, rough sandals made from car tyres, sparkling décolleté dresses and loaded rastacaps seem to be the ingredients of a hidden competition. Hips are shaking, hands clapping, voices rising. Judged from what we see here the cultural exchange seems to be a big success.

No money for translation

The bottleneck in this exchange is to be found particularly on the local level: the islanders who do not understand the Asian and Afro-European films. Nearly all productions, a few Arabic-spoken works excluded, are in English. Either spoken or subtitled. Therefore incomprehensible for those who do not speak or read English, especially if they are not familiar with the subject or the form.



Dancers Saida Karoli

Misunderstanding

When a priest starts raping a beautiful young girl who, in danger of being killed, has sought refuge in his church (*'100 Days'*, Nick Hughes - UK, 2001), a group of young men in the back seats of the cinema rises. They spur him on. 'They don't understand what's going on,' an Zanzibari sighs. 'They are drunk and don't understand the texts.' He is ashamed of his fellow-islanders. What is normally considered to be a devout islamic paradise now seems to reveal itself as a place full of ill-mannered drunks. Whether a box-office winner or not, translating a movie such as *'100 Days'* – the story of a love affair set against the background of the genocide in Rwanda – into kiSwahili is simply too expensive.

Local population

Yet the local rural population must be given a chance to taste the cultural diversity of the Dhow region, the organisers of the festival agree. Television won't give them that chance; African networks choose Western box-office hits in preference to uncertain local initiatives. The filmmakers see the limited budgets of their national broadcasting corporations being drained off into the pockets of big American soap producers.

Education

Therefore the festival dedicates itself to present the local people a programme itself. Instead of making productions more accessible by offering proper introduction, however, the festival resorts to a more traditional concept: education. Often through locally-produced works – music, poetry, theatre, discussions, fashion shows, a mobile cinema, and lots of sports. Specially designed panoramas are used to address local women, children and villagers. The programme on the remote island of Pemba, where hardly any tourist's foot has trod, deals with a number of suspiciously familiar themes: women's groups, Aids, drug abuse, malaria, malnutrition, teen-age pregnancy, and preserving seafood. The festival's missionary work – with best wishes from Stonetown.

Links:

Zanzibar International Film Festival is partner of NiZA's Mediaprogramme (broadcasting unit) - www.ziff.or.tz

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2 Angola - Media liberation in low gear

by Bram Posthumus

Censorship has a long history in Angola. It first appeared under the Portuguese colonial government and has continued unabated since independence was achieved in 1975. Now that the civil war has come to an end at last, the media enjoy a little more freedom of action. It's high time NiZA went to Angola to look for suitable

René Roemersma is parttime based in Angola for NiZA. He acts as a consultant for, among others, Radio Ecclesia, an Angolan independent radio station.

Media variety

Somewhat varied media can only be found in Luanda. According to the findings of the publicist, Paulo de Carvalho, the town boasts eight radio stations of which three are fully independent, one T.V. channel, one daily newspaper (the state-owned *Jornal de Angola*) and at least eight magazines, some of which appear regularly



Photo: Wilco van Herpen ©

Alternatives to the state-owned media

It is especially radio stations such as *Luanda Antena Comercial* and *Radio Ecclesia* that offer a clear alternative to the state-owned media. Among the foreign media *Voice of America* is the most popular, followed by BBC and the Portuguese World Service. The government is rather disinclined to liberate the airwaves.

Control over people's opinion

Roemersma isn't surprised at all. 'There is no place that can't be reached by radio. Most people in towns can get FM channels, and in the rural areas you've still got these old short-wave receivers.' In Angola, whoever has control of radio transmissions has control over people's opinion.

Radio Ecclesia

This is the environment in which *Radio Ecclesia* operates. It used to cover the whole of Angola, but the pro-Portuguese station was confiscated and nationalised when Angola gained its independence in 1975. A quarter of a century later *Radio Ecclesia* is back on the air as the only reliable domestic source of information by radio covering, however, Luanda only. The station wants to play a role in the run up to the elections planned for 2004 or 2005. In order to be able to realise its plans *Radio Ecclesia* wants to resume its national broadcasts. Part of the infrastructure has survived; what is still lacking is the programmes. The station is facing a number of obstacles, technical in nature by the look of it, yet political in nature on closer inspection.

Retarding Tactics

There are FM transmitting stations in six Angolan towns; these are inoperative, however. 'The Angolan government is a master at retarding tactics', says Roemersma. 'The government has decreed that every local station must apply for a broadcasting

license with the local authorities. In some places this doesn't cause a lot of problems, but for instance in Huambo [the country's second town, in central Angola – BP] the current governor is ab-so-lute-ly opposed to it.' Besides, technical proceedings are pending with the national institution that controls both telecommunication and radio frequencies. *Radio Ecclesia* went through all this already once, but was required to start it all over again.

The station is tired of waiting: in August it will commence its transmissions in a number of towns, whether or not a license will have materialised by that time.

Cross-Programme Approach

It is intended that NiZA's Media Programme be interlinked with NiZA's two other main programmes: the Human Rights Programme and the Economic Programme. Roemersma is optimistic about this being possible: 'Most social organisations lack a proper media strategy. That is why we want to promote exchanges between journalists and activists.'

Publish What You Pay

Apart from the above NiZA is involved with campaigns such as *Publish What You Pay*. The latter campaign aims at urging the oil companies to make public how much they pay the Angolan government in order to secure contracts. These so-called *signature bonuses* are kept under wraps. Nobody knows how much money is tucked away in secret bank accounts held by the Angolan elite; estimates range between US \$ 3 and 4 million.

The issue is an extremely touchy one with the MPLA, so the media have to tread very carefully and show great tact.

Harassment of Journalists

Independent journalists such as William Tonet (*Folha 8*), Rafael Marques and Mario Paiva are steadily being harassed by the police. The same goes for foreign correspondents. At least four journalists have been murdered over the last decade. Earlier this year the Minister of Information, de Vaal Neto, accused *Radio Ecclesia* of 'antenna terrorism', after *Ecclesia* had put up an open microphone in a densely populated district of Luanda. Just imagine how outrageous, giving ordinary people an opportunity to vent their opinion on the state of affairs in their country!

Plans

Roemersma reports on the latest plans: 'We are going to bring mobile Internet facilities to people all over the country in order to open up cyberspace to more people. We are also going to use the Internet for *Radio Ecclesia* to get in touch with the huge Angolan community outside Angola. And we have an elaborate plan to let children tell about their ideas of the future.' One question which is as simple as it is fundamental is at the centre of all of this: what kind of Angola do you want to live in?

Links

Radio Ecclesia - www.radioecclesia.org

Publish What You Pay - www.publishwhatyoupay.org

Radio Ecclesia is partner of NiZA's Mediaprogramme (broadcastingunit).

Bram Posthumus is a freelance journalist working in and about West and Southern Africa.

3 View – hardly your ordinary magazine

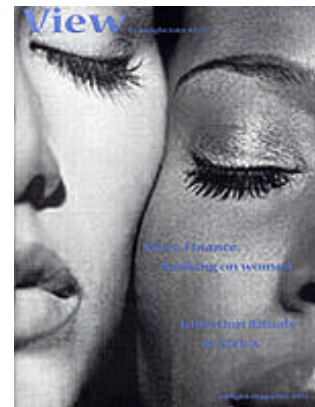
International students challenge the conspiracy of silence

by A' Eysa Kassiem

From the outside it hardly appears to be your ordinary magazine. Instead of the face that usually stare back at you from magazine covers, you now see two models with their eyes closed.

View

View, the new inflight-magazine produced by a group of international journalism students, is aimed at creating a broader understanding of Africa. It allows the reader, airpassengers to Africa, to develop or broaden his or her own vision of a continent that so few are ready to face.



View - an insight into Africa

Project to create cross-cultural awareness

The magazine is the result of what has been dubbed a 'cultural laboratory'; a journalism exchange project in the Netherlands (Fontys Hogeschool Journalistiek Tilburg) with the aim to achieve cross-cultural awareness. This year the project involved a group of forty students, half of whom were representatives from institutions in France, Slovakia, Britain, Ireland and South Africa. After three months of theoretical and practical study the project came to an end last June.

Doomy portrayal of Africa

When the exchange project started in 1997, it was focussed on Europe and on the European Union. Three years later this was changed to Africa. 'Africa is often ignored,' Richard Ton, co-ordinator of the project explained. 'There's this perception that Africa brings only disasters and diseases and that Africa is still in darkness.'

He said the students were expected to question the 'conspiracy of silence' around Africa. They should ask why it is only newsworthy when there is a good percentage of dead people in the region.

Six weeks of intensive training and research

View was the result of six weeks of intensive learning and research on topics surrounding Africa. The period included a mixture of events such as visiting exhibitions, role-playing, video materials and guest speakers.

Writing stories about a place you never visited

However, second-year student Kevin Sewell said it was difficult to write articles about a place he had never visited before. As an European student, he did not feel as though he could do justice to the stories.

Third year student and editor-in-chief of the magazine, Koen Guiking, agreed. He added that European students who knew 'nothing' about Africa produced content that may have had a new angle to them but was often based on a 'second hand idea' that had

already been explored.

Knowledge

Guiking believed that the project had taught students how to be resourceful. It had contributed to a greater knowledge about the current African affairs. This would enable them to further understand the unfolding events in Africa.

Learning how to deal with different cultures

Megan Kakora, fellow editor-in-chief of the magazine and second year South African student, said: 'A lot of it was also about learning how to deal with different cultures.' Most students agreed. They said that the diversity of the group had been the biggest highlight of the project, as the international contacts made would prove to be invaluable.

Breaking down preconceived notions

Ton said the personal reflections and perceptions of students before and after the project had shown a development in thinking and in breaking down the preconceived notions of Africa.

Understand your own culture

Foreign students, he said, could look at their own countries from outside its borders. They get a better view of the region and return home with different perspectives. 'By comparing larger cultures, students are able to look at their own culture and understand it a bit better', he concluded.

A'Eysha Kassiem, a South African student in journalism, was one of the students that participated in the project

At the request of NiZA partner Peninsula Technikon (Cape Town) NiZA has financed the participation of the South African exchange students.

The international exchange programme is an initiative of Fontys Hogeschool Journalistiek Tilburg in The Netherlands: www.fontys.nl/journalistiek

4 NiZA should make a video

Creative Capacity Enhancement

by Jeanette Minnie

NiZA should make a video of its next southern African capacity enhancement and assessment workshop. It's the only way to capture those astounding report backs that take place every morning to summarise the learning of the previous day.

Each day three or more participants are tasked with presenting a creative report back the next morning. A formal summary of the content is strictly 'verboten'!

Plain abstracts strictly forbidden

Over five days in Cape Town we were treated to live on-the-floor improvised stage plays of an international television newscast – including a presenter, panellists and a correspondent from another country. An old style schoolmaster conducting a comprehension test. An ensemble performance in which various participants read from an inspired dramatic text interspersed with traditional African idioms.

During the intensive theory presentations a few people would sing an African song to invigorate everyone. The rest clapping and swaying along. Eventually even the Dutch participants were motivated to sing a traditional song about how much they loved Amsterdam.

Origins of creative reporting

The five-day *Capacity Assessment Workshop* held during April in Cape Town, South Africa, was a follow-up to a *Capacity Enhancement Workshop* held in Windhoek, Namibia, last year.

The tradition of creative report backs began in Windhoek. It was inspired by the African Community Publishing Development Trust in Zimbabwe, using creative participatory learning techniques developed in this organisation with the help of rural African communities, and Bush Radio, which prides itself on its creative programming.

Course on request

The Cape Town workshop was an excellent example of co-operation between the North and the South. The introductory workshop in Namibia dealt with the guiding principles of capacity enhancement. Afterwards the African participants requested NiZA to provide a substantive course on the methodologies and techniques of assessing capacity within non-governmental service organisations.

Fons van der Velden of The Netherlands and Bangani Ngeleza of South Africa presented both of these courses. Their specific aim is to empower NGO's to conduct self-assessments of their capacity enhancement needs.

Medium-term programme funding

At the request of its southern African media partners, NiZA will soon begin to provide medium-term programme funding, and not only short-term project funding. The Cape Town workshop should therefore contribute to the efforts of the African partners in designing well-informed medium-term programmes.



workshop participants

Participants

NiZA itself regarded the workshop as an important learning opportunity and has started applying this learning in its own internal operations. The Media programme sent most of its full-time members of staff and one of its SADC-based outreach consultants to attend the workshop. They were accompanied by senior executive staff representatives of twelve of the Media Programme's forty partners. Some of these are experts in their own fields of capacity enhancement.

Organisation analysis

The participants were taken through some heavy carbo-loading in the fields of identifying organisational characteristics; conducting scans on organisations, their performance, mission and vision; integrating values, strategy, organisational structure, programmes and relationships within an organisation.

Excursions

There were also some excursions – one to view the famous colony of Simonstown penguins that have settled themselves happily among humans on a popular and environmentally protected beach. To the southern tip of the African continent where the warm Indian and cold Atlantic oceans meet dramatically. A romantic dinner at one of the beautiful wine farms of the Western Cape and to Robben Island – where Nelson Mandela and many heroes of South Africa's liberation struggle were imprisoned.

After all of this environmental, aesthetic, intellectual and spiritual wealth – just a reminder. NiZA must make a video of its next capacity enhancement and assessment workshop in Africa.

Links

[Report of Capacity Assessment Workshop - September 2002](#)

Jeanette Minnie is an advisor to NiZA's Media Programme on the issue of freedom of expression. She has been a director of the [Media Institute of Southern Africa](#) (www.misa.org) and the [Freedom of Expression Institute](#) (www.fxio.org.za), South Africa.

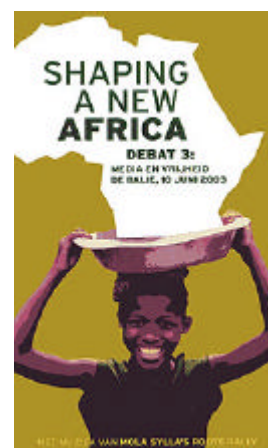
5 Community radio, its power- its danger

by Klaartje Jaspers

Mille Collines, the Rwandan radio station, can be held accountable for the killing of 800,000 people,' said Jonathan Marks, who works for Radio Netherlands as a Creative Director, during a recent debate on community radio. All the participants agreed that community radio can be a quite dangerous medium. How can a station which aims at giving its own audience a voice be kept free from hate speech?

The constitution

Faiza Abrahams Smith, director of the South African *National Community Radio Forum* (NCRF), believes in the law. The degree to which her country's fantastic Constitution has been actually implemented may be a bitter disappointment in her eyes, yet the Constitution serves as a touchstone against which controversial behaviour can be tested. Attentive listeners can take a radio station to court.



Discrimination versus freedom of religion

A case in point is the young listener who protested against an Islamic station's refusal to grant broadcasting time to women. She raised the matter with the independent Broadcasting Authority's gender department. It ruled that the station, *Radio Islam*, had acted improperly. Yet that wasn't the end of the matter, as the radio station appealed to its constitutional freedom of worship and in its turn lodged a complaint against the gender department. It was a close shave, but in the end the voice of women had to be given access to the airwaves.

Know your rights

Things can only be solved this way in a situation where people know their rights and have the courage to enforce them. Community radio should do its share in making this group bigger and bigger.

A waste of budget

Abrahams Smith: 'Take these billboards along the highway in South Africa, which are used to inform people that they may apply for a certain allowance. It takes quite a budget to rent advertising space aimed at people driving on highways – but these are not the ones who need that allowance! The ones who do will never see those billboards.'

Identification

The people who never get to see these billboards: those are the ones community radio is meant for. Broadcasts are in the listeners' vernacular and deal with issues of relevance to them. Information and identification are essential in a divided society such as South Africa.

Blue-eyed blondes parading a stuck-up British accent

'Before apartheid was abolished official broadcasts were always presented by blue-eyed blondes parading a stuck-up British accent', said the NCRF director. 'There were two languages: Afrikaans and English. For people with other backgrounds radio was a rather

mysterious concept. They were being marginalised. Today we involve them in radio-making. We teach them how to make their own programmes, in their own languages, about their own topics. It gives them a voice, and what is more, it boosts their self-confidence.'

Slaves as terrorists

Peggy Burke of *Radio Mart*, the Amsterdam-based Diaspora radio station for Dutch citizens originating in the Netherlands Antilles and Surinam, agreed with her: 'At school we were taught that runaway slaves were a kind of terrorists, but they were our heroes! Our history lessons were always dished up from a white point of view; now we have the opportunity to voice our own views.'

Segregation

An objection was raised by the chairman of the panel, Habtom Yohannes, who works as an editor for the Dutch national radio channel 1, who wondered if such a specific orientation would not result in segregation.

Burke disagreed: 'If you live in a country whose mainstream media disregard the issues that are relevant to you, you are forced to create your own media. We address Surinamese and Antillean people who live in the Netherlands – we are talking about their lives here, not there. Indeed, we are trying to encourage people to turn their minds to their living in the Netherlands.'

Psychological effect

Sometimes things go wrong, but reflecting on where you have come from will not necessarily make you ending up in an antagonistic position towards the other, will it? Radio Netherlands' Jonathan Marks told that his station goes about very cautiously. He works with countries that differ from the Netherlands or South Africa. Things went wrong in Rwanda, and they went wrong in Indonesia. Radio can have a strong psychological impact on listeners. It is a powerful means, and a dangerous one if fallen into the wrong hands.

Political climate

In order to disseminate its own know-how, Marks' company enters into co-productions together with radio stations in Africa, but it will never venture into areas in which the prevailing political climate is unfavourable. It will never just put up new stations, but only seek to co-operate with existing initiatives.

Why is it that Rwanda, with its millions of inhabitants, only has one radio station, a member of the public attending the debate wanted to know from Marks. The reply was inevitably rather disappointing: erecting an independent broadcasting station under the prying eyes of Kigali? The fact that the Rwandese fail to do that themselves probably speaks for itself...

Links

NCRF - www.ncrf.org.za

Radio Mart - www.radiomart.nl

Radio Netherlands - www.wereldomroep.nl

The Debate *Media en Vrijheid* (Media and Freedom) was organised by NiZA, [NCDO](http://www.ncdo.nl) (www.ncdo.nl) in co-operation with SAHAN scientific consultation bureau and

. It took place at the 10th of June 2003, in De Balie (www.balie.nl) in Amsterdam. The debate is part of the cyclus *Shaping A New Africa* (www.niza.nl/shapinganewafrica), which intends to stimulate the debate on Africa. The results of the debates will be presented to the new Dutch minister of Development Co-operation as policy-recommendations.

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6 Zapiro: Demonising Mugabe



Zapiro© 23 July 2003