

# Media News

Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa

## MediaNews 16 - February 2005/ Quarterly newsletter of NiZA 's Media Programme

NiZA's Media Programme supports civil society organisations in Southern Africa that contribute to the creation of more democratic and open societies where governments are held accountable to citizens' needs and interests. To this end the Media Programme supports the strengthening of our partner organisations so that they can: 1. Influence the media and freedom of expression policies and legal environment in the SADC region to reach a conducive freedom of expression environment, 2. Increase access to information for citizens, 3. Train media professionals to deliver more balanced and accurate information on key political, social and economic issues, 4. Improve the financial sustainability of media outlets.

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year of heated debate between splinter groups of rural and community-based publishers.

The negotiations, partially funded by NiZA, helped publishers jettison conglomerate-owned newspapers from the 126-year-old Community Press Association (CPA), and then merge the moribund organisation with the more radical Independent Media Alliance (IMA) lobby group.



### **New association for 250 grassroots newspapers**

News

South Africa's 250 'invisible' grassroots newspapers finally have a unified voice with the establishment of the Association of Independent Publishers of Southern Africa (AIPSA). The new regional umbrella body was established at a national conference in the country's commercial capital, Johannesburg, on 18 September 2004 after almost one

The new association was immediately accepted as a constituent member of the country's most powerful media association, Print Media South Africa (PMSA), and has already won funding for South Africa's first nationwide 'census' into rural, township, and grassroots publications.

The association is initially comprised almost exclusively of South African publishers, but as both its predecessors were regional SADC bodies we're opted to keep the doors open for

rapid growth into southern Africa. AIPSA will however only begin actively recruiting outside of South African once it has established its secretariat, its web portal, and a small number of tangible member services.

### **Aggressive headhunt**

Preliminary AIPSA research indicates that the sector is a hotbed of innovation, with entrepreneurial publishers using everything from second-hand photocopiers to small hand-operated presses to publish an array of micro (A5) and mini (A4) newsletters, as well as more traditional tabloid size newspapers. Virtually none of these grassroots publications are donor funded, instead surviving on advertising revenue and subscriptions alone.

Some of the more unorthodox innovations include using HIV/AIDS home-based care councillors to distribute newspapers deep into rural villages where there are literally no roads - and so beating better funded mainstream newspapers.

Although the newspapers have managed to survive and even thrive without donor or other institutional support, increasing numbers of publishers are now finding themselves the victims of their own success: the cash-flush conglomerate media has begun to aggressively headhunt the most skilled and innovative journalists and editors, offering salaries up to six times what the grassroots media can afford. The resulting brain drain, from newspapers that operate with tiny staff structures, has crippled some of South Africa's most outspoken rural media. The only way to fight back, publishers believe, is to strengthen the commercial viability of their surviving publications.

### **'Idiot guide'**

AIPSA was created to embrace this spirit of entrepreneurial enterprise, and is urgently designing a series of free Open Source (OS) software tools, 'idiot guide' manuals, management toolkits, and technological aids as flagship projects. The OS software includes

specialised distribution/circulation and editorial management tools, as well as automated salary payroll, budgeting, and tax-calculation tools, and is meant to 'level the playing fields' by mirroring the expensive proprietary tools used by the conglomerate media.

The 'idiot guide' manuals will meanwhile help publishers refine their market research, advertising, circulation, and editorial strategies through a series of step-by-step exercises, while the management toolkits will help publishers produce marketing and advertising sales kits equivalent to those used by competing conglomerate media.

AIPSA also intends becoming South Africa's primary clearinghouse for research, policy debate, and the setting of industry standards for the grassroots media sector as part of its mandate to aggressively lobby on behalf of the sector.

### **Advertising procurement**

Registered as a non-profit association, AIPSA has already spearheaded successful highlevel campaigns against State-funded newspapers that undermine the small independent publications by using State resources to undercut their distribution, poach advertisers, and headhunt staff. AIPSA's intervention derailed attempts to restructure the State-funded newspapers so that they could in future also qualify for donor funding.

Other successful AIPSA lobby campaigns since September 2004 include reforming discriminatory police information policies towards small newspapers right across South Africa, and also developing strategies for improving the access of grassroots publishers to national advertising.

Perhaps more importantly though, AIPSA is set to launch a feasibility study into the viability of a proposed national advertising procurement agency. The envisioned non-profit agency will specifically service grassroots newspapers, finally giving them the

collective muscle enjoyed by the multinational conglomerates that dominate South Africa's media industry.

### Ego-stroking

As a first step, NiZA has helped AIPSA commission a comprehensive database-driven web portal to showcase grassroots media to advertisers, to give access to individual publications, and to showcase credible market research proving the effectiveness of such media.

And, to help reward the sector's often unsung heroes, AIPSA is also championing the creation of South Africa's Innovative Media Awards. The awards are intended as more than just another ego-stroking exercise, and therefore avoid cash-handouts -- and will instead seek to pragmatically assist winning entrepreneurs capitalise on their innovations by providing technical training, sponsored onsite mentors/management consultants, scholarships with better resourced media, or even brokering long-term 'twinning' agreements with better resourced media to build capacity and sustainability.

Detailed information on AIPSA's programmes and individual members can be obtained from its NiZA funded website, set to launch in February 2005, at [www.independentpublisher.org](http://www.independentpublisher.org)

by Justin Arenstein

*Justin Arenstein is founding editor of southern Africa's only independent investigative news agency, African Eye News Service, and is currently interim president of AIPSA.*

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## How the Mozambican media performed during election time

### Reflections

During the electoral process in Mozambique, media gave more attention to the ruling and winning party Frelimo than to other political

parties. Further, journalists reported on the organisational aspects of the elections, rather than on party programmes. Five journalists reflect on the performance of the media throughout the presidential and legislative elections.

"I have nothing but praise for the way in which my colleagues on Radio Moçambique and Mozambican Television (TVM) got the results from the polling stations on the air only a few hours after the close of polls. Thanks to them Mozambique knew that Frelimo and



Streetvendor in Nampula, selling the newspaper Noticias. (photo: E. Doleman)

Guebuza had a massive victory. The National Elections Commission (CNE) did not publish its official results until weeks later.

Indeed, media reported a lot on so-called 'technical organisation' of the elections to the detriment of the programmes of the political parties. I personally think party programmes are meaningless. They avoid all the hard questions. But there is another explanation. Access for observers, timely distribution of election materials and state of the registers, are crucial for the proper running of the elections. They are important to ensure that the will of the voters can be known and respected."

### Lack of debate

"The level of development of a society can be measured by the quality of its debate. Debate in Mozambique is poor. But you cannot blame this to the media. The media just represents debate, they don't produce it. There is a lack of debate because of Mozambique's pernicious dependence on aid. When your options are limited there is no point debating whatever

you might think is right. Political legitimacy in Mozambique is not conferred by the electorate, but by the donors.'

*Elísio Macamo, sociologist and journalist for magazine Mais .*

#### Improved quality of coverage

"Compared to the previous elections the media improved the quality of coverage, in terms of trying to be balanced, critical and independent. But it is still difficult to make an objective and abstract analysis in public without being immediately linked to one or the other side.

This shows media and society are not so plural as we would like to see, in terms of really having different opinions. There is a clear need to stimulate real debate and investigation, to bring more diversity, be analytic and to build capacity among journalists."

*Mateus Chale, correspondent for Reuters in Mozambique .*

#### Not easy to be independent

"Normally it is visible which media outlet is biased to which political party, but in a moderate way. During the elections however this phenomenon was amplified a lot. Even if newspaper Notícias provided space to opposition party Renamo, it was the direct transmission of what was said by the National Elections Commission.

It is not easy to be an independent journalist in Mozambique. During other elections the leader of Renamo used to be dissatisfied about the biased reports of TVM. This time he was content with the coverage of the TVM journalist, who was reporting as much of Renamo's electoral campaign as possible. But when the journalist returned he was considered a Renamo partisan. In Mozambique people believe that , if you are critical against Frelimo, you favour Renamo."

*Jordane Bertrand, correspondent in Mozambique for Le Monde, Radio France Internationale (RFI).*

#### Depending on official sources

"Media organisations depend mostly on official sources of information like press

conferences and interviews with the contestants. They don't tend to visit party rallies were they could listen to the messages delivered and point out strengths and weaknesses. One of the reasons is the scarcity of means to move around. Many journalists are forced to hitchhike. Another reason is the lack of information provided by most political parties, who did not even send their party programmes to journalists."

*Manuel Mucari of MISA-Mozambique. This organisation provided tools for a balanced coverage of the electoral process across the country by organising workshops across the country for 120 journalists. It also monitored media coverage of the elections. This report will be published shortly.*

*Information about monitoring Mozambican media by the European Union:*

[www.eueomm.org/stvn.htm](http://www.eueomm.org/stvn.htm)

*Information about monitoring Mozambican elections by Jimmy Carter:*

[www.cartercenter.org/doc1932.htm](http://www.cartercenter.org/doc1932.htm)

*MISA-Mozambique:*

[www.misa.org/about\\_MISA/chapters/Mozambique/Mozambique.html](http://www.misa.org/about_MISA/chapters/Mozambique/Mozambique.html)

*by Barbara Bosma*

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## A powerful voice from behind bars

### Reportage

Doors slam and loud voices ring out in the background, as a group of women meet in a tiny office in the women's section of Pollsmoor Prison near Cape Town. But inside the office, oblivious to the distractions, the women, all inmates, are holding an editorial meeting to decide on the content for the next edition of Women's Link, one of South Africa's most unusual publications.

Launched in December 2002, Women's Link - which is published three times a year, with edition seven having come out end November 2004 - is testimony to how media can take root and grow, even in the most difficult of circumstances.

Women's Link is staffed by women in jail for a variety of offences that include murder, fraud, armed robbery and house breaking. The women involved have all been trained by facilitators from Arts and Media Access Centre (AMAC) - a NiZA partner up until 2005 - in a variety of skills, including media literacy, news gathering, writing skills, ethics and developing an editorial policy.

The publication has given the inmates of the prison a powerful voice, allowing them a space for moving personal testimonies, debate, to express opinions, highlight role models and emphasise positive stories.

#### Prison slang

Issues driven, the publication has so far covered mothers and children in prison, living with HIV/AIDS, rehabilitation and the parole system. Also included in the mix are beauty and health, recipes, jokes, a puzzle page and feedback from readers.

Juveniles are responsible for the 'Kidz on the Block' section, which includes personal stories, the ever-popular 'Hunk of the Month' and 'Tronk Taal' - explaining prison slang.

Many of those involved say it has been a 'healing tool' and working on the publication has taught them to once again trust others and work together as a team, something out of the ordinary in prison where trust is rare. Beatrice Caswell said: "It has allowed me the space to write about what I feel, to express my opinions, it has been a fantastic healing process for me and for the others. We have learned to accept and respect each other's opinions. It has helped me to accept what I did and where I am. I'm a better person for it."

#### Training of new inmates

Producing the publication is an ongoing challenge: inmates have limited access to other sections of the prison and always have to be accompanied by a warder. They are locked up in their cells from 3 pm every day and arranging editorial meetings and access to computer equipment is difficult under those circumstances. Equally challenging is the lack of continuity, with inmates being constantly transferred and released, and new inmates must be trained on an ongoing basis.

Pauline Bester, the warden in charge of sports and recreation in the women's section at Pollsmoor, has been a driving force behind the publication from inception. She said: "Communication is very difficult inside a prison, between inmates and between inmates and the authorities.



"This has been a powerful medium for inmates to express their voices, and for warders to connect with inmates. You would be amazed to see how it has made a difference, it is as if the women working on the newsletter glow, it has given them self confidence and focus and taught them to face obstacles, not just walk away."

#### Reintegration

With regards to helping the women find a job, so far there has been no feedback on whether this has happened. But more important is that the women involved learn about working together as a team, communication, respect and many other issues. These lessons learned, without a doubt, play an important role in their

rehabilitation and prepares them for reintegration into society.

The next issue will come out around March.

*by Raymond Joseph*

*Raymond Joseph has worked with the team of AMAC and the Pollsmore women inmates during a training funded by NiZA. He is a freelance journalist and media trainer, specialising in community media and start-ups of new publications. Raymond is based in Cape Town, but works throughout the Southern African region. [rayjoe@iafrica.com](mailto:rayjoe@iafrica.com)*

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## **Zimbabwe's hampered flow of information in run-up to elections**

### Background

A few weeks before the Zimbabwean parliamentary elections slated for a still to be announced date in March, things are as 'normal' as they can be in the country. There is no question that things will change when the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) announces whether it is going to participate in the elections. But whether Zimbabwe's biggest opposition party takes part or not, the question whether voters are fully empowered to make an informed choice will play a very significant role in the result of the election.

One of the main demands of MDC is for the free flow of information, which at the moment is limited by various pieces of legislation put in place by the government.

While the government can argue that there is media freedom in Zimbabwe because independent newspapers such as the Independent, The Financial Gazette, The Standard and the Mirror are allowed to publish it has not hesitated to use the Access to Information and Privacy Act (AIPPA) to ban the Daily News, The Daily News on Sunday and The Tribune for their critical stance.

### No go area

The papers that are still publishing do a sterling job at trying to tell the story the way it is but what happened to the banned papers is always a reminder of what can happen if one oversteps the mark. And, just like Zanu-PF has declared certain parts of the country such as Mashonaland East 'no go areas' for the opposition, one risks severe abuse if seen with



The Daily News is closed down

a copy of any of the independent papers in the ruling party's strongholds.

This means that beside radio for most and television for some, the only source of information is the political parties themselves and while the ruling party has the right to demonize the MDC as much as it wants, the opposition party cannot campaign or carry out normal political activities in the areas where it is 'banned'. The state broadcaster recently refused to carry MDC advertisements even though the government is claiming 'electoral changes'.

In Zimbabwe's state-controlled media, the opposition exists only when it is being talked about negatively and it never has the right to respond. State employed journalists are nothing more than megaphones of the ruling party.

### Alternative sources

But just like during the days of White rule in the then Rhodesia when the State had a monopoly on broadcasting, those with shortwave receivers tune in to external radio stations such as the British Broadcasting Corporation. The Zimbabwe specific stations

such as SW Africa and the Voice of America's Studio 7 are also alternative sources of information.

The latter is even more potent as it is available on AM. A regular listener, who shall remain anonymous as he works for the government, told this reporter of what he described as a "fascinating" interview Studio 7 carried out with a Zanu-PF and MDC parliamentarian. "I wish they could allow this kind of thing to happen here," he said.

Political party campaigns are also another form of information dissemination but after the 2000 parliamentary elections the MDC's Secretary General Welshman Ncube, said they stopped campaigning in some parts of the country because after holding rallies in those areas, people who had attended were assaulted and in some cases killed.

#### Prejudicial

The Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Bill which if and when it is signed into law by the government will further make life difficult for journalists as it will impose a heavy fine, a jail term of up to 20 years or both for anyone publishing "false" information deemed "prejudicial against the state".

David Masunda assistant editor of The Standard weekly newspaper, "It will make journalists scared; you cannot speculate or infer and while before it could be a civil matter, now you can be jailed," he said. Access to information by the Zimbabwean electorate is therefore going to be very difficult unless the government removes all the hurdles that exist at the moment but the people try by all means at their disposal to get information.

But, as one man patiently waiting in his car in a fuel queue recently observed, "We will not forget the hardships we have endured during the past few years come voting day." The government may deny Zimbabweans access to information but its failures are there for all to see and feel. There is no information more potent than that.

By \*

*Written by a Zimbabwean free-lance journalist who cannot be named because of Zimbabwe's media laws*

## Echoes' journalists gauge interest all over the country

### Partner profile

A complaint that is often levelled at Namibian media, in general, is that they do not listen to the average man or woman and their



Echoes 2004 staff and consultants  
Courtesy: Echoes Newswire

community. The Echoes Polytechnic Student News Service is set up with the aim of providing coverage of issues that affect those at the grassroots of Namibian society.

The existing perception is that Namibia has a top – down approach in media coverage. The Echoes Polytechnic Student News Service, as a project of the Media Technology Department of the Polytechnic of Namibia (PON), was created precisely to counter this perception. Also, it was set up to provide a practical environment for journalism students in order to prepare them to function in the professional media sector after completion of their studies.

The project came about through funding from various donors and partners of the Media

Technology Department, including 40.000 euro from NIZA.

As a multimedia news service, staffed by nine first- and second-year journalism interns/students of the department, Echoes aimed to produce stories for both print and radio as well as for web-based distribution through the Echoes website.

#### **Electioneering process**

The project officially kicked off in mid-2004, during the cultural festival of the PON, with Campus Echoes, a daily newsletter/paper, distributed during the four days of the cultural festival.

In late August 2004, with the focus of the project shifting to coverage of community issues in the run-up to the national, regional and presidential elections, which took place in November 2004, interns were sent to various corners of the country to organise and conduct focus group discussions in communities in order to gauge grassroots interest in and perceptions of the political processes involved in the electioneering process.

In each of these communities stories, related to issues affecting the particular community and the broader society, were then done and distributed through the mainstream media, particularly the print media. In addition to the Namibian, New Era daily newspaper, NBC radio (National Broadcaster) and the Katutura Community Radio (KCR, a community radio station) utilized Echoes' stories.

#### **Quality**

Stories compiled by Echoes journalists appeared mainly in the English-language press weekly and sometimes almost daily. *"There was a sense of achievement,"* said Pauliina Shilongo, Project Co-ordinator of Echoes.

As the elections drew closer, some foreign election observers and even established media practitioners, who were sceptical at first,

commended the project on the quality of articles produced.

Subjects and issues covered by Echoes ranged from gender equality and HIV/AIDS to poverty and development. An early analysis, done by media consultant, Patricia Made, of Echoes coverage stated that *"none of the (first) nine stories contained language that perpetuates gender stereotypes or stigma or discrimination against any groups."*

#### **Pioneering**

*"I think it was a very stunning experience,"* said Johnathan Beukes, second-year intern and editor of Echoes, on his experience with the project. *"I feel like I was part of something pioneering that will go on and become something very meaningful."*

And Head of the Media Technology Department, Emily Brown, said that the project fits in nicely with what the department and PON are trying to achieve.

She explained that the Media Technology Department of the PON was established in 2000 after extensive research was conducted into the need for a qualification in the fields of journalism and communication technologies.

#### **Qualification**

*"So many practising journalists in Namibia don't have qualifications,"* explained Brown. *"But we had to prove to the Senate of the PON that there was a need for the qualification and the best way to do this was through research."*

*"Our research found that 65% of practising journalists in Namibia did not have a qualification. So we asked journalists if they would like to see such a programme of study and they said yes."*

On the future of the Echoes project, Pauliina Shilongo, said: *"My hope is that Echoes will become a very strong student news outlet."*

*"I hope that one day the department Media Technology at PON will also become a*



research institute on media and journalism in this country."

*More information: Polytechnic of Namibia*  
by Frederico Links

*Frederico Links is a second-year journalism student and Echoes intern as well as a freelance print journalist for mainstream media. fredericojlinks@yahoo.com*

## **Botswana's media during election time: barely one article a day**

Monitoring

MISA Botswana embarked on a three-months Media Monitoring Project on elections for the first time. The aim of the project was to examine how elections were reported in the local media, including the political and gender balance of such reporting, as well as to raise public awareness of election reporting.

The eight monitored newspapers: Mmegi, Botswana Guardian, Botswana Gazette, Mokgosi, Midweek Sun, The Voice, Daily News and MmegiMonitor. Plus three radio stations: Radio Botswana, Gabz FM 96.2 and Yarona FM 106.6, as well as Botswana's only television station: Botswana Television. MISA Botswana had long wanted to monitor local media especially during General Elections Times, in particular to verify accusations of media bias during such times. This was our first opportunity to do this.

The project was meant to start data collection at the beginning of September and run for three months so that post-election reporting could also be covered. However, delays in funding meant that it only went into action on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September. The study took place up until November 2004.

Attending the launch in Gaborone on 19 October 2004 was a diverse crowd of journalists, political representatives and people working for EU, embassies and Non Governmental Organisations (NGO) such as UNDP.

### **Little coverage**

The initial findings presented at the launch were challenging for a number of reasons. For one, there were not many articles to analyse. In the month preceding the official launch only 278 items were recorded across all monitored media; an average of less than one article per outlet per day, despite the fact that elections were looming.

Secondly, the coverage was not even across all parties, with just two parties hoarding the majority of coverage. Botswana Democracy Party (BDP) had 41% and the Botswana Congress Party (BCP) had 28.8%. BDP is the ruling party while BCP and Botswana National Front (BNF) are the main opposition parties.

The third conclusion is that women candidates



Presentation of the monitoring project

received very little coverage at all; approximately 10% of the total.

### **Bias**

The launch was greeted positively, though questions were raised regarding how items were recorded. Some political parties pointed out that whilst a party might receive a lot of coverage in terms of percentage, some stories covered were on a negative note. It was suggested that article bias should also be measured so that a better picture of media coverage could be developed.

Some discussion followed the presentation of the results, centring on how to improve election reporting in the country. Some journalists raised concern over political

parties. These are supposedly not being sufficiently proactive in securing press coverage of their events. It was said that some political parties do not invite journalists or even open up to answer their questions.

For example the Botswana Television journalist told the audience that political parties activities organisation tends to be clustered most of the time. Their events often take place on the same day and same time and it is difficult for one television station to divide itself to grasp the activities of all political parties.

#### Political colouring

Mr Themba Joina leader of the opposition party MELS complained that journalists often allowed their own political bias to colour their reporting. There has been a complaint lodged to the Press Council of Botswana by the BNF, another opposition party. The complaint concerns an editor of the leading newspaper in the country who was involved in a private publishing house as a shareholder; the said publishing house had also been engaged by the ruling party BDP to help with the party's advertising campaign. This strongly suggests that there is a conflict of interest. It, according to the complainant, looked like the editor and his newspaper tend to be politically biased in their reportage regarding issues affecting the BDP.

This project was set up by MISA Botswana, with funding being provided by the Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa (NiZA). MISA Botswana is in the process of finalising a report of election monitoring.

*by Romang Lephothoe*

*The author of this article Romang Lephothoe, Advocacy Officer, has been with the Media Institute of Southern Africa Botswana Chapter for four years now. [director@bw.misa.org](mailto:director@bw.misa.org)*

## Restrained by a 900-pound gorilla

Comment

Cyber activist Gregg Stirton, the domain owner and publisher of [www.hellkom.co.za](http://www.hellkom.co.za), is facing court action from Telkom – South Africa's government-owned and corporatised

fixed line telephone monopoly service. Telkom has asked the court to restrain Stirton from making defamatory comments about the company and interdicting him from infringing its copyrighted trademarks. (Another website, [www.telkomsucks.co.za](http://www.telkomsucks.co.za), is also in Telkom's firing line).



Some of Hellkom's web site gems include cleverly adapted and well known Telkom logos with the following captions: "Hellkom: Prices that'll make you sweat; 'Melk-hom: Ons melk die publiek soos 'n Jersey koei' (Milk him: We milk the public like a Jersey cow); Monopolydotcom: Robbing you with the government's permission".

This is the second time in only a few months that a major business monopoly in South Africa has litigated for protection of its trademarks – not against business competitors – but against activists who criticise or make fun of them by cleverly adapting their trademarks and logos. Previously it was South African Breweries (SAB) against the little guys (see the October 2004 edition of MediaNews). Now it is Telkom. Is this the beginning of a corporate onslaught against freedom of expression in the second decade of our democracy?



*Ons melk die publiek  
soos 'n Jersey-koei*

### Spiralling

The Hellkom web site offers serious information and insight into the monopoly practises of Telkom and the spiralling costs of telephony and related internet services to consumers – said by some to be among the highest in the world.

A participant in a South African *Carte Blanche* television talk show, Managing Director of NUS consultants

<http://www.nusconsulting.com/> George Rahr, said on the programme late last year that a national call in South Africa costs 37 US cents (€ 0,28) compared to Sweden where a national call costs only 9 dollarcents (€ 0,69). A local (short distance) call in South Africa costs 14 US (€ 0,11) cents per 3 minutes. By comparison, all local calls in Canada are completely free. An international call in South Africa costs about 125 US cents (€ 0,96) for three minutes, compared to Germany where its costs about 14/15 US cents (€ 0,11).

(In The Netherlands, a local, three-minute phonecall during office hours costs € 0,12 (US \$ 0,17). An international call, let's say to South Africa, costs € 1,97 or: more than 2 \$, for a three-minute call. However, it must be added that competition between telecom providers had provided cheaper options for Dutch callers, ed.)

### ADSL

Another participant claimed that Telkom's business ADSL service, which provides 24-hour internet connectivity at R1000 per month (€ 128) - including ISP and line rental charges – was 300 to 500 per cent more expensive than in first world countries.

Neither is Telkom a struggling company. It made a staggering net profit of R4,5 billion (€ 575-million) in it's last financial year. It's CEO, Sizwe Nxasana, earned more than R11 million (€ 1 403 090) in that year from salary and bonuses. Ewan Sutherland, the Executive Director of a private IT company called INTUG, aptly described Telkom in the same television programme as a "900 pound gorilla which ... is perfectly capable of stamping out competition by destroying the small players [the small value added networks]. [Telkom] can adjust the conditions of the market very easily".

\*One of NiZA's partner organisations in South Africa, The Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI), is assisting Gregg Stirton and 'Laugh it Off' Promotions against the court cases that have been brought against them by Telkom and SAB respectively. See the FXI's web site at

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

zby *Jeanette Minnie*

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See also [www.myadsl.co.za](http://www.myadsl.co.za)